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# PARKS AND RECREATION

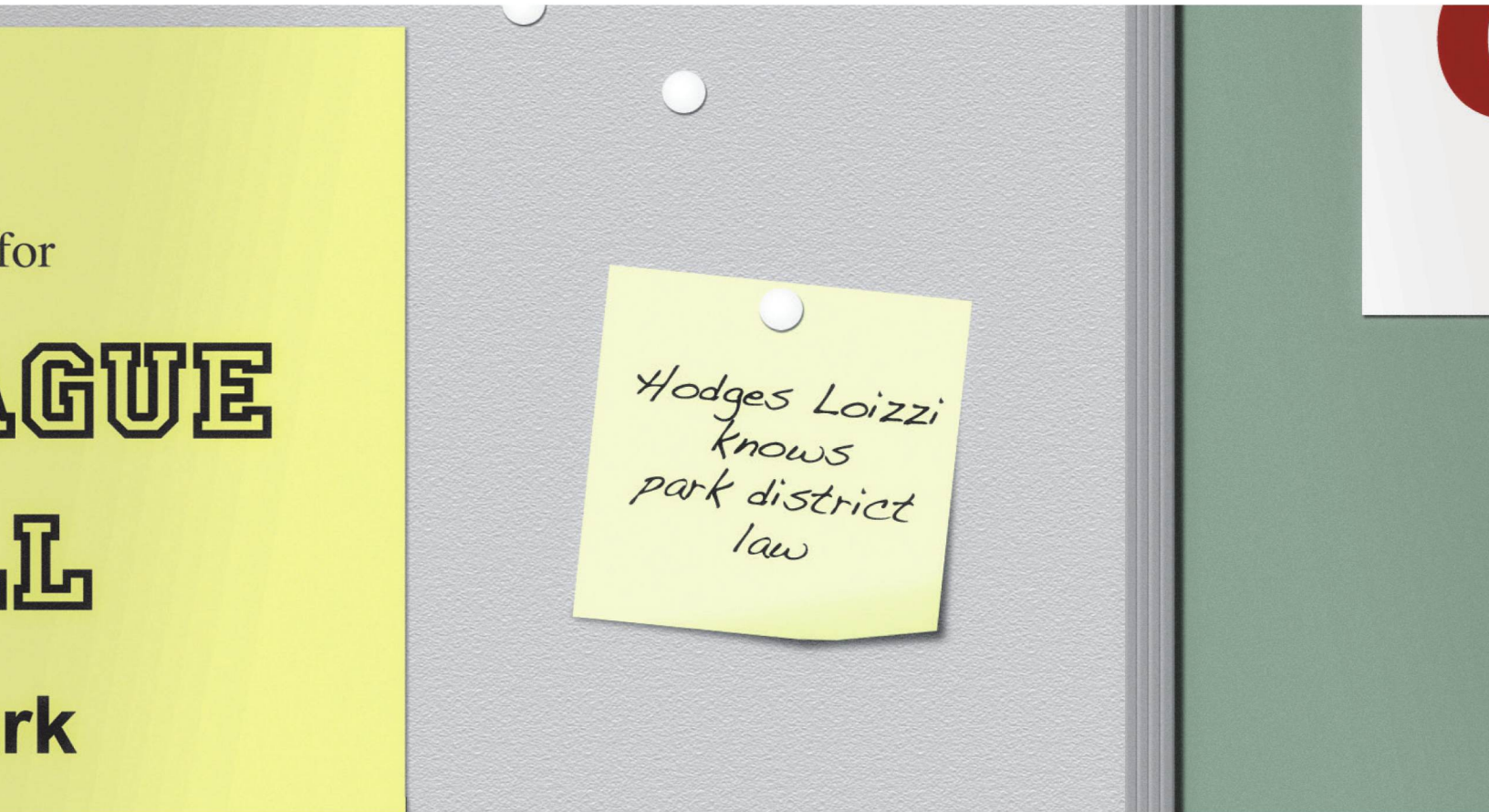
The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



## programming trends

PLUS: 2013 Legal Calendar

# Word gets around



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## IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 From the Editor**  
If you ever need to borrow a Viking hat, our editor has you covered
- 6 Get on Board**  
An expression of gratitude from IAPD President/CEO Peter Murphy
- 8 Eye on the Profession**  
Greetings from new IPRA Executive Director Debbie Trueblood
- 10 Statehouse Insider**  
Jason Anselment shows you how to make the most of valuable IAPD member benefits
- 12 2013 Legal Calendar**  
A convenient resource for key legal dates throughout the fiscal year
- 16 Wacky Races Set the Pace**  
Add some fun to your run with non-traditional race themes
- 20 A Way to Drum Up New Business**  
Drumming is quickly growing in popularity as a stress-relieving total body fitness program
- 23 Good Customer Service**  
Attorneys Gina Madden and Anthony Ficarelli explore practical ways to improve customer service and create loyalty
- 25 2012 Best of the Best Awards Gala**
- 26 People and Places**  
Faces and places making news around the state

On the Cover: "Kids with Attitude" by Melissa Swanner, Geneva Park District, was the 2011 *Give Us Your Best Shot* photo contest second place winner in the Sports category.

# FROM THE EDITOR

On a sunny Saturday morning in early August, my husband, Jeremy, and a carload of his friends – one from as far away as Florida – headed out to spend the day covered in mud, running up steep inclines, dodging barbed wire and jumping over fire. It wasn't a military training exercise or anything of the sort. It was a Warrior Dash, and they paid \$85 apiece for the privilege of putting themselves in one precarious situation after another. Their efforts were rewarded with an "I Survived" medal, a fuzzy Viking hat with horns and an enormous stein of beer.



Upon crossing the finish line, Jeremy knew immediately that he wanted to do the Warrior Dash again next year. And almost as quickly, he began reaching out to friends on Facebook, encouraging them to give it a try as well. (For the record, I declined the invitation.)

You can't put a price on word-of-mouth advertising, especially in this modern era when excitement and enthusiasm – along with photos from the event and even links to online event pages – are spread so quickly through social media. In a day's time, this novice who has never participated in an organized race before was transformed into an eager advocate for fun runs. And his experience is far from unusual.

On page 16, Ian Everett explores the burgeoning trend of theme runs that take participants off the beaten path – sometimes quite literally. From mud-soaked obstacle courses to 'run for your life' zombie-crazed races, the options are as endless as the imagination. If your agency hosts an unusual running event, we'd love to hear about it at [editorialdept@ilparks.org](mailto:editorialdept@ilparks.org).

Another non-traditional programming trend allows participants to improve brain waves, reduce stress and build endurance through a cardio workout – burning up to 400 calories an hour – in a fun group atmosphere. Who knew banging a drum had so many health benefits? Read more about the drumming trend on page 20.

These are just two innovative programming trends with the potential to bring new participants to your agency, but how do you convert initial curiosity into long-term loyalty? Attorneys Gina Madden and Anthony Ficarella suggest that while quality programming gets consumers in the door, it's quality customer service that brings them back. Learn which techniques they suggest on page 23.

Best regards,  
— LORI HARLAN



## Photo Contest Deadline December 3<sup>rd</sup>

The "Give Us Your Best Shot" photo contest, sponsored by the IAPD and IPRA, is a great way to showcase your agency. Contest photos are used in a variety of ways throughout the year, and winning photos are displayed at our annual conference. Do you have great shots from agency events? Enter them to win! The contest deadline is December 3, 2012. Contest rules and waiver form are available online at [ILParks.org](http://ILParks.org).



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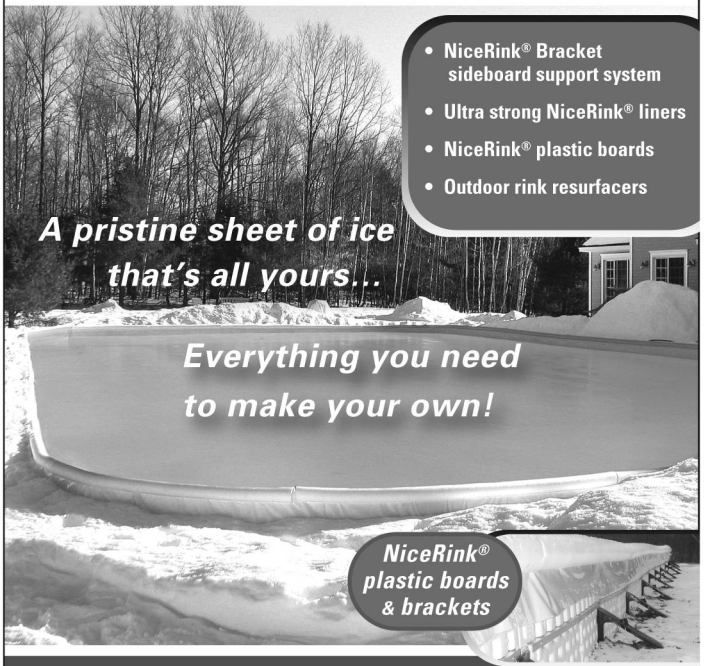


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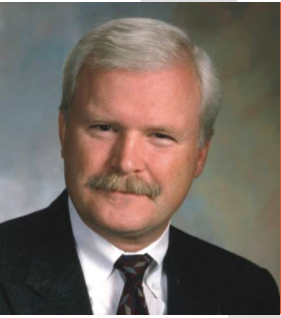
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Peter M. Murphy  
IAPD President and CEO

## Volunteerism The Hallmark of Success

As 2012 draws to a close, I look back on the year and all we accomplished with great pride. An association is only as strong as its membership, and the Illinois Association of Park Districts is fortunate to have countless dedicated, hard-working members whose support enables us to succeed at the highest levels.

