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PARKS AND RECREATION

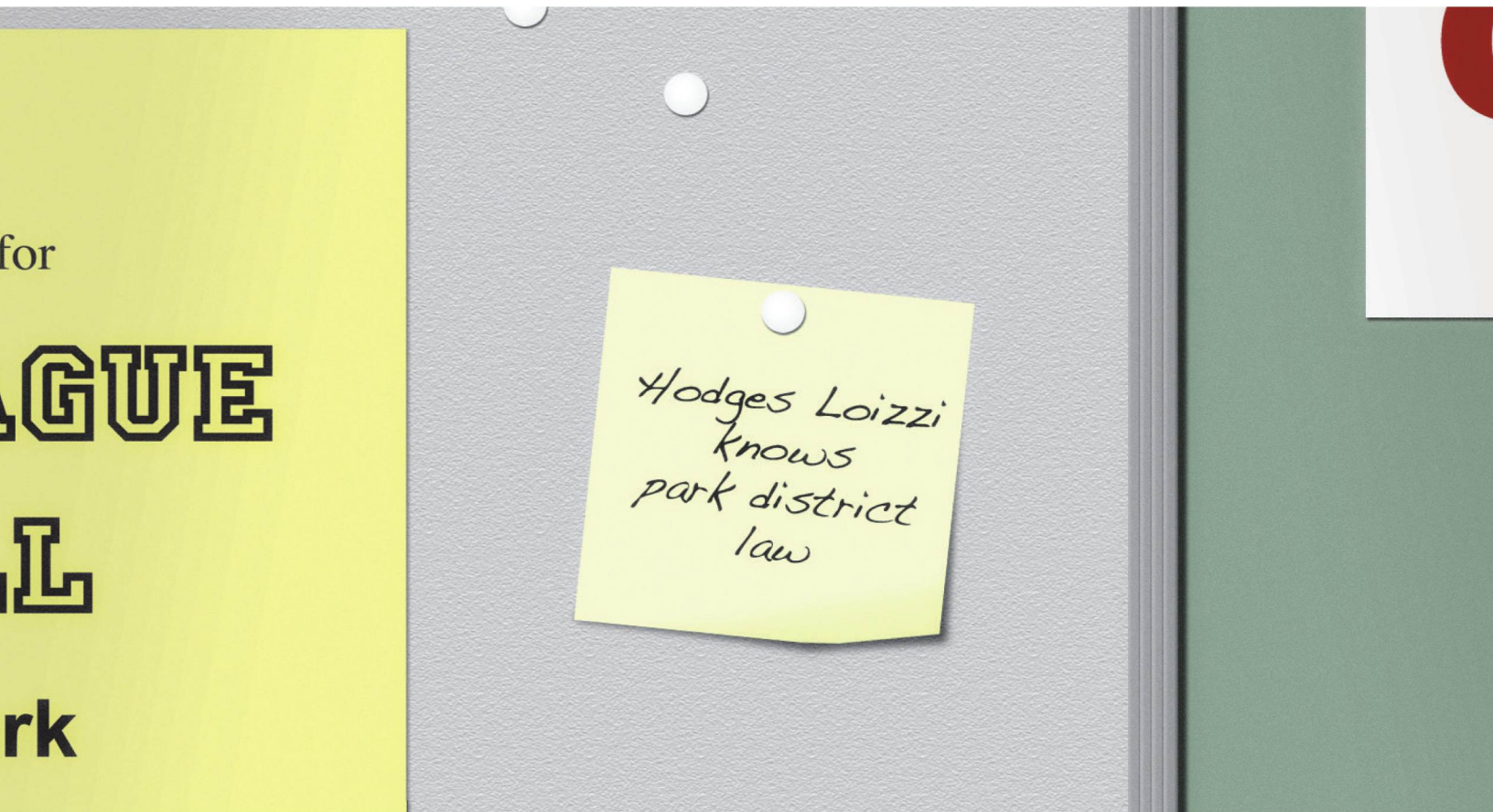
The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



partnerships

See How Park Districts Across Illinois are Utilizing Partnerships to Benefit the Communities They Serve

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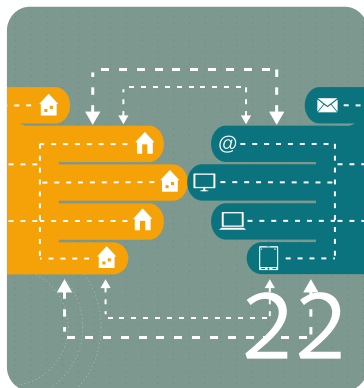
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FROM THE EDITOR

The theme for this issue of IP&R Magazine focuses on 'partnerships.' Merriam-Webster has multiple definitions for the word 'partnership.' One defines a partnership as "The state of being a partner," another outlines a partnership as "A relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified rights and responsibilities." Those definitions speak directly to partnerships as they apply to park districts. In this issue we will explore a multitude of unique partnerships that different park districts have with other agencies, school districts, hospitals and more. As I read these articles on the various partnerships that exist between park districts across the state and other entities, a few common elements in all of them stood out to me.



Each park district is engaged in partnerships that are mutually beneficial. Whether they are sharing space, staff, facilities or other resources, everyone seems to benefit! While the contributions from each partner may not be completely equal it all evens out; and the community ends up with a new facility, program or resource to enjoy.

The innovative nature of all of these partnerships is surprising. It takes true determination and actively creative minds to formulate these types of partnerships. Park districts have formed solid relationships with partners such as museums or cities to create new programs or enhance existing facilities with tremendous results.

Park districts and their partners rely on one another to achieve common goals, putting aside differences and focusing on the task at hand. Many of these partnerships not only provide new opportunities but also save initiatives that would otherwise be lost. These relationships have a positive symbiotic quality about them that makes them work.

Dedication on everyone's part is necessary for these partnerships to be successful. These are all long-term commitments made by each party to better the communities they serve. These relationships continue to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs of their residents. They are by no means short-term quick fixes; these partnerships provide long-term solutions.

Partnerships are important in all aspects of life, including the world of parks and recreation. Great programs evolve from partnerships with park districts including child care solutions, health and fitness initiatives, child obesity awareness, community events and more. Perhaps the most important, basic benefit that comes from park district partnerships is the overall improvement of the environment and the happiness of the community.

Rachel Laier

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Partnerships Save Tax Dollars

Without question, park districts operate more efficiently than any other unit of local government in the state of Illinois. "How so?" you ask. Start counting.

How many partnerships does your agency have? It's not only an interesting exercise, but a critical measurement of your success. While you invest taxpayers' dollars in the community through employment and the purchase of goods and services, you also invest in relationships with community groups and individuals to facilitate the delivery of recreational opportunities for the community. The end result is a savings in local tax dollars.

I recently participated in the Rockford Park District Community Service Awards ceremony as the keynote speaker and was extremely impressed by the breadth of community support for the park district. More than 50 individuals and organizations were also recognized this year for their partnership efforts. The partnerships ran the gamut from the collaborative effort of a summer program with the school district that engages more than 3,000 students in grades K-8 in an enrichment program with a focus on student achievement in math and reading to vocational programs held at the district's indoor sports center.

Cooperative programs recognized also included those with the Rock River Valley YMCA, which prioritized recreational opportunities for citizens with disability-related needs for after-school care and fitness options, and a unique partnership with the Rockford Ice Hogs to initiate an outreach street hockey program for youth at risk. This past summer more than 200 kids from six area community centers participated in the free program.

Special Recreation Associations and intergovernmental risk sharing pools are also great examples and the IAPD Awards Gala showcases must see world-class partnerships between park districts and the communities they serve. So make the count of your agency partnerships and tout your connectivity as well.

Saving our members tax dollars is also a goal of IAPD and this year we continued to strengthen relationships with several organizations to offer our member agencies discounted prices on products and services. Below is a brief description of those services and more detailed information is available from the IAPD offices.

- **Bank of America Merchant Services** – offers a specially negotiated program of card processing services. Bank of America Merchant Services has teamed up with the IAPD to bring you specially negotiated rates; 100% U.S.-based customer service and 24/7 technical support; approximately 99.999% system uptime, year round; and as soon as next business day access to funds.

- **Call One** – is a single-source telecommunications provider and the nation's largest reseller of AT&T products and services. IAPD has worked with Call One to offer programs and services that will not only improve the bottom line, but will also increase profitability and operating efficiency. Studies have found that some of our members are paying more than what is necessary for their telecom needs. IAPD's lower pricing model is accompanied by Call One's simplified, consolidated billing; management assistance and network support; and utilization of the most efficient and reliable technology.

"The most powerful force on this planet is human cooperation."
– Jonathan Haidt



- **IAPD Energy Program** – is an agreement with Seven Utility Management Consultants, Ltd. to provide professional consulting services for the purchase of electricity and natural gas. The goal of this agreement is to save money for all of our member agencies on your utility expenses. As such, we anticipate **savings up to 20%** by having the utilities professional negotiated and managed on a full-time basis by Seven.

