

illinois

Volume 45, Number 2 | March/April 2014



# PARKS AND RECREATION

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



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## FROM THE EDITOR



It was springtime and I had just come on board with the IAPD as the new publications director. I began to learn about the organization and soon realized it was my duty to live up to these “green” initiatives the association stood behind. We signed up for recycling (yes, I know I hadn't done it sooner). We replaced incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents, we replaced plastic plants with live plants in our aquariums and added more live plants to the sunroom. We even started using reusable bags to go grocery shopping, and yes, they are actually colored green. We started doing everything we could to green up our lives once I realized the impact a few changes could make on the environment if many people made them.

Going green for park agencies is a little different than just making some changes at home. Environmentally friendly choices for agencies can affect thousands of people for generations to come. Inside this issue of *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine, you will see how a few park districts and forest preserves take going green to the extreme and how an intergovernmental agreement may be just what your agency needs to get started in the right direction.

In this issue, you will also find the award winners from the 2014 Soaring to New Heights Conference as well as the winners of the 2013 “Give Us Your Best Shot” photo contest. Congratulations to all the winners!

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Illinois Parks and Recreation (ISSN 0019-2155) is published bimonthly at 211 E. Monroe Street, Springfield, Illinois, by the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association. Annual subscription rates: \$12 for IAPD/IPRA members; \$50 for non-members; \$60 foreign; \$20 educational institutions. Single copies: \$2 members; \$10 nonmembers. Periodicals postage paid at Springfield, Illinois and additional post offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Illinois Parks & Recreation, 211 E. Monroe Street, Springfield, IL 62701-1186. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily express the official views of the IAPD/IPRA. Likewise, the publication of any advertisement is not to be construed as an endorsement of the product or services offered. Members of the IAPD and the IPRA and other interested persons are encouraged to submit articles and illustrative photos for possible publication in the magazine. Send for manuscript guidelines and deadline dates: Editor, Illinois Parks & Recreation, 211 E. Monroe Street, Springfield, IL 62701-1186, 217.523.4554, [iapd@ilparks.org](mailto:iapd@ilparks.org), [www.ilparks.org](http://www.ilparks.org). By submitting articles for publication, authors are assigning the copyright to the Illinois Association of Park Districts.

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Peter M. Murphy  
IAPD President and CEO

# The Park District Advantage

One of the most professionally rewarding and rejuvenating experiences I have, besides attending IAPD's Gala and the IAPD/IPRA Conference Awards Luncheon, is to be involved with citizens who are organizing efforts to create a new park district. Both are a reminder of the dedication that goes into making Illinois park and recreation systems the finest in the nation. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the historical development of park districts in Illinois and reexamine the benefits they provide communities across the State.

The seasonal program brochures published by park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts detailing the vast array of recreational opportunities available is also a clear indication of how we make a real difference, as do the lengthy list of Olympic athletes from Illinois that began their sport in public parks and recreation.

IAPD has a tremendous database on its membership and that data is always available to you, our members, to help your agency.

Take a look at:

## IAPD Membership by the Numbers

- There are 13,753 square miles served by IAPD member agencies.
- There are 240,964 acres owned by IAPD member agencies.
- There are 11,894 acres leased by IAPD member agencies.

## Amenities Provided by Park Districts

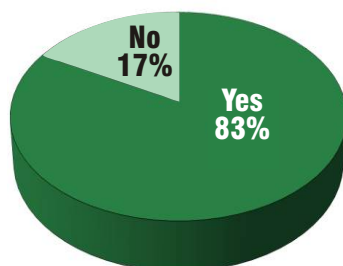
- 6,000 local park sites
- 426 swimming pools
- 602 fishing areas
- 668 recreation centers
- 1,027 miles of bicycle trails
- 345 miles of nature trails
- 318 miles of equestrian trails
- 87 campgrounds
- 149 boating areas
- 96 beaches and 37 marinas
- 2,676 tennis courts
- 139 golf courses
- 82 sledding hills and 3 ski slopes
- Thousands of recreational programs

Do your citizens know how:

## Park Districts Positively Impact Communities

- A recent statewide survey showed that 83% of Illinoisans visited or used a park district within the last year.

Illinoisans Who Visited/Used Park District Last Year



- Studies also show that parks improve property values by 20% and more than 75% of people agree that parks in their community improve property values.