I would be remiss if I didn't pause to say thank you to each of you who played a role in helping IAPD not only to achieve our goals but also in inspiring us to aim even higher next year. In 2013, IAPD will celebrate its 85th anniversary, and we are excited to share this milestone with our membership.

I recently had the privilege of recognizing many of our members' citizen volunteers and business partners at IAPD's sixth annual Best of the Best Awards Gala. These individuals, organizations and businesses have made an indelible impact in their communities through their service and generosity.

It was an exciting evening that reflected the unique support park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies receive from volunteers throughout the state of Illinois. Their stories and those like them need to be told, and I encourage each of you to actively do this at the local level.

In addition, this year we recognized 60 commissioners for service anniversaries totaling more than 975 years, including Channahon Park District's Ron Lehman whose four decades of service is an inspiration to us all. Now that is volunteerism at its best.



If you haven't recognized your commissioners' service anniversaries, it is not too late. Contact Bobbie Jo Hill (bjhill@ilparks.org) for more information.

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

- William Arthur Ward



Park districts have a rich history in Illinois, and the following IAPD members were also recognized for agency anniversaries:

- Oak Brook Park District – 50 years
- Riverdale Park District – 75 years
- Dolton Park District – 85 years
- Forest Preserve District of Will County – 85 years
- Glencoe Park District – 100 years

In this fast-paced world, time is a priceless commodity, which makes volunteer work all the more admirable. Thank you to each of you whose passion and hard work improves the quality of life and protects the fragile natural resources in your community. Illinois' park, recreation and conservation system is second to none in the nation thanks to your perseverance.

I would also like to publicly thank the sponsors whose generosity made the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual IAPD Summer Golf Tour a success.

Special thanks to our tour sponsor, W-T Engineering, Inc. Thank you to our tour hole sponsors: Ancel Glink, Call One, FGM Architects, Hyatt Regency Chicago, IPARKS, Mesirow Financial, Musco Sports Lighting, PDRMA, Planning Resources and Speer Financial, Inc.



We also appreciate our hole sponsors: Cunningham Recreation, Gewalt Hamilton Associates, Hitchcock Design Group, The Mulch Center, PHN Architects, PMA Financial Network, Inc., Rose Paving Company and Tressler LLP.

A special thank you also goes to the hosts of the 2012 Summer Golf Tour: Settler's Hill Golf Course (GolfVisions Management, Inc.), Arrowhead Golf Club (Wheaton Park District), Shepherd's Crook Golf Course (Zion Park District) and Fox Bend Golf Course (Oswegoland Park District).

The generous support of our sponsors and the hard work of everyone involved in this summer's tour make it the networking event of the year. Mark your calendars now with dates for the 2013 Summer Golf Tour (listed in the Calendar of Events) and get ready for another tremendous tour next year.

### Legal Symposium Still Available Through Live Streaming

The 2012 Legal Symposium held in October was another first-class IAPD training event designed to keep our members up-to-date on changes in the law.

Special thanks to Speer Financial, Inc., event sponsor; Chase, breakfast sponsor; and Chapman and Cutler LLP, luncheon sponsor.

If you missed the event, it's not too late to participate. For the first time ever, IAPD conducted live streaming which broadcast the event in real time allowing participants who registered to participate from the comfort of their offices. The live streaming was recorded, and the entire symposium, including handouts, will be available for purchase soon. Watch your inbox for an email with more information.

At IAPD, we are committed to harnessing the power of technology to educate and empower our membership. I am proud of the association's accomplishments this year, and even more excited about our 85th year of service to our membership in 2013. I wish you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season and New Year.

## 2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 24-26  
**IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference**  
Hyatt Regency Chicago

April/May  
**Flying 4 Kids Month**

April 30  
**Parks Day at the Capitol**  
State Capitol, Springfield

April 30  
**Legislative Reception**  
Illini Country Club,  
Springfield

May 1  
**Legislative Conference**  
Crowne Plaza, Springfield

May 20  
**Summer Golf Tour Event #1 – Noon Shotgun**  
Palatine Hills Golf Club  
Palatine Park District

June 10  
**Summer Golf Tour Event #2 – Noon Shotgun**  
Old Orchard  
Country Club  
Prospect Heights Park  
District

July 18  
**Legislative Golf Outing**  
White Pines Golf Club  
Bensenville Park District

August 17  
**Park District Conservation Day**  
Illinois State  
Fairgrounds,  
Springfield

August 20  
**Summer Golf Tour Event #3 – Noon Shotgun**  
Foss Park Golf Course  
Foss Park District

September 9  
**Summer Golf Tour Event #4 – 9 a.m. Shotgun**  
Prairie Bluff Golf  
Course  
Lockport Township  
Park District

September 27  
**IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala**  
Chevy Chase Country  
Club, Wheeling Park  
District

October 8-10  
**NRPA Congress & Exposition**  
Houston, Texas

November 7  
**Legal Symposium**  
Hamburger University,  
Oak Brook

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IAPD website at [www.ILparks.org](http://www.ILparks.org).

**IAPD**  
Illinois Association of Park Districts



By Debbie Trueblood  
IPRA Executive Director

## Benefits Abound with IPRA Membership

Once again, it is my pleasure to meet you as the new Executive Director for IPRA. I have been with IPRA since August 1, and I have greatly enjoyed my time so far. I have been out traveling nearly every day meeting members from every section, large and small agencies all over the state as well as meeting people and forming partnerships and collaborations with other associations. IPRA has been incredibly welcoming to me, and I appreciate so much all the people who have shared their perspectives on IPRA with me. I look forward to meeting many more members. If you would like me to come out and visit your agency and learn more about your programs and facilities, please email me at [debbie@ilipra.org](mailto:debbie@ilipra.org). Specifically, I would like to meet people from agencies who have not been involved with IPRA in the past or who have something they want to share with me about their perspective. I would also very much like to hear from students and new professionals about your thoughts.

While I am out traveling and meeting members, it is also a busy time for IPRA as we start getting ready for membership renewal time, elections, budgets and final planning for the annual conference.

Soon it will be dues renewal time once again. We have all heard the statement that “We pay dues to get the conference member discount rate” or “I’m a member because my employer signed me up,” but I think there is a much bigger picture to consider. The questions I hear frequently are, “Why does IPRA charge dues? What do we get for our dues? How come other groups do not charge as much for their dues?” Let’s discuss!

Plus, as this issue of *IP&R* is about programming, it is a great opportunity to share with you a few thoughts on IPRA’s programming for our members.

At IPRA, we are not just a group of people working in parks and recreation, held together loosely by a board of directors; we are a membership organization, and we do much more than put on the joint conference with IAPD. We come together for many activities and projects, some of which are opportunities for members to volunteer, and others are activities which directly benefit the membership.

**IPRA is an investment in your career and an opportunity to learn, connect and inspire others in the community. IPRA has many member benefits that may help you to advance your career:**

1. Network of 2,500 members and growing
2. Access to complete online membership directory and resource library
3. Subscription to *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine
4. 46% discount to *Soaring to New Heights* conference
5. Opportunity to compete for awards and recognition for you or your agency
6. 50% discount on educational opportunities including in-person sessions, webinars and the new Leadership Academy
7. 25% discount on online job postings
8. Opportunity to serve on committees and get involved with Sections
9. Access to bulk purchase rates through Joint Purchase Program

IPRA is an investment in your career and an opportunity to learn, connect and inspire others in the community.



**Here is what some of your colleagues said about their membership with IPRA in the 2011 membership satisfaction survey:**

“I was able to expand my connections in the facility/program area with other districts. This allowed me to increase my knowledge of the area and receive/share great programming ideas and vendor contacts.”

“It provided me with the experiences and opportunities that I truly believe helped me to grow as a professional and land the position that I currently have. I am a strong advocate for my profession and IPRA, and my sections have provided me the spring board to explore involvement on a national level.”



"I am a firm believer in IPRA and what it has provided for me throughout my years. I hope to be a big part in assisting with the future of this association for all current and future professionals."

From what I can see, as a new person coming in, most people join IPRA so they can work on a project in some way, participate with a section or attend an educational event on a specific topic. But I hear from members frequently that they stay with IPRA year after year because of the friendships and connections they have made here, sometimes spanning several decades. Membership creates a situation where colleagues can work as volunteers and leaders together, continuing to build their professional network as they acquire new skills, learning, connecting and inspiring each other in this community of parks and recreation professionals.