Seven will negotiate with the top 18 electricity and the top 8 natural gas providers in the state by having them all bid on your utility business. In order to make rates even more competitive, some of our membership locations may be grouped together for bidding. However, each park district will always have individual energy contracts. Seven will share all of its pricing analysis (including all bids) and prepare an individual summary bid offer sheet for each park district.

- **Chase Direct Payment Card** – is an alternative to expensive and cumbersome paper checks, the Chase Direct Payment Card enables government employers to deliver payroll conveniently and safely via direct deposit, reducing the significant costs of check delivery, administrative security and fraud, while providing enhanced service and convenience to employees. Employees can easily access their pay at ATMs and retail locations, and this debit card can be used to make purchases anywhere Visa is accepted.

- **IPARKS** – is a highly successful local government risk-sharing pool, providing park districts throughout the state of Illinois with an alternative to traditional insurance. IPARKS coverage is tailored to meet the specific property and liability coverage needs of Illinois park districts and recreation agencies. Having many unique features, the program currently covers more than 165 members with 99% retention year-to-year.

- **IPDLAF+ Class** – offers a professionally managed portfolio with a competitive money market rate and unlimited checkwriting privileges. The Fund stresses “safety of principal” as the number one objective and has earned an AAAM rating by Standard & Poor’s. Additional fixed income investment products are available through the Investment Adviser to assist IPDLAF+ participants in seeking to maximize results.

- **The PFM Purchasing Card** – is a specialized credit card that enables agencies to streamline the buying process and receive money back in the form of a cash rebate at the end of the calendar year.

- **Living Lands & Waters Million Trees Project** – is a program that IAPD and *Friends of Illinois Parks* shared with our members. As part of the project, 100,000 Bur Oak, Red Oak and Swamp White Oak tree saplings were available to our members upon request. The goal of the project is to re-establish native, nut-bearing, hardwood trees within our communities; to provide shelter and a viable food source for wildlife and migratory birds; to increase biodiversity; to help reduce erosion and run-off; and to improve water and air quality. In 2012, sixty-six of our member agencies ordered 9,597 trees. This year, 87 of our member agencies ordered 19,372 trees – an increase of nearly 10,000 trees that will be planted at our agencies this year.

2013 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 20
**Summer Golf Tour
 Event #1**
 Palatine Hills Golf Club,
 Palatine Park District

June 5
SUMMER BOOT CAMP
 Schaumburg Park District

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

June 13
SUMMER BOOT CAMP
 Huntley Park District

June 19
SUMMER BOOT CAMP
 Channahon Park District

June 20
SUMMER BOOT CAMP
 Effingham Park District

June 22
SUMMER BOOT CAMP
 Park District of Oak Park

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

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

August 20
**Summer Golf Tour
 Event #3**
 Foss Park Golf Club
 Foss Park District

September 9
**Summer Golf Tour
 Event #4**
 Prairie Bluff Golf
 Course
 Lockport Township
 Park District

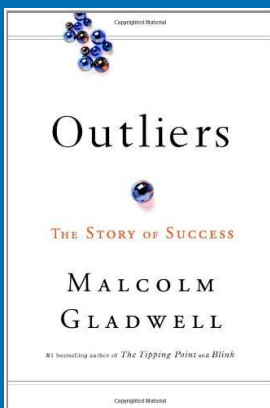
September 27
IAPD Awards Gala
 Traditions at Chevy
 Chase Country Club
 Wheeling Park District

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

November 7
Legal Symposium
 Hamburger University,
 Oak Brook

January 23-
 25/14
**IAPD/IPRA
 Conference**
 Hyatt Regency
 Chicago

For the most up-to-date
 Calendar of Events, please
 visit the IAPD website
 at www.ILparks.org.



Recommended Reading

Outliers
The Story of Success
 By Malcolm Gladwell

The discussion of success and how people achieved it is a widely discussed topic in our culture. A great read on this is *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. He takes readers on a journey of exploration

to the question of why some people succeed, living remarkable lives, while so many others never reach their potential. He does this by examining the lives embodying greatness or success, such as Mozart, the Beatles, Bill Gates, Canadian hockey players, Bill Joy, the developer of Unix and Robert Oppenheimer. It is a fast read and challenges commonly held assumptions.



By Debbie Trueblood
IPRA Executive Director

Partnerships Help Parks and Recreation Make Life Better for Our Communities

The theme of this month's issue is "partnerships." We all know that in parks and recreation, partnerships are a vital key to success. As I have traveled the state and met with people from many agencies, I have heard so many creative examples of partnerships. Real partnerships are long-lasting. The commitment you have to working together will see you through challenging situations and losses. A true partnership allows room to lean on each other in a way that isn't always "50/50." Partnership means putting the relationship first and making a commitment to see it through.

Across our state, I have seen different partnerships related to parks and recreation. For instance, one works with local farms for food co-op programs. Southern Illinois is another example, where parks and recreation departments partner with schools and churches to use their facilities. Additionally, park districts often partner with local schools to help them market programs to families. Some agencies partner with for-profit companies to outsource food service or other programs. Other park districts support the schools by providing school lunches or before/after school programs. In communities with colleges or universities, there are often partnerships with the park district or municipality for space, volunteers or resources. The list of possible partnerships is endless; however, the one truth in every situation is that parks and recreation are an integrated part of the community. Those entities participating in these partnerships are sharing in the opportunity and responsibility of performing community service alongside others. We could not do it alone; and the community would not be well-served without us.

Recently, I participated in the NRPA Legislative Forum in Washington, D.C. which included advocacy meetings with members of the Illinois congressional delegation. There were several issues about which we were meeting. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one partnership of federal and state dollars. We were advocating for more of the fund to be specified for state-directed funding initiatives. Another issue for which we advocated was related to the epidemic of childhood obesity. Advocating for this cause is a great example of how partnerships with parks and recreation should be seen as a resource; for helping the nation solve this growing problem. We want to be eligible for funding when programs are developed related to childhood obesity. Parks and recreation can do so much to help in this area; however, we cannot do it alone. We will partner at the federal, state and local levels; and also one on one in our communities to make a difference to turn this epidemic around.

Within IPRA we also have many partnerships. The most obvious being our ongoing partnership with IAPD which allows us to share this magazine, the Soaring to New Heights Conference and other programs together. Like all successful partnerships, both groups agree that while we are each strong on our own, that we can do more good, and better serve our mission and thus our members when we put our heads together. We continue to be independent bodies, serving our own specific constituencies but we can also come together to represent the needs of our collective state. This partnership allows us each to achieve more.

We also rolled out a new Affiliate Agreement earlier this year. This agreement allows for IPRA and groups like Southern Illinois Park and Recreation Association to identify ways we can each better support each other- keeping our independence while finding ways where we can be stronger together.

In all these ways, IPRA sees that partnerships make us stronger. They allow for IPRA to reach a broader audience, share in advocacy efforts, better support our mission and members, provide high level education for our future leaders and give back to the professional community.



Right now, IPRA is actively engaged in gathering input from members across the state as we develop our new three year strategic plan. We are working with consultant, Dr. Ann Atkinson, and she and I, along with IPRA Board Chair Allison Niemela are touring the state in April hosting focus groups to gain this input from the membership. This is a form of partnership that IPRA has with our members in which we want each member's voice to be heard. We believe this initiative to be of such importance, we are going across the state to give members the opportunity to be a part of the new strategic direction for IPRA.

IPRA also partners with our members by providing the Leadership Academy. This program is designed as IPRA's way of giving back. We subsidize this program substantially because we believe our mission guides us to invest in our future leaders in the parks and recreation community. This program, designed for early career, mid-career and advanced career levels is limited to 30 people in each level each year. A stringent application and evaluation process allows us to select the strongest candidates in each career level and then provide top notch education to them one day a month for six months. The training that is provided is designed to develop crucial parks and recreation leadership skills for people in our community. We are hosting our first Leadership Academy graduation in April and at that time will also be opening up the application process for next year. As such, if you are interested, please watch our website and apply for the 2013/2014 Leadership Academy year. Training will begin in the fall. We have analyzed every evaluation of each participant from the 2012/2013 classes and used it to put together an even better second year of the program.

Finally, IPRA partners with communities through our foundation. The foundation is a separate organization with its own Board of Directors, bank account and bylaws. The foundation is focused on the future of the field. The Foundation board is engaged in a campaign to develop our endowment from \$245,000 up to \$500,000. As an endowment, the entire fund would be permanently restricted from use. The foundation would, however, use the interest on the account to support scholarships for park and recreation professionals and students. It would also be used to subsidize in part, the annual Education Institute Program, a member benefit event. This year, the Education Institute will be streamed live to several locations around the state, making it a member benefit everyone can enjoy. The foundation sees this as a way to give back to the field and again, educate our future leaders. If you would like to support this "Pay it Forward" campaign, please send a check to IPR Foundation at 536 East Ave, La Grange, IL 60525. By partnering with the members, the foundation can build this fund to give back to the parks and recreation field.