## Park Districts Pay for Themselves

**CREATING JOBS AND EXPANDING TOURISM**

- 62,900** Illinois jobs are within local park districts & recreation agencies. *These jobs encompass a wide range of professional and support staff.*
- Annually, more than **5.6 Million** citizens make over **94 Million** visits to Illinois parks.
- Parks & Recreation is a \$3 Billion Industry in the State of Illinois.**
- Parks Employ Youth.** There are **54,200** seasonal part-time employees at park & recreation agencies annually.
- Parks Generate Revenue.** Illinois park agencies invest more than **\$371 Million** annually in capital projects.

## Reduce Healthcare Costs

- Approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2-19 years are obese. (Source: CDC)
- Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents in the past 30 years. (Source: CDC)
- Illinois' local park and recreation agencies offer thousands of programs to promote healthier lifestyles and avoid expensive medical costs.

## Reduce Crime

- As many as 15 million children are unsupervised during non-school hours. On school days, 3:00-6:00 p.m. are the peak hours for teens to commit crimes, be in or cause car crashes, be victims of crime, and smoke, drink and use drugs. However, studies show that children in beyond-school programs are two times less likely to use drugs and one-third less likely to become teen parents.
- Law enforcement overwhelmingly agrees that after school and summer school programs have a greater impact in reducing youth crime and violence than hiring more police officers.
- Park districts offer these programs and reduce the demand for costly correctional facilities.

## Improve Air and Water Quality

- One tree's contribution over 50 years in controlling air pollution, soil erosion, soil fertility, recycling water and humidity is worth a total of \$196,250.
- IAPD partnered with Living Lands & Waters in the Million Trees Project to plant 19,372 trees in 2013.

## Mitigates Flooding

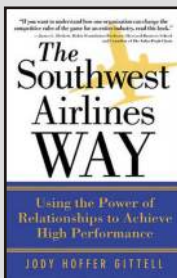
- Throughout the past 20 years, flooding has cost Illinois more than \$1.25 billion in property damage and \$814 million in crop damage.
- The cost of providing safe drinking water may be \$140 billion over the next 20 years.
- Open space conservation is a cost effective remedy to preserve the environment, to mitigate flooding and to ensure the long-term protection of water supplies.
- Park, recreation and conservation agencies preserve hundreds of thousands of acres of open space.

## Impact Fuel Usage

- High gas prices undermine our economic recovery. Lowering demand is one way to lower price.
- On average, one mile of urban trail can save approximately 6,000 gallons of fuel consumption annually through alternative transportation.
- Trails are also less costly to maintain than roads and bridges.
- Local park and recreation agencies lower demand for fuel by offering family vacation opportunities close to home and by providing miles of trails.

While all these things are true about park districts, the fundamental reason that they are so successful is due to the non-compensated, non-partisan park commissioners that serve on each district's governing board.

Simply put, you make the difference. It has been said that a rising tide lifts all boats. It is your dedication that raises the quality of life for all of us in Illinois. Thank you for your service and during 2014, please make the time to celebrate your success.



## Recommended Reading

***The Southwest Airlines Way***  
*Using the Power of Relationships to Achieve High Performance*  
 By Jody Hoffer Gittell

Southwest Airlines has been able to achieve and maintain a high level of success. Their business model is based on relationships and park agencies can apply some of the same principles to enhance the overall success of their programs.

Southwest provides an environment of shared

goals, shared knowledge and mutual respect. The company also embraces ten organizational relationships that all work together to help them achieve success. These ten relationships are:

- Outstanding business relationships
- Investment in front line leaders
- Hire and train for relationship excellence
- Use conflicts to build relationships
- Bridge the work/family divide
- Create positions that span boundaries
- Use broad performance metrics
- Create highly flexible job descriptions
- Partner with the unions
- Build the supplier relationships

When these ten relationships are used together with techniques such as frequent and timely communication in a problem solving approach, Southwest has been able to sustain a successful company. Park and recreation agencies can do the same.

## 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April-May, 2014  
**Flying for Kids Month, Statewide Kite Fly**

Tuesday, April 29, 2014  
**Parks Day at the Capitol**  
 Illinois State Capitol

Tuesday, April 29, 2014  
**Legislative Reception**  
 Illini Country Club

Wednesday, April 30, 2014  
**Legislative Conference**  
 Crowne Plaza, Springfield

Tuesday, May 13, 2014  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #1**  
 Bittersweet Golf Club, Gurnee, GolfVisions Management, Inc.