To new people and those who may be reading a colleague's copy of this magazine, please feel welcome to try us out and join our family. Each of us was the new girl or the new boy once. (I am still quite new myself!) Give it a chance, and you will find you quickly have many friends here. I feel I am already making connections and friendships in IPRA.

This year, at dues time, we have made it a little easier for you to renew. We will highlight on-line renewal for individuals as well as renewal for multiple staff from the same agency. Those who renew early by December 15 will get a \$15 discount, and those who renew early and on-line will also have their names (the names of the members, not the person submitting the information) entered into a raffle for a free iPad. Watch your email for more information.

**We are already planning for some exciting programs in 2013:**

- We plan to continue working with the new Membership Council to better serve the sections and bring all our members together for more networking and educational opportunities.
- We plan to continue to build on our partnerships and collaborations with other related associations to discover more ways to serve all our collective members.
- We plan to develop more technologies to enhance member services, adding to the website redesign and enhancements from 2011.
- We plan to once again host a members-only educational event with an outside speaker (similar to the "Oz Principle" presentation from 2012) sponsored in part by the Foundation.
- We plan to work toward a new strategic plan to begin in 2014.
- We plan to bring back the popular Leadership Academy.

**So, as we get ready for dues season, share with me your thoughts and perspectives on IPRA, and while you are at it, share with me what keeps you coming back to IPRA at [debbie@ilipra.org](mailto:debbie@ilipra.org). We will share your testimonials, and it will give me a chance to get to know you.**

## UPCOMING IPRA EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

November 2  
**Certified Park and Recreation  
Professional (CPRP) Exam  
Preparation**  
Matteson Community Center  
10 AM - 4 PM

November 3  
**Early Childhood Trends Workshop**  
Downers Grove Park District -  
Lincoln Center  
8:30AM - 11:45AM

November 11-14  
**Professional Development School**  
Decatur Conference Center & Hotel

November 30  
**Innovation Renovation Workshop  
- People, Purpose, Passion**  
Oak Brook Park District;  
Central Park West  
9 AM - 3 PM

January 24-26, 2013  
**IAPD/IPRA  
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Conference**  
Hyatt Regency Chicago

For the most  
up-to-date Calendar  
of Events, please  
visit the IPRA website  
at [www.ilipra.org](http://www.ilipra.org).





Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Are You Taking Advantage of One of IAPD's Most Valuable Member Benefits?

Each year, IAPD responds to hundreds of legal-related inquiries from member agencies. Questions related to the Freedom of Information Act, the Open Meetings Act, financial procedures, tax levies, and purchasing property are just a few of the most popular topics.

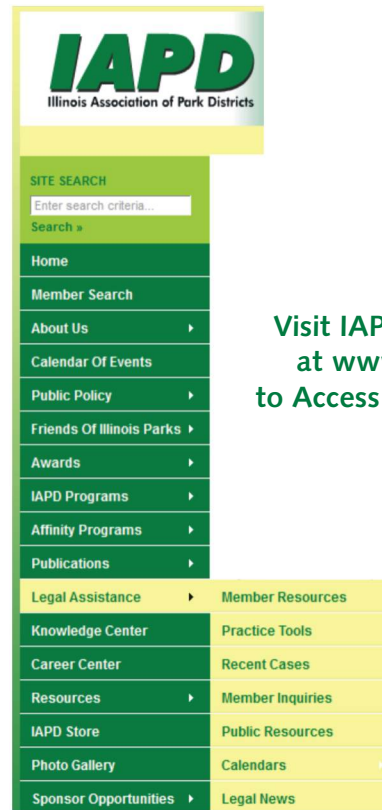
Indeed, the general legal guidance we are able to provide is one of IAPD's most valuable member benefits. Whether we are consulting with board members, professionals or agency attorneys, IAPD is pleased to discuss legal issues facing its members.

Although IAPD is never more than a phone call away, we have been striving to make more and more resources available to our members through the simple click of a button. Over the past few years, IAPD has revamped the Legal Assistance section of our website. We have developed numerous legal resources such as model policies, templates and forms, sample ordinances, answers to frequent member inquiries, and a section on court opinions, to name just a few. In fact, we continue to roll out new features each month, so it is important to visit the Legal Assistance web page frequently to find the latest additions.

### Member Resources Save Time and Expense

Based on the feedback we have received from members, the most popular resources can be accessed through the Member Resources page of the Legal Assistance section. There, you will find valuable resources IAPD has developed **exclusively** for our members.

For example, model conduct ordinances on nearly 60 different topics are available. You can also find model policies for permitting remote attendance under the Open Meetings Act, a sample Soccer Goal Safety and Education Policy, a template for the new Notice of Availability of Audit Report form that is saving some members thousands of dollars in lieu of publishing their annual treasurer's report, as well as a sample Identity Protection Policy. Primers on the Open Meetings Act, the Prevailing Wage



Visit IAPD's Homepage  
at [www.ILParks.org](http://www.ILParks.org)  
to Access Legal Resources

Act, the Public Officers Prohibited Activities Act and guidelines for complying with restrictions on election activities are also available to IAPD **members only**.

### Practice Tools Provide Guidance on Common Areas

One of the most recent additions to the Legal Assistance section is the Practice Tools page. Members can access useful resources from state and federal agencies which help local governments comply with legal requirements. For instance, resources related to the new electronic training requirements on the Open Meetings Act, forms for complying with Prevailing Wage Act requirements, record retention policies and other information concerning the Local Records Act and sample sexual harassment policies are just a few of the resources available at the Practice Tools page. Information on important topics such as concussion awareness and prevention and playground safety are also available.

## Popular Member Inquiries Answer Your Questions, Too

Many of the questions put to IAPD have been asked by other member agencies in the past. We also recognize that other agencies may have these same questions. In order to chronicle these common questions, and the answers to them, this past summer IAPD unveiled one of our newest resources. The Member Inquiries page is dedicated to common questions facing IAPD member agencies. At least once a month, IAPD adds a new question with the corresponding answer, so visit this page often.

## Public Resources - Your One-Stop Shop

In an effort to make it easier to find pertinent, useful websites, IAPD developed a single page that contains links to more than 50 popular sites. Links to most statutes and administrative rules that affect IAPD member agencies, as well as websites for Illinois courts, state agencies and federal laws are all neatly organized by category on the Public Resources page. You can avoid wasting valuable time searching for legal resources on the web by simply making IAPD your one-stop shop.

## Follow the Courts through Recent Cases

Another popular feature is IAPD's Recent Cases section where members can find in-depth discussions on recent court decisions impacting park and recreation agencies. Currently, the page includes recent opinions pertaining to eminent domain, tax caps, the Tort Immunity Act and more than 10 other legal topics. Like the Member Inquiries section, IAPD updates this page monthly as new decisions from Illinois and federal courts are handed down. New judicial decisions have the ability to impact member agencies as much as new statutes, so it is important to keep up with this body of law.

## Timely Information Available Through Legal News

Yet another resource for staying current on the law is through IAPD's regular email updates in *Legal News*. Upcoming deadlines, newly enacted regulations, and recently released court decisions are just a few of the items covered. If you happen to miss these important emails, you can still obtain copies as all past editions of *Legal News* are available under the Legal Assistance section.

## Don't Forget IAPD's Publications

IAPD offers many publications that address nearly all of the legal issues park and recreation agencies confront. The *IAPD Law Handbook*, the *Park District Code*, the *Financial Procedures Manual* and the *Guide to Illinois Sunshine Laws* are just a few of IAPD's most popular legal resources. These publications are a

must-have for every agency professional and board member. Based on our conversations with many local counsel with whom we have worked closely over the years, we also know that copies of these publications are much appreciated by your agency attorneys. In fact, the answers to most of the questions that IAPD fields can be found in our publications, and we are committed to expanding these offerings.

Copies of IAPD's *Election Calendar* (published in the September/October issue) & *Legal Calendar* (on page 12) are also available under the Legal Assistance section. These popular tools provide key election dates and deadlines by which agencies must perform legal obligations.

## Take Advantage of These Resources Today

Although IAPD's legal resources and publications cannot be a substitute for the independent advice of your own local counsel, they are an extremely valuable way to obtain information about legal matters facing your agency. When members need basic guidance or have an unusual question that requires our expertise, we are always delighted to help point them in the right direction to avoid legal pitfalls or to discuss the matter with their attorneys.

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# legal calendar 2013

Prepared by Peter M. Murphy, IAPD President/CEO & Jason Anselment, IAPD Legal/Legislative Counsel

*The following park district calendar includes key dates based on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30. For those park districts that have adopted another date for the commencement of the fiscal year (70 ILCS 1205/4-4), this calendar must be adjusted for those duties that must be performed at times related to the fiscal year. The calendar is also established around regular park board meetings held on the third Thursday of each month selected. Selected election dates are based on the Consolidated Primary Election to be held on February 26, 2013, and the Consolidated Election to take place on April 9, 2013. For additional election dates, consult IAPD's election calendar published in the September/October issue of Illinois Parks & Recreation.*

All references are to the Illinois Compiled Statutes (ILCS).

## ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

### AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CALENDAR (OR FISCAL) YEAR:

Post the date, time and place of park district regular meetings for the year. Mail copies to the news media. (5 ILCS 120/2.02)

Review the requirement that all closed sessions are to be recorded verbatim by audio or video. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)

Review requirement that open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later, and made available for public inspection within 10 days after approval. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)

Review the requirements that all Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act officers must complete the Attorney General's annual training requirements. Newly appointed officers must complete the training within 30 days after designation or assuming the position. (5 ILCS 120/1.05; 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))

Review requirement that newly elected or appointed members of a public body must successfully complete the electronic training curriculum on the Open Meetings Act developed by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor within 90 days of their oath of office or otherwise assuming their responsibilities if no oath is required (Public Act 97-0504; 5 ILCS 140/1.05).

Review with the park district treasurer the requirement that all funds of the district not immediately needed for disbursement must be invested within two working days at prevailing interest rates or better. (30 ILCS 225/1)

Review the requirement that every person, other than the treasurer, receiving money for the district must

keep a triplicate record of the money, and deliver the money to the treasurer not later than the middle of the month following the month of receipt. (30 ILCS 20/1)

The American flag must be displayed and flown each day of the week from each City Hall or Village Hall and Village Square and at the principal entrance to all supervised public parks. (5 ILCS 465/3b)

Contributions to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) must be deducted each pay period from covered employees' pay and remitted to the IMRF along with the contribution from the local government. This requirement is mandatory for municipalities over 5,000 population where Social Security is not provided, and elective for others. (40 ILCS 5/7-132, 7-172, 7-173)

Districts that have employees under Social Security must send their FICA contributions at such times as may be designated by the Internal Revenue Service. (40 ILCS 5/21-105.2, 21-109)

Review the requirements that all newly hired employees must be reported to the Illinois Department of Security. (820 ILCS 405/1801.1)

Review the requirement that while participating in a public works project, each contractor and subcontractor must submit a certified payroll to the public body in charge of the project every month. The public body must maintain these records for at least three years. (820 ILCS 130/5)

For persons or entities required to report under the Lobbyist Registration Act, review reporting requirements for expenditures made during the 2013 calendar year. (25 ILCS 170/6, 170/6.5)

### EVERY SIX MONTHS

Unpublished written minutes of all closed meetings are to be reviewed not less than semiannually. Minutes

are to be reviewed to determine if (a) the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes, or (b) if the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection. The results of the review are to be reported in the open session of the board of commissioners. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)

Check IAPD database to verify that all information is up-to-date for your agency.

### OCTOBER 2012

#### OCTOBER 29

Last day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

#### OCTOBER 29

Last day to file petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officers or board for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: Objections can be filed on or before the date of the hearing with the appropriate circuit court clerk. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 99-92 days before such election (November 19-26, 2012). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

NOTE: The circuit court clerk shall publish the hearing date for a public policy petition filed in his/her office not later than 14 days after the

petition is actually filed, but at least 5 days before actual hearing (final orders within 7 days of hearing). (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: See the specific statute governing the unit of local government to be established for filing procedures. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

### NOVEMBER 2012

#### NOVEMBER 5

Last day to file objections to petitions to create a political subdivision in the office of the circuit clerk for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

#### NOVEMBER 8

First day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

#### NOVEMBER 26

Last day for filing of petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local). [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

## DECEMBER 2012

### DECEMBER 3

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local). [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

### DECEMBER 10

Last day for local governing boards to adopt a resolution or ordinance to allow a binding public question to appear on the ballot for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(c))

### DECEMBER 10

Last day for county, municipal, township and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for the Consolidated Primary Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30)

### DECEMBER 10

Last day notice of intention to file a petition to create a political subdivision whose officers are to be elected, rather than appointed, may be published in a newspaper within the proposed political subdivision, or, if none, in a newspaper of general circulation within the proposed territory for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(g))

### DECEMBER 10

Last day to file petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officers or board for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: Objections can be filed on or before the date of the hearing with the appropriate circuit court clerk. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election (December 17-24, 2012). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

NOTE: The circuit court clerk shall publish the hearing date for a public policy petition filed in his/her office not later than 14 days after the petition is actually filed, but at least 5 days before actual hearing (final orders within 7 days of hearing). (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

NOTE: See the specific statute governing the unit of local government to be established for filing procedures. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

### DECEMBER 17

Last day to file objections to petitions to create a political subdivision in the office of the circuit clerk for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

### DECEMBER 17

First day for filing in office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates in park districts and forest preserves) for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

NOTE: Filing is between 113-106 days prior to the Consolidated Election. December 17, 2012 is the 113th day prior to that election and is the first day of filing in those offices which are open.

### DECEMBER 24

Last day for filing in the office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates for township and municipal library boards, road district boards, library district boards, park district boards, school boards, community college boards, regional boards of school trustees, fire protection district boards and forest preserve district boards for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

NOTE: The office in which petitions for nomination must be filed shall remain open for the receipt of such petitions until 5:00 P.M. on the last day of the filing period. (10 ILCS 5/1-4)

## JANUARY 2013

### JANUARY 7

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Election. [EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

### JANUARY 9

Newly elected members of the General Assembly shall convene and organize their respective chambers. (Illinois Constitution, Article IV, Sections 5 and 6(b))

### JANUARY 14

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy for the Consolidated Election. [EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

### JANUARY 17

Regular January Board Meeting.

### JANUARY 22

Last day for local governing boards to adopt a resolution or ordinance to allow a binding public question to appear on the ballot for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(c))

### JANUARY 22

Last day for county, municipal, township and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for the Consolidated Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30)

### JANUARY 24-26

Attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference, Hyatt Chicago.

### JANUARY 31

Last day to file with the chief county assessment officer for all tax-exempt real estate an affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been any change in the ownership or use of the exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

NOTE: Copies of leases or agreements related to exempt property that is leased, loaned, or otherwise available for profit must be filed with the assessment officer. (35 ILCS 200/15-15)

### JANUARY 31

Last day for the circuit court clerk and the local election official to certify any binding public question or advisory referenda to the election authority having jurisdiction over the political subdivision for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-5)

## FEBRUARY 2013

### FEBRUARY 1

Last day by which the chief administrative officer or his or her designee for a unit of local government with persons described in items (h), (i) and (k) of Section 4A-101 shall certify to the appropriate county clerk a list of names and addresses of those persons described in items (h), (i) and (k) of Section 4A-101 that are required to file statements of economic interest pursuant to the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act. In preparing the lists, each chief administrative officer or his or her designee shall set out the names in alphabetical order. (5 ILCS 420/4A-106)

### FEBRUARY 21

Regular February board meeting.

### FEBRUARY 26

Consolidated Primary Election

## MARCH 2013

### MARCH 19-21

Attend NRPA Legislative Forum in Washington, D.C.

### MARCH 21

Regular March board meeting.

## APRIL 2013

### APRIL 1

Last day by which the county clerk of each county shall notify all persons whose names have been certified to him, other than candidates for office who have filed their statements with their nominating petitions, of the requirements for filing statements of economic interests. The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A-101, requires the following persons to file verified written statements of economic interests: (g) Persons who are elected to office in a unit of local government, and candidates for nomination or election to that office; (h) Persons appointed to the governing board of a unit of local government and persons appointed to a board or commission of a unit of local government who have the authority to authorize the expenditure of public funds but not members of boards or commissions who function in an advisory capacity; (i) Persons who are employed by a unit of local government and are compensated for services as employees and not as independent contractors and who: 1. are, or function as, the head of a department, division, bureau, authority or other administrative unit within the unit of local government, or who exercise similar authority

within the unit of local government;  
2. have direct supervisory authority over, or direct responsibility for the formulation, negotiation, issuance or execution of contracts entered into by the unit of local government in the amount of \$1,000 or greater;  
3. have authority to approve licenses and permits by the unit of local government (this item does not include employees who function in a ministerial capacity);  
4. adjudicate, arbitrate, or decide any judicial or administrative proceeding, or review the adjudication, arbitration or decision of any judicial or administrative proceeding within the authority of the unit of local government;  
5. have authority to issue or promulgate rules and regulations within areas under the authority of the unit of local government; or  
6. have supervisory responsibility for 20 or more employees of the unit of local government. (5 ILCS 420/4A-106; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101)

#### **APRIL 4**

The suggested date to prepare the budget and appropriation ordinance in tentative form and place on file for public inspection at least 30 days prior to final action. (All park districts are required to adopt a combined budget and appropriation ordinance within or before the first quarter of each fiscal year.) (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

NOTE 1: Beginning January 1, 2012, IMRF employers must post on their website or at their principal office the total compensation package of employees with a total compensation of \$150,000 or more per year at least 6 days before the employer approves the total compensation package. The employer must also post the total compensation package within 6 business days after approving their budget for employees with a total compensation package in excess of \$75,000 or more. (Public Act 97-0609)

NOTE 2: Beginning January 1, 2012, before an IMRF employer increases the earnings of an officer, executive or manager by more than 12%, the employer must obtain a "Pension Impact Statement" from the IMRF which states the effects of the salary increase on the employee's pension benefits. (Public Act 97-0609)

**APRIL 9**  
Consolidated Election

**APRIL 18**  
Regular April board meeting.

### **MAY 2013**

#### **APRIL 30 – MAY 1**

Attend the IAPD Legislative Conference in Springfield. The Legislative Reception is held the evening of April 30 with the conference starting the next morning on May 1.