In all these ways, IPRA sees that partnerships make us stronger. They allow for IPRA to reach a broader audience, share in advocacy efforts, better support our mission and members, provide high level education for our future leaders and give back to the professional community. IPRA partnerships allow us to be independent while having a mutually supportive relationship with others.

As you read these pages, I hope you see some examples of partnerships that might be beneficial in your own communities or identify new potential partners. In parks and recreation, we know we are stronger together than we would ever be on our own. Thank you for partnering with us, sharing your views with us, volunteering your time and allowing us to better serve you.

When we partner, IPRA is stronger and we can do more for you. I look forward to working with each of you, in partnership, to make that happen.

IPRA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 16, 2013
Recreation Section Meeting & Discussion
 Bloomingdale Park District
 Johnston Recreation Center
 11:30AM - 1:30PM

May 16, 2013
Communications & Marketing Section Meeting & Educational Presentation
 Bartlett Park District
 Villa Olivia
 1:00PM - 3:00PM

June 5, 2013
Administration & Finance Section Meeting & Discussion
 Bartlett Park District
 10:00AM - 1:00PM

June 6, 2013
Therapeutic Recreation Section Board Meeting
 NEDSRA
 9:00AM - 10:00AM

June 19, 2013
Diversity Section Meeting
 IPRA Headquarters
 10:00AM - 11:00AM

June 19, 2013
Athletic Committee Golf Outing
 St. Charles Park District
 Pottawatomie Golf Course
 1:00PM - 4:00PM

June 21, 2013
Chicago Cubs vs. Houston Astros
 Wrigley Field
 1:20PM - 4:00PM

June 27, 2013
IPRA Board Meeting
 Batavia Park District
 Peg Bond Center
 10:00AM - 12:00PM

June 28, 2013
IPRA New Member Webinar - 2nd Quarter
 online
 10:00AM - 11:00AM

July 12, 2013
Facility Management Section Meeting
 Gurnee Park District
 Hunt Club Community Center
 1:30PM - 3:00PM

July 17, 2013
Communications & Marketing Section - Summer Social & Luncheon
 Carol Stream Park District
 Coyote Crossing
 12:00PM - 3:00PM

July, 2013
Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) Exam Preparation - SERIES OF THREE CLASSES
 Chicago Park District
 Fosco Park
 9:30AM - 1:00PM

July 18, 2013
Recreation Section Meeting
 Channahon Park District
 Arrowhead Community Center
 11:30AM - 12:30PM

July 25, 2013
Chicago White Sox vs. Detroit Tigers
 US Cellular Field
 1:10PM - 4:00PM

For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IPRA website at www.ILipra.org.





Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Partnerships are the Pathway to Efficiency in Local Government

Legislative activity in Springfield is nearing its peak with the May 31st scheduled adjournment date just around the corner. As IAPD members know from our frequent Legislative Updates and Alerts throughout the past few months, we have been actively engaged in a number of important legislative matters. Perhaps no issue being talked about in Springfield has more long-term potential to threaten the delivery of services to Illinois' communities than local government consolidation. In that regard, the theme of this issue of *Illinois Parks and Recreation* is well timed with the legislative session because partnerships, not consolidation, are the pathway to efficiency in local government.

Recent Legislation Based on Misperception

During the past several years, a number of bills have been introduced in the Illinois General Assembly which aim to force consolidation of units of local government. In fact, this issue has confronted local governments for more than 30 years. The persistence of those who advocate for consolidation is based upon a misperception that combining smaller, geographically-centered, single purpose units of government into larger, regional, general purpose governments will somehow result in a more efficient delivery of local services. While there may be isolated examples where the latter may improve efficiency in the delivery of specific services, it is certainly not true for parks and recreation.

Although not presently aimed at park districts or other local governments with elected boards, at least four different bills have been introduced in the 98th General Assembly that include the following misleading statements within their preambles:

- *Illinois has more units of local government than any other state.*
- *The large number of units of local government results in the inefficient delivery of governmental services at a higher cost to taxpayers.*
- *It is in the best interest of taxpayers that more efficient service delivery structures be established in order to replace units of local government that are not financially sustainable.*
- *The lack of a streamlined method to consolidate government functions and to dissolve units of local government results in an unfair tax burden on the citizens of the State of Illinois residing in those units of local government and prevents the expenditure of limited public funds for critical programs and services.*

Not surprisingly, these "findings" are based mostly on guesswork without citing any actual authority.

Number of Units of Government is not Proportional to Total Spending

While the media and some legislators are fond of pointing out that Illinois has more units of local government than any other state, they almost always fail to note that Illinois is not even in the top quarter in this category on a per capita basis (14th) and that neighboring states like Missouri, Iowa and Wisconsin all have more local governments per person than Illinois.ⁱ

Be that as it may, the attempt to draw a relationship between the number of units of local government and guaranteed taxpayer savings is based on a false premise in the first place. A 2010 report released by the Michigan State Senate concluded that the number of local governments is not proportional to the amount of per capita spending. Here are some findings from the Michigan report that utilize Illinois' total number of governments by way of comparison.

- *There is no clear relationship between spending per person and the total number of local governments or number of persons per local government.*
- *Illinois, with many local units of government, spends nearly the same as Michigan, with the fewest local units.*
- *New York has the highest spending per person of any state. Meanwhile, Illinois spends only half as much as New York on local government and has more than twice the number of local units of government, including Chicago.*
- *To this point, the evidence seems to point to the fact that a policy of local government consolidation may not be effective in reducing or slowing the growth rate of governmental costs.ⁱⁱ*

These facts directly contradict the claims of consolidation proponents in Illinois when it comes to the relationship between the number of units of government and total spending.

Consolidation Does Not Guarantee Cost Savings

Not only is there no relationship between the number of units of government and total spending, other states have also concluded that eliminating units of government does not guarantee savings and can actually threaten local services. For instance, a report on local government consolidation in Minnesota published just last year contained the following conclusions:

- *According to national research, consolidation does not guarantee cost savings or more efficient operations.*
- *Studies have found that consolidations have had mixed results in terms of cost savings, service quality, and responsiveness of delivery.*
- *Consolidation can be a costly, time consuming and complicated undertaking with no guarantee of savings or more efficient operations.ⁱⁱⁱ*

In other words, simply eliminating units of government does not save citizens money as consolidation proponents claim and instead jeopardizes critical services upon which they rely.

Cooperation, Not Consolidation, is the Key to Efficiency

States which have carefully studied local government consolidation have also investigated alternative ways to achieve efficiency in the delivery of services at the local level. In New York, for example, a Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness concluded that expanding local governments' ability to share services and encouraging cooperation were critical elements in bringing about efficiencies. This finding is consistent with Michigan's, which noted that "it is likely to be a better strategy for local governments to pursue service specific arrangements before considering political consolidation"^{vi} and Minnesota's where the Legislative Auditor found that cooperative service arrangements are preferred over consolidation to reconfigure services and, therefore, the legislature should encourage more collaboration.^v

These findings are also corroborated by the experiences of Illinois' park and recreation agencies throughout many years. By partnering with neighboring park districts, school districts, other units of government and private organizations, park districts have saved taxpayer dollars by sharing services through facility use arrangements, police protection services, and stormwater management to name just a few of the hundreds of examples. At the same time, park districts have preserved local control over the manner in which services are delivered, which allows them to provide the level of attention necessary to achieve best practices.

It is also worth recognizing that while some in Springfield focus on eliminating units of government, "in many cases, special district governments are the key mechanism through which intergovernmental cooperation is achieved for a specific service."^{vi} This is true, of course, of one of Illinois' most successful stories of intergovernmental cooperation: special recreation associations (SRAs). This partnership among park districts and municipal recreation agencies results in the delivery of critical services to those with special needs. A regional government focused on public safety and transportation very likely would not have developed SRA services during good economic times, let alone during recent times when municipal governments in other states without park districts have cut spending on parks, recreation and conservation.

SRAs meet a critical need in Illinois' communities that most assuredly would otherwise go unmet, yet cynics would simply add them to the number of units of local government they believe should be reduced.

State's Approach to Promoting Efficiency Has Been Misdirected

In recent times, the focus of legislation in Illinois has taken a top down approach by looking at ways in which the State can eliminate units of government. What we can learn from the research of other states and park district experiences in Illinois is that there is a much better approach to increase efficiency.

Like other states, the Illinois General Assembly needs to recognize that efforts must start at the local level, not from the top down. Minnesota concluded that consolidation efforts should be led by local government representatives and citizens and not be mandated by the

state while pointing out that determining possible cost savings and improvements among potential partners requires knowledge of the government entities and their service arrangements.^{vii} New York's efficiency commission also noted that substantive change cannot be achieved without the direct input and insight of local government leaders and that one size may not fit all because the circumstances and needs are very different in communities across the state.^{viii} Of course, there are vast differences among communities in Illinois, too.