Monday, June 9, 2014  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #2**  
 Randall Oaks Golf Club, Dundee Township Park District

Thursday, July 17, 2014  
**Joint Legislative Awareness Golf Outing**  
 White Pines Golf Club, Bensenville Park District

Saturday, August 16, 2014  
**Park District Conservation Day**  
 IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield

Wednesday, August 27, 2014  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #3**  
 Sanctuary Golf Course, New Lenox Community Park District

Saturday, September 6, 2014  
**Legislative Awareness Picnic**  
 Inwood Park, Joliet Park District

Monday, September 29, 2014  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #4**  
 Wilmette Golf Club, Wilmette Park District

October 14-16, 2014  
**NRPA Congress**  
 Charlotte, NC

Friday, October 24, 2014  
**IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala**  
 Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling Park District

Thursday, November 6, 2014  
**IAPD Legal Symposium**  
 McDonald's University/ Hyatt Lodge

January 22-24, 2015  
**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**  
 Hyatt Regency Chicago

**IAPD**  
 Illinois Association of Park Districts

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

# EYE ON THE PROFESSION

A CLOSER LOOK AT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN THE PARK AND RECREATION PROFESSION



By Debbie Trueblood  
IPRA Executive Director

## Congratulations to IPRA's Award Recipients

As I write this, we are just back from the 2014 Soaring to New Heights Conference. My thanks to all the volunteers and staff from both IPRA and IAPD who made this year's conference a success including the 2013 joint conference committee and **IPRA co-chair Sherrie Izban, from the Lily Cache Special Recreation Association, and IAPD co-chair Jerri-Lynn Kleina from the Alsip Park District** and the rest of the committee: Matt Barber, WSSRA; Tom Barz, Frankfort Park District; John Curran, Tinley Park Park District; Kevin Dolan, Mundelein Park & Recreation District; Tom Hartwig, Oak Lawn Park District; Mike Kies, Hoffman Estates Park District; Greg Kolinek; Lili McGovern, Hoffman Estates Park District; Bob Schmidt, Schaumburg Park District; Mike Vogl, Bloomingdale Park District; Marty Walsh, Vernon Hills Park District; and John Wilson, Lan-Oak Park District. While everyone on both staff teams works on the conference, I am grateful for the leadership of Leesa Kuo, IPRA's conference director, Sue Triphahn, IAPD's conference director and Sue Cottingham-Haupt, IPRA's conference coordinator.

This year, we rolled out the new Sponsor a Student program and we were able to seat 57 students in the awards luncheon at conference with sponsoring agencies at no cost to the student or the agency. I believe that if we share the inspiration of the awards luncheon with these students, we will encourage their commitment to the parks and recreation professional community. I spoke to many of the students who greatly enjoyed the experience. Several students mentioned that their sponsoring agency had invited them out for a visit and informational interview. What a wonderful connection these students and agencies are making. IPRA sponsored a student at our table too, Torri Withrow who is the current Southern Illinois University - Carbondale Student Recreation Society president, made it her personal mission to bring ten SIU-C students to conference with her. Torri is a junior and already showing leadership in our profession. She inspires me and it was my honor to spend time with her at the awards luncheon.

I was also thrilled this year that Chicago State University held their first social at conference for students and alumni. I had the privilege of spending some time getting to know Dr. June Price-Shingles, the rest of the faculty team, along with Antonio Washington and other current students and alumni. It sounds like CSU parks and recreation is full of energy and enthusiasm. Congratulations to them on their first social!

This year conference attendees had a great time at the closing social at House of Blues with a performance by Super Diamond. So many people have asked me, "How are we going to beat that next year?" Between the change to nice new coach busses and the energy of a rock concert, it was clear to me that attendees were having a great time.

I want to once again thank Allison Niemela, executive director of the Batavia Park District, who completed her term as chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors. Allison was an incredible leader for us. I enjoyed partnering with her and traveling all over Illinois with her meeting our members, attending focus groups, and volunteering together at Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair. She has been a terrific guide for IPRA through the strategic planning process. I look forward to working with her on our board for another year as our past chair.

I also want to again welcome our new chairman of the board, Jan Hincapie, director of the Lincolnwood Parks & Recreation Department. Jan was IPRA's intern years ago and is thrilled to be coming around full circle as IPRA's new chair. As a municipal director, she brings a fresh perspective to IPRA and is a constant advocate for municipalities. She has already formed several new task forces for IPRA for 2014 to support the first year of the new strategic plan. These task forces include Women in Leisure, Community Outreach, and Mentoring. I am thrilled to work with these task forces to support our new plan and Jan's vision for IPRA.