April 30 is Parks Day at the Capitol with park district, forest preserve, conservation district, and special recreation agency displays lining the Capitol Rotunda.

#### **MAY 1**

The last date for filing Statements of Economic Interest for persons who have not previously filed during the calendar year. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 1: Failure to file a statement of economic interests within the time prescribed shall not result in a fine or ineligibility for, or forfeiture of, office or position of employment, provided that the failure to file results from not being included for notification by the appropriate agency, clerk, secretary, officer or unit of government, and that a statement is filed within 30 days of actual notice of the failure to file. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 2: All statements of economic interests shall be available for examination and copying by the public at all reasonable times. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

NOTE 3: Any person required to file a statement of economic interests who willfully files a false or incomplete statement shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor. Failure to file a statement within the time prescribed shall result in ineligibility for, or forfeiture of, office or position of employment, as the case may be; provided, however, that if the notice of failure to file a statement of economic interests is not given by the county clerk, no forfeiture shall result if a statement is filed within 30 days of actual notice of the failure to file. (5 ILCS 420/4A-107)

NOTE 4: The County Clerk with whom a statement is to be filed may, in his or her discretion, waive the late fees & penalties, and the ineligibility for or forfeiture of office or position for failure to file when the person's late filing of or failure to file is due to (i) serious or catastrophic illness that renders the person temporarily incapable of completing the statement or (ii) military service. (5 ILCS 420/4A-105)

#### **MAY 1**

Suggested date to send notice to the Illinois Department of Labor requesting determination of current

prevailing rate of wages for the district's area. (820 ILCS 130/4; 130/9)

#### **MAY 1**

(Beginning of new fiscal year.) The date to post the dates, times and places of park district regular meetings for the fiscal year. Mail copies to news media. (As an alternative, this can be done at the beginning of the calendar year.) (5 ILCS 120/2.02; 2.03)

#### **MAY 1**

The date to start the annual audit. Every governmental unit is required to make an annual audit to cover the immediately preceding fiscal year. The audit must be completed and the audit report filed with the Comptroller within six months after the close of the fiscal year. All governmental units are also required to file a copy of the completed report with the county clerk. (50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3)

NOTE: Any governmental unit receiving revenue of less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year is required to file a financial report with the Comptroller in lieu of an audit. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/3)

NOTE: Pursuant to Public Act 97-0890, these reports must be submitted to the Comptroller electronically unless the governmental unit provides the Comptroller's Office with sufficient evidence that the report cannot be filed electronically and the Comptroller waives the requirement.

#### **MAY 1**

The date to begin preparation of the Statement of Receipts and Disbursements. (30 ILCS 15/1)

#### **MAY 1**

Update IAPD database with information pertaining to newly elected commissioners and verify accuracy of other information.

#### **MAY 3**

The suggested date to publish notice of public hearing on the budget and appropriation ordinance (must be done at least one week prior to hearing). (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

#### **MAY 16**

Regular May board meeting. This is the suggested date to hold the public hearing on the budget and appropriation ordinance and the date for enacting the ordinance at the board meeting following the hearing. (70 ILCS 1205/4-4)

NOTE 1: The budget and appropriation ordinance must be made available in tentative form for public inspection at least 30 days prior to final action thereon.

NOTE 2: All taxing districts are also required to file a certified copy of their budget and appropriation ordinances with the county clerk within 30 days of adoption, as well as an estimate, certified by the district's chief fiscal officer, of revenues, by source, anticipated to be received by the taxing district in the following fiscal year. Failure of a district to file the required document will authorize the county clerk to refuse to extend the tax levy imposed by the governing authority until such documents are filed. (35 ILCS 200/18-50)

#### **MAY 31**

General Assembly scheduled to adjourn.

### **JUNE 2013**

#### **JUNE 14**

The last day for filing a copy of the district's budget and appropriation ordinance with the county clerk, as well as a certified estimate of revenue by source anticipated to be received in the following fiscal year (assuming a passage adoption date of May 16).

#### **JUNE 20**

Regular June board meeting.

#### **JUNE 30**

The last day to: (a) investigate & ascertain prevailing rate of wages to be paid for work on public works projects, and (b) publicly post or keep available for inspection in the main office of the public body its determination of such prevailing wage rates. The district must promptly file, no later than July 15 of each year, a certified copy of its determination with the Illinois Secretary of State and the office of the Illinois Department of Labor. (820 ILCS 130/9)

NOTE: Pursuant to 820 ILCS 130/4, a park district may request the Illinois Department of Labor to ascertain the prevailing rate of wages.

### **JULY 2013**

#### **JULY 15**

Last day to file certified copy of prevailing wage rate determination with Illinois Secretary of State and the office of the Illinois Department of Labor if determination was made by district and not Department of Labor. (820 ILCS 130/9)

#### **JULY 18**

Attend the Legislative Golf Outing at the Bensenville Park District.

## **JULY 18**

Regular July board meeting.

## **AUGUST 2013**

### **AUGUST 1**

First date nominations for the Board of Trustees of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund Board are to be made for terms beginning the next January 1. (Between August 1 and September 15.) (40 ILCS 5/7-175)

### **AUGUST 14**

The last date to publish determination of prevailing rate of wages (if determination was made by the district and not the Department of Labor) and mail copies of rates to requesting parties if filed with Secretary of State on the last possible date (July 15). (Publication must be within 30 days of date of filing with Secretary of State.) (820 ILCS 130/9)

### **AUGUST 15**

Regular August board meeting.

## **SEPTEMBER 2013**

A good month to review and update park district policies and ordinances.

### **SEPTEMBER 19**

Regular September board meeting.

## **OCTOBER 2013**

### **OCTOBER 1**

The suggested date to review documents to determine which records can be destroyed. Permission of Local Records Commission required. See 50 ILCS 205/7 for authorization to digitize records. (50 ILCS 205/1)

### **OCTOBER 8-10, 2013**

Attend the NRPA Congress in Houston, TX.

### **OCTOBER 17**

Regular October board meeting. Review non-referendum bonding needs preparatory to selling bonds before close of calendar year. (70 ILCS 1205/6-4)

NOTE: Before adopting any ordinance selling non-referendum general obligation bonds or limited bonds, the district must hold a public hearing concerning the intent to sell the bonds. Although the hearing may be part of a regular meeting, the ordinance authorizing the bonds may not be adopted for a period of 7 days after the hearing. Notice of the hearing must be published not less than 7 nor more than 30 days before the hearing. (30 ILCS 352/10, 352/15, 352/25)

### **OCTOBER 17**

The suggested date for the board to determine the amount of money estimated to be necessary to be raised by the tax levy ordinance and to determine whether the funds to be raised exceed, by more than 105 percent of the amount, which has been extended or is estimated to be extended, upon the final aggregate levy of the preceding year. (This determination must be made at least 20 days prior to enactment of the levy ordinance.) (35 ILCS 200/18-60; 200/18-65)

NOTE 1: Local governments must file either a certificate of compliance or a certificate indicating the inapplicability of the Truth in Taxation Law with the tax levy ordinance filed with the county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

NOTE 2: 35 ILCS 200/18-185 provides park districts in the tax cap counties the authority to levy a tax for handicapped programs outside the restrictions of the tax cap.

NOTE 3: It is recommended that the park district attorney review all determinations and proceedings relating to this reference, which is the Truth in Taxation Law. (35 ILCS 200/18-55 *et seq.*)

### **OCTOBER 31**

The last day to publish annual statement of receipts and disbursements and file a copy with the county clerk for districts on a May 1-April 30 fiscal year. In lieu of publishing the annual statement of receipts and disbursements, the district can publish a notice of availability of its audit report that includes the time period covered by the audit, the name of the firm conducting the audit, and the address and business hours where the audit may be publicly inspected. (Must be accomplished within six months after expiration of fiscal year.) (30 ILCS 15/1; 15/2)

### **OCTOBER 31**

The last day to file annual audit report (or financial report if district received revenue of less than \$850,000) with the Comptroller of the State of Illinois and county clerk (within six months of close of fiscal year) and make a copy open to public inspection. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/2; 310/3; 310/6)

NOTE: Pursuant to Public Act 97-0890, these reports must be submitted to the Comptroller electronically unless the

governmental unit provides the Comptroller's Office with sufficient evidence that the report cannot be filed electronically and the Comptroller waives the requirement.

### **OCTOBER 31**

Update IAPD database with financial information from audit report and verify accuracy of other information.