What State Government Can Do to Improve Efficiency

Rather than proposing to force consolidation by simply eliminating units of government, the State should instead focus on ways in which it can encourage intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships. For example, the State could provide efficiency grants and other consulting resources to help local governments develop intergovernmental cooperation agreements or other partnerships. It could also offer incentives for those local governments that implement best practices and achieve efficiencies in their operations.

Perhaps the single most important thing the General Assembly could do to help reduce costs and improve efficiency in local government is to begin the much needed process of identifying and eliminating state mandates. These rules and regulations are the leading cause of inefficiency because they are typically unfunded mandates. All too often, we hear individual lawmakers speak about the need for local governments to be more efficient and spend less but then see those same lawmakers vote for unfunded mandates that drive up costs and make local government less efficient.

Other states that have explored ways to improve efficiency have understood that state laws often create an environment which makes local government less efficient and have recommended elimination of mandates as a way to improve efficiency in local government. "[New York's] proposals address mandates and other cost-drivers. State government creates the rules under which local governments and schools operate – rules which can stand in the way of efficient and effective operations."^{ix}

One wonders how much taxpayers would save if state government focused on looking for ways to eliminate costly mandates and regulations required of local government.

Conclusion

Illinois' park and recreation agencies have known for years that partnerships are the best way to improve efficiency in their operations while maintaining local autonomy. We have also known that Illinois' park district model for delivering these services is one of the reasons our state leads the nation in parks and recreation. While other states look to Illinois as the model for delivering affordable, high quality park and recreation services, Illinois can find useful guidance from other states when it comes to the role State government should play in improving local government efficiency.

ⁱ *Local Government by the Numbers*.

<http://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines/infographic-local-government-by-the-numbers-85899375303>

ⁱⁱ *Local Government Consolidation: Assessing the Evidence for Cost Savings and Economic Improvement* by Eric Scorsone, Senior Economist. (Michigan 2010)

ⁱⁱⁱ *Evaluation Report: Consolidation of Units of Local Government*. Office of the Legislative Auditor of the State of Minnesota (April 2012)

^{iv} *Local Government Consolidation: Assessing the Evidence for Cost Savings and Economic Improvement* by Eric Scorsone, Senior Economist. (Michigan 2010)

^v *Evaluation Report: Consolidation of Units of Local Government*. Office of the Legislative Auditor of the State of Minnesota (April 2012)

^{vi} *Local Government Consolidation: Assessing the Evidence for Cost Savings and Economic Improvement* by Eric Scorsone, Senior Economist. (Michigan 2010)

^{vii} *Evaluation Report: Consolidation of Units of Local Government*. Office of the Legislative Auditor of the State of Minnesota (April 2012)

^{viii} *21st Century Local Government. Report of the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness*. (April 2008)

^{ix} *Id.*

Referenda Results – April 9, 2013

Eight of approximately 311 referenda submitted to voters at the general election held on April 9, 2013, pertained to park, recreation and conservation issues. Seven of those referenda passed. The following table summarizes the types of initiatives, the amounts requested and vote totals for the 2013 Consolidated Election. Data for this report to was obtained from election authorities and news outlets after all precincts were counted but before results were officially certified. If you are aware of an initiative that is not included, please contact the Illinois Association of Park Districts at IAPD@ILparks.org.

Park and Forest Preserve Referenda Results

DISTRICT	JURISDICTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PASS/FAIL	RESULT
Collinsville Area Recreation District	Madison, St. Clair	Tax	Shall the maximum tax rate for all corporate purposes of the Collinsville Area Recreation District, Madison and St. Clair Counties, Illinois, be established at .0563 percent of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property herein instead of .0750, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?	Pass	Yes = 2,570 No = 604
Collinsville Area Recreation District	Madison, St. Clair	Tax	Shall the maximum tax rate for the purposes of establishing, acquiring, completing, erecting, rehabilitating, improving, operating, maintaining and caring for museums and be established at .0225 percent of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property herein instead of .0300, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?	Pass	Yes = 2,562 No = 589
Collinsville Area Recreation District	Madison, St. Clair	Tax	Shall the maximum tax rate for purposes of planning, establishing and maintaining recreation programs for the Collinsville Area Recreation District, Madison and St. Clair Counties, Illinois, be established at .0563 percent of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property herein instead of .0750, the maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes to be extended?	Pass	Yes = 2,569 No = 582
Ford Heights Park District	Cook	Tax	Under the Property Tax Limitation Extension law, may an aggregate extension not to exceed Thirty-Five Thousand (\$35,000.00) Dollars be made for the Ford Heights Park District, Cook County, Illinois, for the 2013 levy year?	Pass	Yes = 493 No = 270
Godley Park District	Grundy/Will	Tax	Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Godley Park District, Will and Grundy Counties, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.1254% above the limiting rate for park purposes for levy year 2011 and be equal to 0.3308% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2013?	Pass	Yes = 49 No = 18

DISTRICT	JURISDICTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PASS/FAIL	RESULT
Kingsbury Park District	Bond	Misc.	Shall the number of commissioners of Kingsbury Park District be reduced from seven (7) to five (5)?	Pass	Yes = 794 No = 259
Lan-Oak Park District	Cook	Tax	"Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the Lan-Oak Park District, Cook County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.107% above the limiting rate for levy year 2011 for park purposes and be equal to 0.356% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2012?"(1) The approximate amount of taxes extendable at the most recently extended limiting rate is \$1,685,856.00, and the approximate amount of taxes extendable if the proposition is approved is \$2,138,368.57. (2) For the 2012 levy year the approximate amount of the additional tax extendable against property containing a single family residence and having a fair market value at the time of the referendum of \$100,000 is estimated to be \$31.78. (3) If the proposition is approved, the aggregate extension for 2012 will be determined by the limiting rate set forth in the proposition, rather than the otherwise applicable limiting rate calculated under the provisions of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as the Property Tax Cap Law).	Fail	Yes = 2397 No = 2,455
Park Ridge Recreation and Park District	Cook	Bond	Shall the Park Ridge Recreation and Park District, Cook County, Illinois, acquire land known as The Youth Campus (11.35 acres), build and equip improvements and demolish some of the 12 buildings thereon and issue its bonds to the amount of \$13,200,000 for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?"	Pass	Yes = 5,104 No = 4,028

CPI Rate for 2013 Extensions is 1.7%

The IAPD has received many inquiries regarding what Consumer Price Index (CPI) "cost of living" or inflation percentage to use in computing the 2013 extensions (taxes payable in 2014) under PTELL.

Section 18-185 of the Property Tax Code defines CPI as "the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor." This index is sometimes referred to as CPI-U. Section 18-185 defines "extension limitation" as "the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index during the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year."

For 2013 extensions (taxes payable in 2014), the CPI to be used for computing the extension limitation is 1.7%. The CPI is measured from December 2011 to December 2012. The U.S. City Average CPI for December 2011 was 225.672 and 229.601 for December 2012. The CPI change is calculated by subtracting the 2011 CPI of 225.672 from the 2012 CPI of 229.601. That amount, 3.929, is then divided by the 2011 CPI of 225.672, which results in 1.7% CPI.

Information on PTELL may be accessed through the Illinois Department of Revenue's Web site at www.tax.illinois.gov under the category of "Property Tax," then look for the "Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)" option under "tax information."

Year	December CPI-U	% Change From Previous December	% Use for PTELL	Levy Year	Year Taxes Paid
1989	126.1	--	--	--	--
1990	133.8	6.1	5.0 (5% Max)	1991	1992
1991	137.9	3.1	3.1	1992	1993
1992	141.9	2.9	2.9	1993	1994
1993	145.8	2.7	2.7 (5% for Cook)	1994	1995
1994	149.7	2.7	2.7	1995	1996
1995	153.5	2.5	2.5	1996	1997
1996	158.6	3.3	3.3	1997	1998
1997	161.3	1.7	1.7	1998	1999
1998	163.9	1.6	1.6	1999	2000
1999	168.3	2.7	2.7	2000	2001
2000	174.0	3.4	3.4	2001	2002
2001	176.7	1.6	1.6	2002	2003
2002	180.9	2.4	2.4	2003	2004
2003	184.3	1.9	1.9	2004	2005
2004	190.3	3.3	3.3	2005	2006
2005	196.8	3.4	3.4	2006	2007
2006	201.8	2.5	2.5	2007	2008
2007	210.036	4.08	4.1	2008	2009
2008	210.228	0.1	0.1	2009	2010
2009	215.949	2.7	2.7	2010	2011
2010	219.179	1.5	1.5	2011	2012
2011	225.672	3.0	3.0	2012	2013
2012	229.601	1.7	1.7	2013	2014



Even Snakes BENEFIT FROM Partnerships

BY ANN AUSTIN



In our challenging economic times, park and recreation agencies try harder than ever before to be good stewards of taxpayers' dollars. Partnerships can help to bring the best possible recreational opportunities to residents at the lowest possible cost.