"My thanks to all the volunteers and staff from both IPRA and IAPD who made this year's conference a success."



At the conference, during the awards luncheon, the following awards were granted. Congratulations to these professionals who were recognized for their service to IPRA and parks and recreation: Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement award: John Curran, Tinley Park Park District; Community Impact award: Diane Stanke, Park District of Oak Park; Professional award: Carrie Fullerton, Bloomingdale Park District; and Young Professional of the Year: Steve Golembiewski, Westmont Park District.

During the 2014 Annual Business Meeting, outgoing chair, Allison Niemela honored the following people with Chairman's awards. Congratulations to these professionals for your service to IPRA: Sue Cottingham-Haupt; Michael Kies, CPRE, Hoffman Estates Park District; Nancy McCaul, CPRP, Fox Valley Park District; Carlo Capalbo, CPRP, Worth Park District; and Kari Miller, Batavia Park District.



During the Annual Business Meeting, Allison also gave special recognition to Heather Weishaar, IPRA's communications and development manager and Sue Triphahn, CMP, education & conference director from our sister organization Illinois Association of Park Districts.

Congratulations also to the new agencies who achieved Distinguished Accredited Agency status: Buffalo Grove Park District, Channahon Park District, Elk Grove Park District, Park District of Highland Park, Lincolnwood Parks and Recreation Department, Lombard Park District, Park District of Oak Park, Rockford Park District, Rolling Meadows Park District, Urbana Park District, Warrenville Park District and Wheeling Park District. The 2013 Outstanding Sustainability/Conservation award was given to O'Fallon Parks and Recreation, St. Charles Park District, and Waukegan Park District in their respective divisions. The 2013 Outstanding Facility and Parks award were given to Champaign County Forest Preserve District, Bloomingdale Park District, Geneva Park District, Crystal Lake Park District, Urbana Park District, Carol Stream Park District and Glenview Park District. The 2013 Outstanding Program and Special Event awards were given to Waukegan Park District and the Mundelein Park and Recreation District in their respective divisions. The Agency Showcase awards went to Rockford Park District in first place, Wilmette Park District in second place, and Park District of Highland Park in third place. The Agency Showcase People's Choice award went to Wilmette Park District. Other Agency Showcase recipients in their respective categories were Park District of Oak Park, Lombard Park District, Arlington Heights Park District, Rockford Park District, Arlington Heights Park District, Winnebago County Forest Preserve District, Addison Park District, Oswegoland Park District, Skokie Park District, Channahon Park District, Buffalo Grove Park District and Northbrook Park District. The Exceptional Workplace award recipients were Channahon Park District, Chicago Park District, Mundelein Park & Recreation District, Oak Lawn Park District, Olympia Fields Park District, Oswegoland Park District, Park District of Oak Park, Romeoville Recreation Department, SEASPAR, Warrenville Park District and Waukegan Park District.

Congratulations to these award recipients! Next year, I hope each of you take the time to nominate someone for one of these awards or strive to achieve one of these awards. The purpose of all service award programs is both to recognize leaders who have gone above and beyond in their service, and also to motivate others to do the same. Maybe next year's award recipient will be you!

If you attended the IPRA Annual Business Meeting at conference, you know we're off to a great 2014 with IPRA! Our financial status is healthy and strong. Our membership is growing. We have new high quality educational opportunities for our members. We are focused on creating additional access for services and ensuring that we do a better job of serving members across Illinois. We are creating partnerships and collaborations with like-minded organizations. And we are working to ensure that all members of IPRA feel valued in our diverse community. I look forward to working with all of you this year to come together in taking IPRA to the next level of service, growth, value and access. As I said at the Annual Business Meeting, let's make a commitment you and I, to stand by each other and to do whatever it takes to make IPRA stronger and better than ever. When IPRA is stronger, we can do more for you. I look forward to working with each of you to make that happen.

## IPRA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 20, 2014

**IPRA's Skills**

**Development Webinar Series**

April 9, 2014

**IPRA's Skills**

**Development Webinar Series**

April 11, 2014

**Leadership Academy Graduation**

**Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club**

April 17, 2014

**IPRA's Skills Development**

**Webinar Series**

April 17, 2014

**Communication & Marketing  
Section Meeting & Workshop**

**Lombard Park District - Lagoon**

April 25, 2014

**Innovation Renovation Workshop:  
Strategic Planning**

**Carol Stream Park District -**

**Fountain View Recreation Center**

April 29, 2014

**Park's Day at the Capitol**

**Springfield, IL**

**State Capitol**



**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

## Plenty of Legislation to Watch Closely as State Budget Dominates Spring Session

The second year of the 98<sup>th</sup> General Assembly is now well underway. With the temporary state income tax increase set to expire at the end of the year, lawmakers will continue to focus much of their attention on the State's budget. At the same time, there will be plenty of other legislative activity to follow at the Capitol as nearly 10,000 bills have been filed during the 98th General Assembly. IAPD has reviewed each of these bills to determine their impact on our member agencies.