## **NOVEMBER 2013**

### **NOVEMBER 7**

Attend the IAPD Legal Symposium Hamburger University, Oak Brook

### **NOVEMBER 11**

The suggested date to publish notice of hearing (Truth in Taxation Law) if the district's proposed levy is greater than 105 percent of last year's extension or estimated extension. Must publish not more than 14 days, nor less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Publication date assumes a hearing date of November 18-22, 2013. (35 ILCS 200/18-70; 200/18-75)

NOTE: The form of the notice is set forth in the Truth in Taxation Law. Be sure to check special publication requirements found in statute. Further, any notice that includes information in excess of that specified and required by the Act shall be considered an invalid notice. (35 ILCS 200/18-80)

### **NOVEMBER 21**

Regular November board meeting and the suggested date to hold a hearing pursuant to the Truth in Taxation Law. (35 ILCS 200/18-55 *et seq.*)

### **NOVEMBER 21**

The suggested date to enact tax levy ordinance at the regular meeting following the Truth in Taxation hearing (if required).

## **DECEMBER 2013**

### **DECEMBER 1**

The suggested date to verify that, for real estate acquired in 2013, appropriate applications have been filed to exempt the real estate from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-5)

### **DECEMBER 6**

(If levy ordinance was enacted on November 21, 2013) The last day to publish Truth in Taxation notice if levy amounts as enacted exceed prior published figures, or if levy exceeds 105 percent of last year's extension and there was not prior publication. (Notice must be given within 15 days of the date the levy ordinance was enacted.) (35 ILCS 200/18-85)

### **DECEMBER 10**

The suggested date to confirm that a certified copy of the levy ordinance was properly filed with the county clerk. (70 ILCS 1205/5-1 and 35 ILCS 200/18-15 require that a certified copy of the levy ordinance be filed with the county clerk not later than the last Tuesday in December.)

### **DECEMBER 19**

The regular December board meeting date and suggested date to enact bond ordinance for non-referendum bonds to be issued prior to the end of calendar year. (70 ILCS 1205/6-4)

### **DECEMBER 27**

The suggested date to prepare and file with the Supervisor of Assessments the annual affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been a change in the ownership or use of the district's exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (Last day for filing is January 31, 2014.) (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

### **DECEMBER 27**

The suggested day by which bond ordinances should be filed with county clerk in order to receive extensions of taxes for the payment of principal and interest on general obligation bonds or limited bonds for 2013 taxes collected in 2014. The filing must actually take place prior to March 1, 2013. (30 ILCS 350/16)

NOTE: This filing has no relationship to the General Tax Levy filed by park districts.

### **DECEMBER 30**

Because many offices will be closed December 31, the last day to: (a) file certified copy of tax levy ordinance with county clerk (70 ILCS 1205/5-1; 35 ILCS 200/18-15), and (b) file board president's certificate of compliance with county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

NOTE: State statutes require a certified copy of the tax levy ordinance to be filed with the county clerk on or before the last Tuesday in December. In 2013, the last Tuesday falls on New Year's Eve and many offices will be closed. Therefore, the certified copy of the tax levy ordinance should be filed no later than Monday, December 30.

NOTE: State statute requires that all local governments file either certificate of compliance or a certificate indicating the inapplicability of the Truth in Taxation Law with the certified copy of the tax levy ordinance filed with the county clerk.



# Wacky Races

*set the Pace in*

# Running Boom



BY IAN EVERETT

Should you ever find yourself running from a hoard of zombies, here's a tip: Make sure your laces are tight. Stopping to retie loose laces is not a great idea.

Zombies have always had an appeal to moviegoers, but over the past year, they've broken out from the movie screen, and along with mud, color and chocolate, have become part of a rapidly growing trend of theme runs. So is it time to rethink your 5k?

America is still deep within its second running boom. In 2011, a record 13.9 million Americans completed a road race, according to Running USA, and the number of road race finishers has nearly tripled since 1990. However, this surge in participation has also led to increased competition among race organizers to attract participants, which has led to the recent spike in wacky ideas and non-traditional road races.

So if your pancake breakfasts and cotton t-shirts are failing to increase race participation numbers, here's a quick guide to the wide variety of theme runs that have recently emerged.



# “If you decide on a niche run, then aim for a unique theme that has a connection to your district.”

## Niche Fun Runs

Want to run in your underpants or race in the dark with glow sticks? Whatever your desire, you'll likely find a fun run to fit your needs. The themes may vary, but these races have several things in common: the focus is on fun, rather than time; they tend to attract new runners; and they often go viral on social media, which can lead to rapid growth and sell-out events.

One such social media success story is The Color Run, a 5k run which douses participants with a different colored powder (made from food-grade corn starch) at each kilometer mark. The run isn't timed, and the only rule is that participants wear white. Since the first run in January 2012, the race series has gained more than 450,000 Facebook fans and traveled to more than 50 US cities – many of which sell out weeks in advance. The run, dubbed the 'happiest race on the planet,' has already spawned several copycats and has proven extremely popular with students and younger runners.

## How To...

If you decide on a niche run, then aim for a unique theme that has a connection to your district. Put the focus of your run on fun, rather than time, with awards for costumes, discounts for groups, race bags stuffed with themed goodies and unique finishers' medals. To help boost registration, provide the ability for people to share information about the event through social media.

## Mud & Obstacle Runs

Theme runs are a great way to get non-runners active. Obstacle runs, however, appeal to fitness enthusiasts who are looking to test more muscles than just their quads. In 2011, Running USA estimated that more than one million people took part in mud runs. These races challenge runners to wade through mud pits, clamber over walls and cargo nets and even scramble under barbed wire and leap over fire pits. Popular mud runs in Illinois now include the Muddy Buddy – a team-of-two event involving running and mountain bike riding; the Pretty Muddy – a women-only mud run, and the Spartan Race – a tough series of runs created by a Royal Marine and ultra-athletes.

Not all obstacle runs have to involve mud, however. Chicago Urbanathlon participants jump over traffic cone hurdles and scale the steps in Soldier Field along its 10-mile route. No matter what the obstacle, the aim of these runs is to test physical and mental endurance, and for most participants, simply finishing a race is viewed as an accomplishment.

## How To...

Mud and obstacle runs are the natural evolution of a trail run and are typically held off-road. While this means there's no need for road closures or course certifications, it does require much more cooperation from your natural resources or operations departments. Unlike traditional road races, runners set off in waves. This prevents traffic jams at obstacles but also results in a longer event day – and post-race beer tents are a common feature.





### Case Study: Oswegoland Park District Terror Trail Run

According to Kristie Vest, special events supervisor at the Oswegoland Park District, the secret to the success of their Terror Trail Run is making the most of natural resources within the district. When local road runners requested an off-road run, Vest instantly thought of Saw Wee Kee Park – a wooded park filled with natural obstacles, used mainly for mountain biking. The park's remoteness ensured it was already a scary place for many runners, and the addition of a few spooky signs and a dusk start time completed the terror theme. The run, now in its third year, also rewards competitors with a clean pair of pants and a post-race party when they cross the finish line. Vest says, "In the end, it doesn't matter how many gimmicks you have. You need to ensure the race is a good experience, otherwise runners won't come back."

### Zombie Runs

With AMC's 'The Walking Dead' television series currently driving a new surge in zombie fandom, runners are seeking out the opportunity to test their zombie apocalypse skills (and paying higher-than-average race fees to do so). The Run for Your Lives race series kick-started this genre of runs by challenging racers to complete a 5K trail run while retaining three flag football style tags. Along the course, strategically placed zombies are given the task of grabbing the flags, but runners can also earn extra flags by completing obstacles. Arrive at the finish line with at least one tag, and you're declared a survivor; lose all your tags, and you join the zombie hordes.

### How To...

Logistically, zombie runs require a lot of organization and rules (to help avoid runner-versus-zombie fist fights), but these races do offer the opportunity for extra revenue, as runners and zombie participants pay an entry fee. Getting the ratio of zombies and runners balanced is likely to be crucial for a successful and fun event, and like mud runs, runners could set off in waves, so it can become an all-day event. Like theme runs, zombie runs also have a huge social media appeal and the potential to go viral.

### Food Runs

While zombie runs offer something to run *from*, food runs provide something to run *toward*. Although rewarding runners with high-calorie treats for completing their exercise may seem counter intuitive, food runs have proven extremely popular. Chicago's Hot Chocolate run, for instance, swelled from 3,500 participants in 2008 to 40,000 chocoholic runners in 2011, thanks largely to its high-quality goodie bag featuring a custom fleece sweatshirt and souvenir mug. Other food runs include eating challenges, such as the Krispy Kreme duathlon, which combines the sports of running and competitive eating by challenging participants to scarf half a dozen glazed donuts at the halfway point.

### How To...

Food runs are the most similar to traditional runs, with many focusing on the goodie bag as the main source of appeal. If you do opt for a run with a food challenge, be prepared for the reality that running and sugary foods don't always mix – a lot of post race clean up may be required.

# “When done well, theme runs transform a sporting event into a ‘must do’, memorable experience to complete with friends.”