“ The communities these park districts serve are fortunate to have innovative partnerships that everyone can enjoy. ”

Glenview Park District

Glenview Park District's history of partnerships extends back to the early 1950s with the establishment of their first agreement with the school district. According to Chuck Balling, Executive Director of the Glenview Park District, Glenview has since formed dozens of unique partnerships with local and state government agencies, not-for-profit organizations and even the local hospital working together to the benefit of all Glenview Park District residents. For the past seven years, the Glenview Park District has made strengthening community relationships and partnerships a strategic initiative.

A partnership between Glenview Park District and *Glenview Public Library* began with the park district's simply providing landscaping maintenance in exchange for use of the library community room and computer lab. This partnership has evolved; now the staff from both agencies work together to develop innovative special events, classes, workshops and programs. StoryWalk® is a unique program that integrates literacy and recreation with an outdoor playground. Every three months, library staff chooses a different children's book and laminates the pages and displays them as pages of an open book on stands. Families are encouraged to read together as they stroll along the paths at the park district's Little Bear Garden park. This partnership was the first to bring the StoryWalk® program to the state of Illinois.

As part of the I-294 expansion project in 2008, the Glenview Park District partnered with the *Illinois Tollway Authority*. Both agencies worked together at the *Grove National Historic Landmark* property to build a berm and plant vegetation and trees to mitigate sound and enhance beauty. Two main components of the berm were wetland restoration and construction of two snake hibernacula (shelters occupied by hibernating animals).

Another unique partnership for the Glenview Park District is with *Evanston Northwestern Healthcare (ENH)*. When the Glenview Park District was planning a new community park center, the district entered into a partnership with ENH. In this agreement, ENH paid for a 10,000 square foot build-out including physician offices, as well as facilities for physical and cardiac rehabilitation, screenings and health education programs. The park district received a financial contribution toward the costs of the building, which opened in 2001, and the ability to broaden health education offerings for park district residents, while ENH received access to Park Center's warm water therapy pool and fitness floor equipment for rehabilitation use.

The Glenview Park District has even had the opportunity to partner with the *Smithsonian Institution* in Washington, D.C. The team of Glenview's Wagner Farm, a working operation from the early 20th century, was invited to travel to Washington, D.C. and present an outreach program as part of the Smithsonian's Gardenfest special event. The program the Wagner team put together complimented the Smithsonian's efforts in trying to illustrate where our food originates. In exchange, the Smithsonian provides the Glenview Park District with supplies of historic seeds and has provided historical information for research projects.

Rockford Park District

The Rockford Park District actively develops partnerships through various resources, including other governmental entities, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. The goal of these collaborations and partnerships is to expand services and offer greater opportunity for citizens to access and enjoy recreation, according to Tim Dimke, Executive Director of the Rockford Park District.

By expanding its existing partnership with the *Rockford School District*, The Rockford Park District was able to form a “mega-partnership” for the “Summer Challenge” enrichment program. This program which served 2,300 youth in 2012 in six schools involving the *YMCA*, the *Burpee Museum*, the *Discovery Center Museum* and the *Rockford Area Arts Council* offered math, reading, tutoring and curriculum activities to enhance learning. The Park District's Youth Sports Department also offered various sports promoting active lifestyles, and its Environmental Recreation and Education Department organized FarmTown at RESA Middle School, where students received lessons on gardening, planting and harvesting and environmental issues in a ¾-acre garden plot.





In addition, approximately 45,500 healthy meals and snacks were served through the *Northern Illinois Food Bank* and the *City of Rockford Human Services Department* to youth and teens attending the after school, evening, and summer camp programs sponsored by the Rockford Park District at Washington Park and Lewis Lemon Community Center.

Another partnership involving multiple agencies was formed among the Rockford Park District, the *Department of Natural Resources*, *RockfordFishing.com* and *Gander Mountain* to offer “Fish Fest.” Two hundred children and 130 adults were provided free fishing poles and tackle, as well as hands-on instruction from experts during the day-long fishing event.

The Rockford Park District also partnered with *DeVine, DiVas & DoNs*, a grassroots neighborhood group, whose mission is “promoting and restoring hope while mentoring and motivating.” Working together, these groups organized “Saturdays in the Park” for the neighbors and community members in Andrews Park. On the third Saturday of each summer month, volunteers provide a variety of free activities and lunch. The organizers anticipated an attendance of around 800, and 1,155 actually came to these events.

Peoria Park District

“Developing partnerships,” says Bonnie Noble, Executive Director of the Peoria Park District, “is very time-intensive, but anything worthwhile is worth working at.” The Peoria Park District maintains several intergovernmental agreements with the *City of Peoria*, *Peoria County*, the *Greater Peoria Sanitary District*, *Peoria Heights* and *Peoria Public School District 150*.

In one such agreement, the Peoria Park District's Youth Outreach and Intervention Department collaborates with *Peoria Public School District #150* to focus on developing the inner strength students need to make solid daily decisions despite peer pressure and other obstacles. At Trewyn School, more than 500 K-8 students, teachers and staff are working on improving themselves and their community “ELITE-style.” The ELITE curriculum focuses on self-esteem, conflict resolution and teamwork; while strengthening students' academic abilities. To date, more than 400,000 students nationwide have participated in the Youth Outreach ELITE programming.

Benefits of successful partnerships:

- Sharing of resources as well as risks
- Avoiding duplication of services and creating efficiencies for all involved
- Teaming up with agencies with similar values and missions
- Expansion of services to offer greater opportunity for citizens to access and enjoy recreation
- Collaboration instead of competition
- Access to new energy and new ideas, helping to get the job done

Words of Advice Offered by Park District Officials on Partnerships:

The Peoria Park District worked with the *City of Peoria*, *OSF Saint Francis Medical Center* and a private foundation to build the RiverPlex. It is designed to offer a unique, holistic approach to recreation and wellness, fitness and preventative health care services, as well as a host of leisure programs. It includes, among other amenities, an XR-Game Zone, indoor cycling studio, indoor family aquatic center, outdoor water playground, elevated running track, arena and gym, aerobic and dance studio as well as a kitchen and classrooms. The XR-Game Zone at the RiverPlex, which focuses on exercise opportunities through gaming systems, was opened with the help of Exergame Fitness. In this partnership, Exergame Fitness paid for and installed all of the equipment in exchange for the ability to use the space to market their equipment. Additionally, RiverPlex staff worked with physicians from the *University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria* to put together exercise regimens in this space targeting obese youth.

The Peoria Park District supported the formation of a non-profit *Peoria Zoological Society*, which raises funds in support of the Peoria Zoo. This group was able to raise, with the support of a Caterpillar, Inc. grant, \$28 million for improvements to the zoo, including a new entry complex and the "Africa!" exhibit, which almost tripled the size of the Zoo. This fundraising effort has been expanded into a collaboration among the Peoria Park District, *Peoria Zoological Society* and *Junior League of Peoria*. Their Power of Play Campaign is working to raise \$8 million to bring interactive learning to Glen Oak Park. Included in this effort are enhancements to Peoria Zoo, as well as the addition of a children's museum, focused on children ages 0-8. An additional phase of the campaign, which is supported by the local *Rotary Club of Peoria*, will add Rotary Adventure Grove, located between the existing Zoo and the planned Children's Museum. Adventure Grove will be an interactive animal experience, all parts of which will be free to the public.

Arlington Heights Park District

"In this time of reduced budgets and scarce resources, a collaborative approach is a helpful and creative way to continue providing local services while reducing operation and maintenance costs," observes Steve Scholten, Executive Director of the Arlington Heights Park District.

A shortage of indoor recreational facilities has prompted this district to establish cooperative agreements with *local school districts* to share utility costs and operational expenses by running programs in already existing rooms or gymnasiums at times when they aren't being used by the schools. The Arlington Heights Park District works with *School Districts #21, #23, #25, and #59* as well as the *Village of Arlington Heights* to provide quality before and after school care in the Children at Play (CAP) program. The Park District hires, trains, and supervises the staff and is responsible for the daily program. The School District houses the program and provides custodial service. The Village provides scholarships to families who need financial assistance and reside within the village boundaries.

The nationally-accredited *Arlington Heights Senior Center* involves a multi-agency partnership among the park district and seven other entities including the *Village of Arlington Heights*, *Catholic Charities*, the *Arlington Heights Memorial Library*, *Northwest Community Hospital*, the *Community Nutrition Network*, *Escorted Transportation Services* and the *Arlington Heights Nurses Club*. "All of these

"While partnerships are dependent upon mutual benefit, avoid 'measuring the milk.' Benefits need to flow both ways, but the quickest way to kill a valuable partnership is to demand that it always be exactly equal in value all the time."