As this issue goes to press, it is still too early in the legislative process to know which proposals will move forward this spring, but, as always, IAPD will keep you apprised of the latest developments from the Capitol through Legislative Updates and Alerts. You can always track the status of each bill we consider a priority by visiting the Public Policy section of IAPD's website ([www.ilparks.org](http://www.ilparks.org)), which we update several times each week during session.

Below are some of the bills we will be watching closely throughout the spring session.

### IAPD Legislative Platform

IAPD's Legislative Platform is a two-year agenda that coincides with each General Assembly. Fortunately, because of our success in passing six legislative initiatives last year, most of our platform has already been signed into law. Passing measures in the first year of a General Assembly is ideal because the second year is always an election year for all members of the House of Representatives and at least one-third of all Senators, which limits the number of session days and scope of bills that are considered.

Of course, IAPD has never rested on its laurels, so this year we have introduced two more initiatives with companion bills in both the House and the Senate. **SB 2838 (Barickman, J.) / HB 4483 (Reboletti, D.)** would allow newly elected officials to satisfy their Open Meetings Act training requirements by attending a special course developed by IAPD while **SB 2991 (Bertino-Tarrant, J.) / HB 4597 (Martwick, R.)** would expand the options for park district borrowing by allowing the use of a simple promissory note to address short term cash flow needs rather than more expensive borrowing methods like issuing tax anticipation warrants or bonds.

During the spring session, we will also be advocating for an expansion of grant opportunities for park, recreation and conservation agencies by seeking an increase in the appropriation for next year's OSLAD grants as well as other grant programs like the Youth Recreation Corps.

### Legislation Threatening Local Revenues

**HB 3727 / HB 4429 (Sandack, R.)** would change the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) to prevent taxing districts subject to tax caps from capturing the CPI-increase to their extension limitation if the district's total EAV is less than the previous levy year. Members

will recall that we defeated identical proposals during the past few years. **HB 3726 / HB 4426 (Sandack, R.)** contain similar concepts but use a three-year average for the EAV calculation.

**HB 5552 (Halbrook, B.)** would effectively freeze tax levies for taxing districts that are subject to tax caps until 2015 unless voters approve an increase by referendum. This legislation would have a similar impact to the bills referenced above but would apply to all taxing districts in tax capped counties rather than just those where the total EAV is declining. **HB 4251 (Kay, D.)** would similarly cap tax levies at their current level until 2017 and would also allow a county clerk to adjust an individual taxpayer's bill in certain cases. **HB 4450 (Cabello, J.)** is nearly identical except the period is extended until 2018.

**HB 4273 (Franks, J.)** would require districts to hold a non-binding advisory referendum for their proposed extension limitation at the next general election while **HB 3678 (Franks, J.)** would require taxing districts to approve an ordinance or resolution establishing a tax levy rate increase and hold a hearing if the district's total levy exceeds the previous levy year unless the district is otherwise required to hold a Truth in Taxation hearing.

**HB 4247 (Kay, D.)** would allow 10% of the registered voters within a county not subject to PTELL to file a petition to place a PTELL referendum on the ballot.

**SB 2854 (Jones, E.) / HB 4460 (Rita, R.)** are similar to bills that have been filed the past couple years which extend the statute of limitations for Cook County taxpayers to claim refunds for property tax overpayments or erroneous assessments from 5 years to 20 years.

While all of these measures threaten local revenues in a variety of ways, **HB 4515 (McAsey, E.) / SB 3564 (Harmon, D.)** would more favorably amend PTELL to give taxing districts the option to forgo increasing their annual tax levy by the CPI growth without losing the opportunity to capture that growth forever.

### Minimum Wage

In addition to **SB 68 (Lightford, K.)** upon which we have been reporting since last year, **SB 3126 (Noland, M.)** and **HB 3732 (Flowers, M.)** propose to increase the Minimum Wage anywhere from \$10.65 an hour to \$15 an hour. We continue to closely monitor all other legislation for possible amendments containing minimum wage increases.