## Case study: Chocolate Chase Rabbit Race 5K

In 2008, the Palos Heights Park District transformed their 'Race for Recreation 5K', which averaged 75 runners, into a chocolate-themed race. Registration instantly shot up to more than 300 runners, and it has continued to grow. In 2012, more than 700 runners completed the race. Joe Smith, program supervisor at the Palos Heights Park District, said, “The chocolate strawberries at the finish line are one of the most popular features of this race. We also aim to add something new each year to prevent the theme going stale.”

## So Why Are Theme Runs So Popular?

Although these races vary widely in their themes, a few common threads may explain their popularity. They all provide a social way to get fit, without the need for team sports, and thanks to social media, it is easy for participants to recruit friends to run in teams or to brag about their accomplishments. Social media can also help draw participation from across a wide geographic area. When done well, theme runs transform a sporting event into a 'must do', memorable experience to complete with friends.

It's also worth noting that race fees for theme runs are typically higher than traditional races, but in return, participants expect a unique experience and a unique souvenir. The standard race t-shirt and medals for top finishers are not enough of an incentive anymore.

So if your 5K race is getting musty, inject some imagination into your race preparation, make the most of your current resources, and most importantly, have fun. The US running boom is showing no signs of slowing down, and your agency shouldn't either.

**About the author** Ian Everett, originally from Wales, is currently the Marketing Coordinator at the Carol Stream Park District. He has completed races on three different continents, and his travel writing and photography has appeared in publications across the globe.



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®

By Janel Geary

# A WAY TO DRUM UP NEW BUSINESS!

It is Wednesday evening and the stresses of the workweek are creeping up on you. Three eight-hour days, two more to go, and a mountain of responsibilities wait for you at home. The only thing that keeps running through your mind are the lyrics, "I don't want to work. I just want to bang on the drum all day" from the 1983 Todd Rundgren hit. Then it hits you! Tonight is your Drums Alive class where you can let go of work and you can "bang on the drum all day!"



## Types of Drums Alive Programs

- Kids Beats – improves children's concentration, memory and physical coordination while reducing stress and aggression.
- Golden Beats – Using songs popular with their generation, provides a unique, fun alternative to traditional aerobics for seniors
- Tone & Drum/Step 'n Drum & Drumming Strong – The perfect combination to burn fat and tone the entire body while increasing strength and flexibility
- Wellness Beats I & II – is done with smoother movements with mind and body relaxation
- Dance & Trends – Using latest trends in dance and choreography with drumming in the foreground
- Academic Beats – Using intervals of Math, Science and Language Arts

**While many fitness programs provide such benefits, what makes Drums Alive stand out is that anyone can do it, regardless of age, fitness level or physical limitations.**

Some people "march to the beat of their own drum," and that is exactly what Drums Alive! founder Carrie Ekins of Germany has done. After suffering a major hip injury, she started her journey of rehabilitation. Having a background in dance, Carrie decided to have fun with the rehabilitation process by turning to music. She started to drum on boxes and unexpectedly experienced the positive effects of that drumming, both aerobically and mentally. She ventured onto the internet to explore the reason for the feelings of euphoria while doing the "drumming." What she discovered was that her brain was being affected. Drum patterns help the brain to generate enhanced Alpha waves, which correspond with relaxation and creativity. Hence, the euphoric feeling and the birth of a fantastic program ... Drums Alive.

### How Drums Alive Works

For starters, Drums Alive is a total body fitness program that includes all of the traditional endurance training to stimulate the cardiovascular system. Drumming alone at 110 to 190 beats per minute for an hour can burn up to 400 calories. Establish a regular (and fun) drum routine, and you're on your way to getting fit. Drumming also improves brain waves, which leads to feelings of well-being, making this exciting new exercise a very powerful stress reduction program. It's also been shown to improve memory.

While many fitness programs provide such benefits, what makes Drums Alive stand out is that anyone can do it, regardless of age, fitness level or physical limitations. Plus, drumming in a group fosters not only individual well-being but creates a new sense of community. At the Crete Park District, our recreational and fitness classes have moved beyond servicing the "typical" mainstream population. In addition to offering high-intensity

aerobic classes, Drums Alive can be adapted for a variety of fitness opportunities. Through specific programming, Drums Alive can improve the quality of life for a wide variety of audiences including mentally and physically challenged children, gifted and talented children, fit and healthy children and adults, children and adults with aggression issues, senior citizens, patients with Parkinson's or Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and other life-altering conditions. Persons who are confined to a wheelchair or have limited physical movement can still participate. Ball height can be adjusted for stationary participants allowing them to participate in the upper body exercise. The intrinsic value of beating on the drum is the same for everyone.

### Putting the Program into Place

In the spring of 2010, the local community school district decided to eliminate Physical Education from Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade due to budget cuts. This was devastating news, especially to those of us in the park and recreation field who were well aware of the rise in childhood obesity. The Crete Park District decided we needed to rise to the challenge and develop more opportunities for the students in our area to participate in physical activities. But what would be new and exciting program would entice children to join?

Through online research and other recreation agencies around the country, we found the Drums Alive program. After staff training and certification, it was time to put the program into place. The Crete Park District is a "business partner" with the local school district, so we set our target as the local elementary school. Since the students did not have a physical education class, we created a program to offer the Drums Alive class to every student in the school for six weeks.

**To find more about trainings in your area, go to [www.drums-alive.com](http://www.drums-alive.com)**

**“Drums Alive is an adaptable program suitable for all ages and abilities and works well within recreational, school and therapeutic programming.”**

Upon working with the school, we secured enough equipment to begin the program. Each class came to the gymnasium once a week to drum their hearts out to popular music. Songs like Michael Jackson's "Beat It" and The Go Go's "We Got the Beat" kept the students engaged and excited. So how did the children respond? The 10-year-old child of the instructor summed it up this way, "All the kids thought my mom was a hero teaching Drums Alive. They had so much fun!"

I encourage you to explore this fun and effective program in your own district. Drums Alive is an adaptable program suitable for all ages and abilities and works well within recreational, school and therapeutic programming. So if you know someone who likes to tap their pencils on their desk, their spoons on their plate, or simply needs a fun way to get moving, sign them up and get them banging on the drum all day!

**About the author** Janel Geary, CPRP, is Superintendent of Recreation and a certified Drums Alive instructor at the Crete Park District. With 18 years in parks and recreation, Janel is passionate about encouraging participation in recreational programming. She also conducts classes in science, cooking and swimming to the youth in her community.

### What Participants Are Saying

Family classes give you the opportunity to engage the entire family in a fitness routine. Preschoolers through adults will enjoy drumming together.

I participate in the Drums Alive class with my two girls, who are in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and Preschool. This is our special time together. I am helping to foster in my girls a hunger for exercise and showing them that exercising can be fun. Even though my little one doesn't get every move, she just keeps on drumming and loves it. We have a blast with Drums Alive, and my girls ask for it every week.



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QUALITY PROGRAMMING GETS  
THEM IN THE DOOR, BUT GOOD

# CUSTOMER SERVICE

BRINGS THEM BACK

By Gina L. Madden and Anthony Ficarelli, [Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP](#)

Customer service in the parks and recreation industry has become increasingly important. Park districts are very visible, and residents demand high-quality services. If park district facilities hope to generate revenue, they must provide programs and services that can compete with those offered by their private-sector counterparts. By providing quality customer service, you can develop customer loyalty, which translates into profitability.

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**How Can You Ensure High-Quality Customer Service?**

The key to providing the highest level of customer service can be summed up in two words: staff training. Successful staff training requires a cohesive and consistent set of policies that management teams can effectively enforce. Remember – if the policies are consistently enforced with each employee, and they mirror the mission statement of the park district, the result will be a successful, team-oriented approach.

For example, if department heads train their teams to manage customer service from the moment the patron enters the facility throughout the duration of the visit, the patron will likely leave with a feeling that they received a high quality of customer service. This could mean the patron was greeted upon entry, had a good experience and then left the premises with a satisfied feeling. However, if there is a breakdown between the communication of the district's mission statement by the managers to their teams, the team members may not be aware of how to handle customer service. This could be as simple as the front desk staff not knowing to greet each patron as they enter the facility, or an employee not feeling comfortable interacting with the patrons in a positive way.

**Do Not Be Afraid of a "Comment Box"**

Patrons often want a voice – a mechanism to offer feedback, both positive and negative. If your agency does not have a policy in place to respond to a complaint or a compliment within a certain timeframe, it is recommended that a general 24-hour rule be adopted. That guarantees a member of your management team will respond in a timely manner and helps patrons to feel their feedback is valued. A prompt response is important, regardless of whether the feedback is negative or positive. When patrons take the time to offer constructive criticism or pay a compliment to the park district's staff and/or its facilities, they deserve a timely response.

**Put Your Most Friendly and Skilled Staff on Display**

Each employee has a different skill set level. It is important for your management teams to identify the strengths and weaknesses of staff and then help staff to build upon them. In some cases, you may have employees who are very outgoing and friendly. It would make sense to put those staff members in a location where they will be the first point of contact. This will create a positive first impression of your facility. On the other hand, if you have an extremely shy employee who is the only person to fill the front desk position, a member of your management team may want to consider personally training that person to help build his or her confidence and create a positive experience for the patron. Initially, this may involve simply initiating a standard greeting to all patrons.