— **Chuck Balling**, Executive Director, Glenview Park District

"Identify agencies/companies with like missions and customers who will mutually benefit from the partnership; develop and expand relationships first, then define roles and responsibilities of each agency."

— **Tim Dimke**, Executive Director, Rockford Park District

"Don't be an obstructionist. Keep an open mind and be willing to give some things up in order to get others back. Compromise is key."

— **Bonnie Noble**, Executive Director, Peoria Park District

"Successful partnerships tend to be those with clearly stated goals, sources of funding and division of responsibilities, as well as ongoing communication with the community and a long-term commitment."

— **Steve Scholten**, Executive Director, Arlington Heights Park District

governmental and private entities cooperate to keep Arlington Heights seniors active and sociable," explains Scholten. Each day, over 500 people age 55 and over attend the center to engage in activities such as walking the indoor walking trail, working in the woodshop, eating in the café or playing billiards.

The *Arlington Heights Historical Museum* operates under a three-party intergovernmental agreement involving the Arlington Heights Park District, the *Village of Arlington Heights* and the *Arlington Heights Historical Society*. In 1985, the *Arlington Heights Historical Society* approached the Arlington Heights Park District for assistance with managing the museum and its educational program. Today the Arlington Heights Park District runs programs at the museum such as the "Fancy Nancy Tea Party" and "Irish Tea at the Museum," which are very popular with residents.

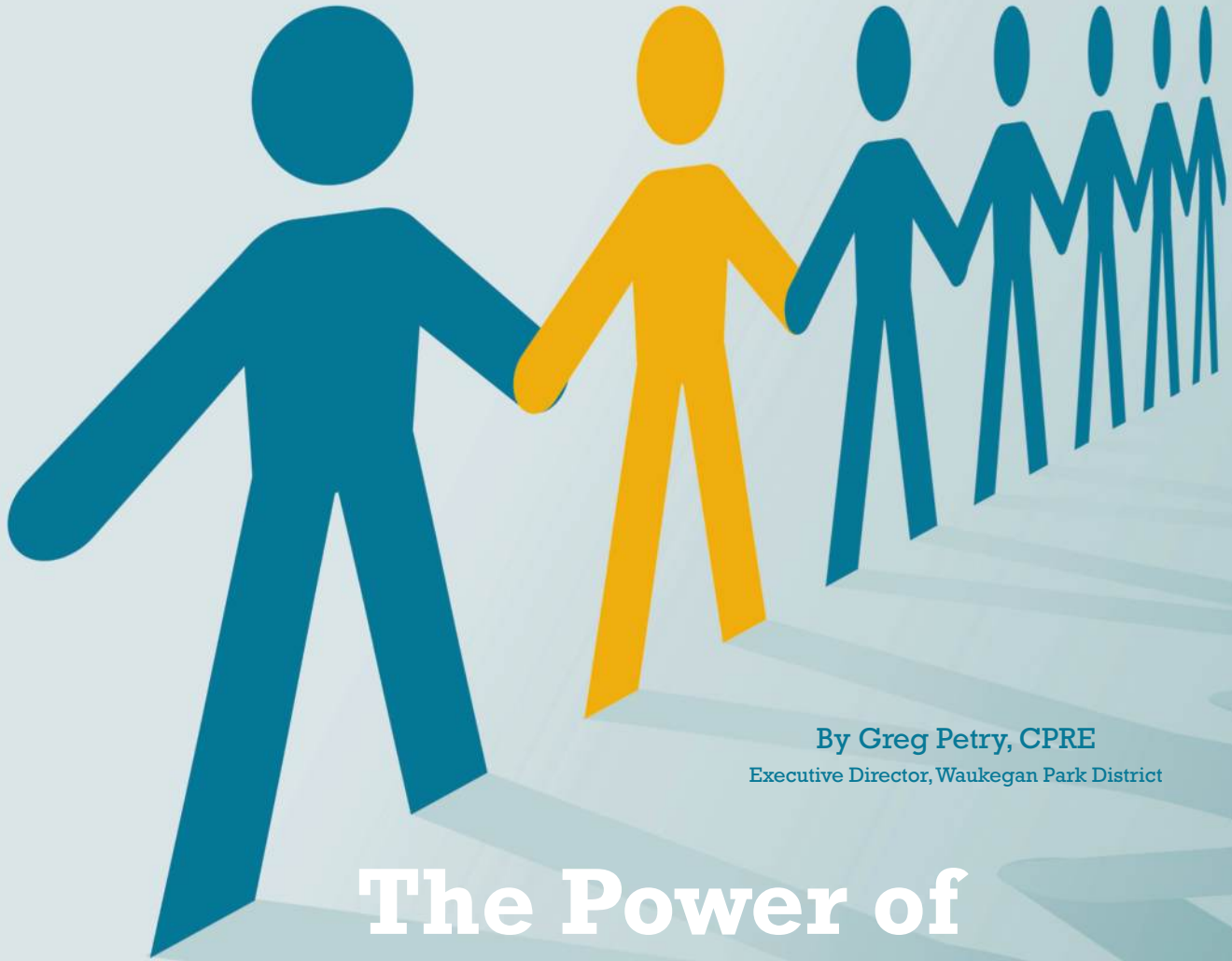
All these partnerships are unique and benefit everyone involved. Partnerships are an important part of the function of a successful park and recreation agency. The communities these park agencies serve are fortunate to have innovative partnerships that everyone can enjoy.

Article by

Ann Austin - Rock Island Park and Recreation Department IAPD/IPRA Joint Editorial Committee Co-Chair

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By Greg Petry, CPRE
Executive Director, Waukegan Park District

The Power of Partnerships

Every day that we come to work we are faced with an enduring problem. How do we meet the needs of our community with diminishing resources? The tax revenues are stagnating. Donations and sponsorships have declined. People just don't have the time to volunteer. Yet we are expected to continue to uphold the same level of service to which the public has become accustomed and meet their needs. We can't do it alone. How can we leverage our existing resources for greater outcomes? The most powerful tool available to us is partnerships.

No one can do it alone! Park agencies are naturally positioned for community engagement to have people work together and achieve mutual goals.

Through partnerships, agencies can achieve more. Partnering with individuals, corporations, governmental agencies and not for profits should be an implement in the toolbox. Working WITH partners is a resourceful way to act collaboratively on opportunities, leverage resources, meet challenges and address the needs of your community. Partnerships are a powerful way to get things done!

Leadership needs to be open minded and listen when people approach you with ideas of working together. You also have to feel the pulse of the community, know how to integrate your long range plans with something that fits and capitalize on it. Think strategically to gain partners with whom you can identify. Park and recreation agencies are constantly asked to take leadership roles in the community. Agencies don't always have to be the prime "doer" or "mover" to make things happen. Being a facilitator of services can often be even more effective. Be on the lookout for who is doing it better and cheaper or capitalizing on the resources of others that have a complementary mission. Whether they come to you or you go to them, the strategy should be to blend skills that enhance one another to advance mutual interests to meet the needs of the community.

For example, the Waukegan Park District operated the Community Recreation Center in a youth at risk neighborhood serving 50 children daily with one full time staff member and an annual subsidy of \$80,000 a year. A group of citizens formed the Boys and Girls Club of Lake County, which grew to serve 300 children out of a closed social club. Realizing their growth and impact on the neighborhood, they approached the park district to see if it would be feasible to take over the programs and operation of the community center. A partnership was formed and the building leased to the club for \$1 a year. The outcome was that the center is now staffed with five full time employees and expanded services are supported with not for profit funding sources. The district saves on the operating costs. The moral of the story is that with a little cooperation, it could be done better, cheaper and more effectively than by any individual or group alone!

Partnerships are a great way to get two groups together to make a difference. They are most naturally created when there is a pressing need or sense of urgency. Find partners to participate in improving the well-being of the community. Demonstrate the outcomes! Doing so will increase the likelihood of each partner achieving their mission and amplify their reach. No one can do it alone! Park agencies are naturally positioned for community engagement to have people work together and achieve mutual goals.



With the demand for greater services and fewer resources, partnerships are a dynamic way to meet the demands and needs of our citizens.

Alliances are easily formed when there is a spirit of cooperation and give and take. This is particularly true when everyone's motivations are aligned. There cannot be any underlying undisclosed ulterior motives. Partners must embrace each other's mission, vision and values.

Partnerships are an effective way to enhance community engagement. The Waukegan Park District has very little civic engagement as compared to other communities. In response, we have formed 32 partnerships. Some are formally established, while others are loosely defined. Nevertheless, the community is more included and involved. The civic participation gained through partnerships results in the district having powerful influence in the community, consensus building and positive positioning of the agency.

Coalitions, collaborations, alliances or partnerships all activate civic involvement. Partners can be from the business community, not for profits, citizens, etc. Ultimately the process creates public buy-in, implementation of strategy and, hopefully, desired outcomes.

For example, the Waukegan Soccer Federation was formed in response to the need to provide more soccer fields to meet the growing demand. The parks, schools, soccer clubs and affiliated groups could no longer act independently. A loosely defined and organized group was created to coordinate scheduling, respond to public concerns about overcrowding and noise at games and validate the need to develop a sports complex. Ultimately, 20 years later the Waukegan SportsPark was developed that consolidated all outdoor sports into one location and had a \$10.5 million impact on the local economy in 2012.

The process of partnering is all about building relationships. You need to make an effort and both involved parties need to be champions of the cause and effort. Start small, let success grow and be contagious.

The partners need to be optimistic, persistent, resilient, flexible, resolved and energetic. Create an atmosphere of collaboration where ideas and information flow freely, removing institutional and organizational barriers. There is nothing worse than bureaucratic red tape to hold things up and find reasons not to get things done. Partnerships are an exercise in networking, with the will to get things done. The people leading the partnership have to act and think collaboratively. They should desire to help people make connections for the betterment of the community.

As these connections and collaborations are established, more people benefit from the efforts of partnerships. Leveraging resources in a partnership will attract prospective customers. Our goal should be to continually gain customers and serve more people so they can benefit from our services. We recently partnered with the Lake County Health Department and Vista Health Hospital for community wellness programs. The three of us desire the same outcome for people; we just take different approaches on different platforms. Together we have improved the health of seniors, reduced their dependence on prescription drugs and provided the public with free health screenings. All at no cost while just sharing information, space and membership databases. Wellness programs continue to thrive with cross promotion.

Learn and understand your partner's organization and its dynamics. How will the overall effort benefit everyone as opposed to the individual good of the entity partnered with? Combining complementary skills enhance and add value to the effort. Typically, partnerships offer specialization services or initiatives that in turn enhance and complement the services and or interests of both partners. Combining and contributing knowledge, expertise and skills brings the effort to the table. Both partners must share responsibility equally.

You would think that each should have equal authority. At times it will be necessary for one partner to lead or have authority over certain aspects of the partnership. There should be no formal authority over the other partner. However, the power and value comes from combining efforts and competencies to achieve the desired outcomes. Everyone must work in tandem and alongside one another. Mutual decision making is imperative. Developing trust is a must. As is establishing boundaries as the partnership thrives. No one should be out front. Make it a mindset to say “theirs” and “ours” and not “mine.”

A good example of this is our relationship with the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), an environmental support and watchdog group. Originally, an informal collaboration was started with the park district and CAG to understand and support one another to improve the environmental conditions at the Waukegan Harbor and Lakefront. Our participation was first centered on meetings with a group composed of citizens, governmental agencies, businesses and other environmental groups to discuss possibilities of environmental clean-up. Twenty years later, a formal agreement exists and CAG has directly raised money and secured millions of dollars of grants for park improvement along the Waukegan River and associated watershed. Our participation has led to businesses contributing hundreds of thousands of dollars and volunteer hours to park improvement projects. Several CAG members have been recognized as our Patron or Volunteer of the Year.

It is imperative that you celebrate the efforts and accomplishments of your partner and the partnership. Share the credit. Make it a win-win relationship.

Now that is not to say that there will not be disagreements. You need to devote time to cultivate the partnership. Meet regularly simply to get to know one another and reduce miscommunications. Stay on track by getting feedback from your partner to evaluate your efforts. Strategically establish priorities together. Establish and identify mutual interests as well as conflicts of interest. There will be disagreements, so be prepared to address them. It may come to a point where your disagreement cannot be resolved and the partnership needs to be dissolved. How will that notice and message be delivered to maintain the public image of the entities in the partnership? The Waukegan park board usually insists on a “kick out clause” to get out of the relationship in a timely manner. Other times you just need to work around the issues to sustain the beneficial relationship over time. As an example, we have a cooperative free use of facilities with the school district. However, the unions demand premium time to work on weekends while the gyms are used for programs which limits service delivery. It's the only obstacle that compromises our relationship and is not worth fighting over in the whole spirit of cooperation with our school district.

With the demand for greater services and fewer resources, partnerships are a dynamic way to meet the demands and needs of our citizens. There are certainly far more advantages than disadvantages with partnered efforts. The benefits of working together are endless! Partnerships may be the key to our future in these trying times.



WebXtra

Vernon Hills Park District Partners with the Village of Vernon Hills to Save and Expand Community Facilities

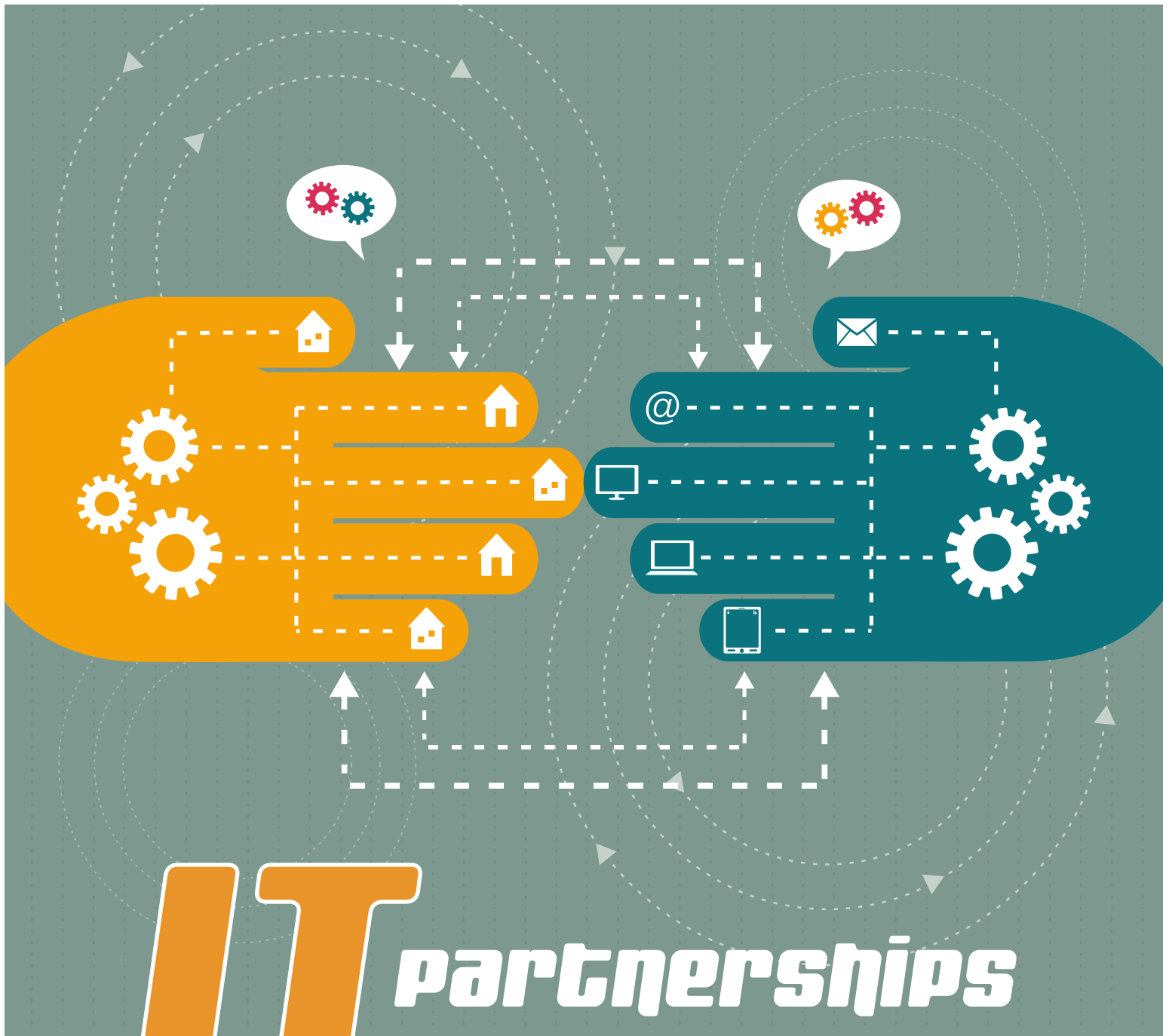
by Jeff Fougousse, Executive Director,
Vernon Hills Park District

Due to their cooperative efforts, the Village and the Park District of Vernon Hills have worked together on several important projects including the creation of the Summer Celebration grounds in Century Park and the agreement of dual responsibilities with both agencies in the maintenance and management of the Vernon Hills Athletic Complex. On September 29, 2012, the Central Lake County YMCA, located in Vernon Hills, announced its future closing due to financial hardship. The Village and Park District were approached as possible partners in keeping the facility open under new management. The agencies worked together, in a very short timetable, to access the possibility of keeping the YMCA in operation.