**Train Your Staff in Addressing Concerns of the Public**

When your employees are given the proper tools to deal with the public, you are likely to receive more compliments than complaints. It is important to conduct routine training and also to update staff as policies change. With the mission statement as a guide, customer service training can prevent negative encounters with the public and create an environment that promotes the facilities that the park district has worked hard to achieve. While it is impossible to make every patron happy all the time, a consistent application of the customer service policies, enforcement of those policies, proper training and strong leadership will keep unhappy patrons to a minimum.

**About the authors** Gina L. Madden attended the John Marshall Law School and was admitted to practice in Illinois in 2003. Since then, she has focused in the area of park district and municipal law as well as a variety of civil litigation. Anthony Ficarelli attended Georgetown University Law Center, and his primary areas of practice are school law and local governments/not-for-profit organizations. Ficarelli and Madden are both with Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP.





At IAPD's sixth annual Best of the Best Awards Gala, more than 50 awards were presented to board members, agencies, citizen volunteers, businesses and members of the media in recognition of their outstanding contributions to Illinois parks, recreation and conservation.



## Congratulations to the 2012 Best of the Best Award Winners

### Top Journalist

First Place – Waukegan Park District's *News Sun* Editor Charles Selle  
 First Runner-Up – Oak Brook Park District's *The Doings Oak Brook*  
 Second Runner-Up – Kankakee Valley Park District's *Kankakee Daily Journal*

### Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Small Business

First Place – Deerfield Park District & Il Forno Pizza and Pasta  
 First Runner-Up – Bloomingdale Park District & Ducat Chiropractic & Sports Medicine  
 Second Runner-Up – Forest Preserve District of Will County & Pet Supplies Plus

### Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Large Business

First Place – Decatur Park District & Decatur Memorial Hospital  
 First Runner-Up – Northwest Special Recreation Association & Zurich North America

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

First Place – Decatur Park District with Decatur Public School District 61  
 First Runner-Up – Naperville Park District with the City of Naperville and the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County  
 Second Runner-Up – Midlothian Park District with the Village of Midlothian and Bremen School District 228

### Partnership

First Place – Wheeling Park District with the ZAC Foundation  
 First Runner-Up – Northern Suburban Special Recreation Foundation with the Glenview Park Foundation  
 Second Runner-Up – Frankfort Park District with the Frankfort Athletic Association, Frankfort Baseball, Inc., Frankfort Girls Softball and Lincoln-Way Soccer Club

### Arts in the Park

First Place – Mundelein Park & Recreation District  
 First Runner-Up - Oak Lawn Park District  
 Second Runner-Up – Rockford Park District

### Best Green Practices

First Place – Olympia Fields Park District  
 First Runner-Up – Frankfort Park District  
 Second Runner-Up – Homewood-Flossmoor Park District

### Volunteer of the Year

First Place – Mundelein Park & Recreation District's Bill and Nora T'Nieme  
 First Runner-Up – Deerfield Park District's Susan Redondo  
 Second Runner-Up – Urbana Park District's Tom Berns

### Good Sportsmanship

First Place – Special Recreation Services of Northern Lake County – Round Lake & Round Lake Area Park District's Bob Weber  
 First Runner-Up: Bensenville Park District's Marty O'Connell

### 10-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Carl Schultz, Forest Preserve District of DuPage County  
 Mary Ross Cunningham, Lake County Forest Preserve District  
 Ann Maine, Lake County Forest Preserve District

### 12-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Connie McChristian, Riverdale Park District

### 15-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Sebastian "Buzz" Puccio, Bloomingdale Park District  
 Linda Johnson, Crete Park District  
 Rick Patinkin, Deerfield Park District  
 Lester Long, Sr., Dolton Park District  
 Carnell Woodbury, Dolton Park District  
 Donna King, Foss Park District  
 Gayle Cinke, Grayslake Community Park District  
 Jeff Craven, Itasca Park District  
 O. Eugene Englehart, Princeton Park District

### 25-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Dr. Larry Reiner, Buffalo Grove Park District  
 Mike Yesner, Golf Maine Park District  
 Timothy Bradford, Olympia Fileds Park District

### 30-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Audrey Nixon, Lake County Forest Preserve District

### 35-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Eileen Coursey, Morton Grove Park District  
 Ann Mackin, North Berwyn Park District

### 40-Year Board Member Service Anniversary Awards

Ronald Lehman, Channahon Park District

### Agency Anniversary Awards

Oak Brook Park District – 50 Years  
 Riverdale Park District – 75 Years  
 Dolton Park District – 85 Years  
 Forest Preserve District of Will County – 85 Years  
 Glencoe Park District – 100 Years

## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Batavia Park District Names Niemela Executive Director

**Allison Niemela**, Director of Marketing and Public Relations for the Batavia Park District, was recently named Executive Director by the Park Board of Commissioners. Over the past seven months, she has served as Interim Executive Director and has been with the district since 2000.

During her time with the Batavia Park District, Allison has been instrumental in developing intergovernmental agreements and collaborating on the development of a strategic master plan. For more than six years, Allison has served on the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association's Board of Directors. She is chair-elect of the association. She is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional and holds two bachelor's degrees and a certificate in sports and entertainment management.



### Channahon Park District Announces New Golf Course Manager

**Brian Smith** has returned to the Channahon Park District as the Golf Course Manager/Head Golf Professional overseeing Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club. Brian has 14 years of experience in the private and public sector of the golf business, most recently the Manager/Head Golf

Professional for the Coyote Run Golf Course at the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District, a position he held since 2004. He was also the Assistant Golf Professional for the Channahon Park District's Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club for five years. Brian has a proven record of continued growth in revenue. He is experienced in instruction, merchandising, club fitting, budgeting, event coordination and management. Brian was the Illinois Park and Recreation 2006 Golf Manager of the Year.



### Pagac Retires from Champaign County Forest Preserve District

**Gerald Pagac** retired from the Champaign County Forest Preserve District in August, after six years as the Executive Director. During his time with the district, Pagac's wide-ranging and personal leadership impacted everything from adding more than 270 acres to the district, including the Sangamon River Forest Preserve; expanding the Museum of the Grand Prairie; developing the natural playscape at Homer Lake Forest Preserve; renovating the Lake

of the Woods golf course and Middle Fork campground; to planting gourds, lilies and lotus at the Botanical Garden; and to more than \$100,000 in eBay sales including the district's outhouses.



### Skokie Park District Announces New Superintendents

As part of a recent Skokie Park District administrative reorganization, **Michelle Tuft** was appointed Superintendent of Recreation & Facilities, and Mike Rea was named Superintendent of Parks.

As the administrator of the district's recreation division since 2006, Michelle will now also oversee the district's revenue facilities. She will continue to supervise programming, administer the district's recreation programs, special events, child care services and summer camps, and manage all recreation personnel. Michelle earned a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Illinois.

**Mike Rea**, the Assistant Superintendent of Parks at the district since 2008, will now oversee all park services operations, including park maintenance, special event setup, facilities repair and construction, landscaping, and capital planning. Mike previously served as Park Superintendent for the Dundee Township Park District. He earned an Associate's Degree from Elgin Community College.



### Elk Grove Park District Announces Personnel Changes

The Elk Grove Park District is also pleased to announce the appointment of **Jeff Collier** as the Superintendent of Recreational Programs. Jeff earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Leisure Studies at the University of Illinois in Champaign. Jeff will directly supervise the areas of Early Childhood, Dance, Art, Special Events, Senior, Adult Athletics, Youth and Teen programming.



*Representatives from the Rockford Park District and NRPA proudly display the 2012 National Gold Medal Award.*

### Agencies Earn National Recognition for Excellence

Congratulations to the 2012 National Recreation and Park Association's Gold Medal Winner and Finalists. The Rockford Park District won the Class IV Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Field of Park and Recreation Management. The St. Charles Park District (Class II) and the Waukegan Park District (Class III) were both finalists. Agencies were honored earlier this month at NRPA's Annual Congress & Exposition held in Anaheim, California. The awards recognize park and recreational agencies throughout the country for excellence in long-range planning, resource management, citizen support systems, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition.



### Glen Ellyn Park District Welcomes New Superintendent of Parks

The Glen Ellyn Park District is pleased to announce **Dan Hopkins** as the new Superintendent of Parks. Dan brings with him 15 years of experience, including five years with the Village of Hinsdale as its Superintendent of Parks and Horticulture, and six with Salt Lake City Parks and Recreation that included supervising special events at the 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

Dan holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from Southern Illinois University. He also holds

national certification from several organizations, including the National Playground Safety Institute and the International Society of Arboriculture.

### Want to Read More?

Keep up with the latest milestones, new hires, promotions and award-winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry online. Visit our website, [www.ilparks.org](http://www.ilparks.org), and click on the Publications tab on the left. Select IP&R Magazine and then People and Places.

### Want to submit news from your agency for People & Places?

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