Concerns for both parties included the building structure, space limitations, operation and maintenance of an indoor pool and taking over a childcare facility. Moreover, a bigger concern was the price tag to purchase the YMCA. The Park District's operating budget had no monies set aside to purchase or maintain such a facility. Although, it made sense to the Village for the Park District to purchase the YMCA and continue to operate it as a recreational extension of the Park District, so the two agencies were determined to come up with a solution together.

Read the Full Story Online

Go to ILparks.org and select Publications/IP&R Magazine/
WebXtras from the left column.



IT Partnerships

The way to really get wired!

"It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed." — Charles Darwin

BY
CARRIE A. FULLERTON, CPRP
AND ANDREA M. PINDAK

The world, the economy and our industry is so completely different from when we started years (and years) ago. The global shift toward "shared" services and the entire concept of bartering has been taken to a higher level world-wide. There are now entire websites dedicated to bartering of rooms, use of vehicles, sharing of babysitters and so much more.

When it comes to IT services, of course everyone would like the luxury of just yelling down the hall and having an IT professional magically show up to un-jam our printer, replace our ink, or teach us just one more formula we will never remember on Excel. For many agencies this is just not financially feasible. The cost of a full-time IT professional may prove too much for one park district budget. For others who can afford it, this may not be the best stewardship of tax dollars unless you truly can justify the need for these services consistently on-site for 40+ hours/week for your agency to effectively serve both your internal and external customers.

“The key to making this system work is collaboration, patience and understanding.”

THE MODEL

Five years ago the Executive Directors of the Bloomingdale, Addison, Glen Ellyn and Wood Dale Park Districts met to create a “shared” IT position that would efficiently and effectively serve all four agency's IT needs. These guys and gals were way ahead of their time! Sure, many agencies share positions such as Safety Coordinators, but this was something new; and all four of the agencies had a void that needed to be filled.

Prior to this arrangement the agencies had contracted with outside technical support firms at a rate of \$100-\$150 per hour. Often times we had to wait for these vendors to be available to take care of whatever our needs were at the time. Emergencies would obviously take priority, which is still the case, but when you're sharing with 3 other agencies instead of several; it's an extremely workable arrangement.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

In essence, the IT professional spends one full-day/week at each agency. One of the four agencies has greater IT needs so they have the professional two days per week – thus being responsible for a larger portion of the salary/benefit costs for the staff person.

In the event that a major project is on the schedule that requires more than one day, he adjusts his schedule accordingly and we “borrow” or “owe” each other days. For example, the Bloomingdale Park District purchased a new server last year which required about 6 days of work in a row. In that case we borrowed days from the other agencies and were able to repay them when Addison and Glen Ellyn installed new telephone systems that required several days installation.

One agency serves as the staff's “home agency” and thus administers the employee's salary and benefits; and then bills the other agencies quarterly for their share.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

We all have experienced situations when the server crashed or the phone system is down, the credit card machines won't work, etc. In these instances, our shared IT professional is able to prioritize and take care of emergencies first. Because we are all located within a 10 mile radius it is manageable and feasible for him to go address the emergency and head back to his regular site for the day. While we have found that the challenges definitely do not outweigh the benefits – as with anything over which you do not have total control, there are some things to consider:

- *IT problems do occur at agencies when the staff person is not available.* This can be avoided by some training of agency staff to handle minor problems. Someone other than the IT professional needs to be able to answer customer and staff related questions so as to not impede your agency's business.
- *Larger IT projects need to be planned well in advance.* You cannot plan to make large changes to your website, add a new server or update your online registration and expect these projects to be ready to go in two weeks. You will need to plan projects and “barter” with the other agencies to switch days to ensure that your project is completed.

- *Not all agencies use the same registration software and hardware.* The person you hire will have to be knowledgeable and have the capacity to manage a variety of software and hardware systems at multiple locations.

MAKING IT WORK

The key to making this system work is collaboration, patience and understanding. You have to be flexible and considerate when your partners have issues that may take the IT professional away from the office on 'your day.' But with cell phones, email and text messaging, it's all manageable and a great way to effectively serve your internal and external customers. We have found that sharing an IT person between four different park districts has been beneficial for all parties involved.

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Andrea M. Pindak

Director of Administration, Bloomingdale Park District

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Winnebago County Forest Preserve Names New Executive Director

Mike Holan has been named executive director of the Winnebago County Forest Preserve. Mike has spent 30 years working in both DuPage and Kane County Forest Preserves. His experience will serve him well in his new position as he oversees the district's 9500 acres and 40

forest preserves. One of Mike's major objectives will be to drive more people into the forest preserves and engage the community. He will also be charged with finding more open space for the district. Mike earned a bachelor of science in zoology, had both police work and firefighting training.



Hawthorn Woods Announces New Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

The Village of Hawthorn Woods announced that **Brian J. Sullivan** MPA, CPRP, has joined the village's leadership team. Brian assumes a new position of deputy director of parks and recreation and executive projects manager for this dynamic and progressive community in Lake County. Sullivan brings over 25 years

of experience in the leisure industry to his new position with Team Hawthorn Woods and was named Honored Professional of the Year by IPRA in 2011. Sullivan is tasked with improving programing and operational effectiveness and transparency, enhancing community engagement, participating in regional issues and identification of funding opportunities for infrastructure improvements.



Champaign County Forest Preserve District Names New Director

Dan Olson was named the new director of the Champaign County Forest Preserve District. Olson, 40, has been with the forest preserve district for about 10 years as its director of natural resources. He also was named deputy director earlier in 2012.

He is a native of Clinton who graduated with a bachelor's degree in zoology from Eastern Illinois University. Before coming to the forest preserve district, he worked at the University of Illinois' College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences as a visiting research scientist, with a specialty in biological research.



Warrenville Park District Names New Superintendent of Recreation

Tim Reinbold has been named superintendent of recreation for the Warrenville Park District. Tim's responsibilities include administrative planning and management of the overall operation of the recreation department to include a wide scope of recreation, fitness and facility related programming. In

addition, Tim serves as the park district safety coordinator.

Tim comes to Warrenville from the Oakbrook Terrace Park District, where he was director of recreation and park services. Tim managed the day-to-day operation of the parks department and supervised the recreation department, including recreational programs, facilities, and staff.

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, 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?

E-mail information and jpegs to editorialdept@ILparks.org. Jpegs should be 300 dpi at about 2 inches tall.

Arlington Heights Park District Announces Retirements



Jim Glueckert, Director of Recreation & Facilities Retires
Jim Glueckert was a dedicated employee of the Arlington Heights Park District for thirty-nine years, beginning in 1973 and held the positions of facility supervisor, athletic supervisor, assistant superintendent of recreation, superintendent of recreation and

director of recreation and facilities. Jim was part of the district's outstanding achievement as a three-time recipient of National Gold Medal for Excellence in Park & Recreation Management and certification as an IAPD/IPRA Distinguished Park and Recreation Agency. Jim was instrumental in guiding the recreation and facilities department to meet the challenging and changing leisure needs of the community.

Pam Lingert, Recreation Supervisor Retires

Pam Lingert was an employee of the Arlington Heights Park District for thirty-seven years, beginning in 1975 and held the positions of cashier, recreation leader, center director, cultural arts supervisor, preschool/day camp supervisor and C.A.P. supervisor in the recreation and



facilities department. Pam was also involved in specialty camps, sports camps, and the outreach program for the park district. Pam was an active member of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association and was recognized for her dedication in attending conferences and seminars to find the latest programs for preschool and youth in the community. Pam also served as chair on the before and after school committee which serves over 800 children on a daily basis at ten schools.



From left to right - Farhad Madani, President AOAP, Walter Johnson, AOAP Executive Director, Juliene Hefter, First President, NRPA Aquatic Branch and presenter, Bob Bradley

Association of Aquatic Professionals Visionary Award

Walter Johnson recently received the Association of Aquatic Professionals Visionary Award at the National Aquatic Conference in Austin, Texas. Walter supported the formation of the new association now led by many leaders and delegates previously involved in the former NRPA National Aquatic Conference which he created and administered for 18 years.

Association president Farhad Madani stated "We would not be here if it was not for Walt's past vision and dedication in creating the foundation for education and training for aquatic professionals nationwide."



Arlington Heights Park District Welcomes Brian Meyer

Brian Meyer, CPRP recently joined the Arlington Heights Park District as director of recreation and facilities. Brian has over 20 years of experience in his field; he has overseen the daily operation of Bolingbrook Park District recreation department and the Joliet Bolingbrook Special Recreation Association. He was also the Itasca Park District superintendent of recreation and served in many other capacities.

Brian earned his bachelor of science degree in recreation, parks and tourism from Western Illinois University. He is also a graduate of the North Carolina State University Graduate School of Sports Management, is an NRPA certified pool operator and attended the IPRA Facility Management School. In his new role, Brian will be responsible for the overall leadership of the recreation and facilities department and staff.

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