### Freedom of Information

**SB 2926 (Biss, D.)** would allow public bodies to satisfy FOIA requests by publishing information on their website provided their FOIA officer certifies the online record, notifies the requester, and the requester is able to access the record online.

**HB 3664 (Kosel, R.) / HB 5635 (Hurley, F.)** would prohibit the use of confidentiality clauses in settlement and severance agreements that are funded by public moneys or which release a claim against a public body unless it is necessary to protect a trade secret, proprietary information, or information that is otherwise exempt from disclosure under FOIA.

**HB 4719 (Kay, D.)** would subject public bodies that willfully and intentionally fail to comply with FOIA, or otherwise act in bad faith, to a business offense (rather than civil penalty) and a fine ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for each occurrence. It would subject individual public employees and officials who willfully and intentionally fail to comply with FOIA to a Class B misdemeanor and term of imprisonment up to 60 days. **HB 5553 (Halbrook B.)** is similar but would subject public employees and officials to a Class C misdemeanor.

### Open Meetings Act

**HB 4437 (Halbrook, B.)** would delete a provision in the Open Meetings Act which provides that if a notice or agenda is not continuously available for the required period due to actions outside the control of the public body, then that lack of availability does not invalidate any meeting or action taken at a meeting.

**HB 4438 (Halbrook, B.)** provides that if a person requests information during a meeting and if the corporate authorities of the public body do not respond to the request during the meeting, the public body shall provide a written response to the request prior to or at the next meeting.

**HB 4794 (Riley, A.)** would add an exemption to the OMA for contract negotiations with a vendor.

### Additional or Duplicative Disclosure of Public Records

**SB 3106 (Connelly, M.)** would require local governments with a website to maintain an email system and address for each of its officials for use in the course of their official duties and to post the information to its website. **HB 5623 (Sandack, R.)** would create the Governmental Officer Online Accessibility Act containing similar requirements.

**HB 4216 (DeLuca, A.)** would subject any person who knowingly alters, destroys, defaces, removes, or conceals any public record, without lawful authority and with the intent to defraud any party, public officer, or entity, to a Class 4 felony.

**SB 3291 / SB 3292 / SB 3293 (McConnaughay, K.)** would require local governments in counties with a population of 100,000 or more to maintain a website containing the following information in perpetuity: (1) contact information for elected and appointed officials; (2) meeting notices and materials; (3) procedures for requesting information; (4) public notices; (5) annual budget; (6) ordinances; (7) financial reports and audits; (8) employee compensation information; (9) taxes and fees imposed; (10) debt disclosure report; (11) pension liability debt disclosure report; (12) lobbying contracts; (13) rules governing the award of contracts; (14) bids and contracts worth \$25,000 or more; (15) campaign contributions made by vendors; and (16) all vendor disclosures of relationships to any employee of that unit of local government. **HB 5861 (Ives, J.)** contains similar concepts.

**HB 5350 (Jones, T.)** would require park districts to post information concerning the total compensation paid to their employees. This is similar to existing requirements except that it is not limited to employees making more than \$75,000 and would add yet another mandate for calculating this information.

**HB 5671 (Burke, D.)** is an IMRF initiative that would require its member employers to submit a report to the IMRF listing each of its

employees during the past 12-month period, including part-time and seasonal employees, regardless of whether they participate in IMRF.

### Concealed Carry

**HB 4722 (Moffitt, D.) / SB 3143 (McCarter, K.)** would amend the new Firearm Concealed Carry Act by deleting the provision that currently prohibits a licensee from knowingly carrying a firearm into a public park while **SB 2653 (Forby, G.)** proposes to delete the provision prohibiting a licensee from carrying a firearm into a public gathering or special event conducted on property open to the public where a permit is required.

### Attacks on Local Control

**HB 924 (Hoffman, J. / Harmon, D.)**, which is a bill upon which we reported throughout last spring when it passed the House, would amend the Prevailing Wage Act to require bidders on local government contracts to meet the "responsible bidder" standards under the Illinois Procurement Code, including a requirement for bidders to participate in a training / apprenticeship program.

**HB 5719 (Dunkin, K.)**, which is similar to **SB 2363 (Martinez, I)** that we also covered last year, would eliminate the exemption under the Local Government Professional Services Selection Act for preexisting relationships with an architect, engineer or land surveyor.

**HB 5989 (Conroy, D.)** amends more than thirty different statutes including the Park District Code and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act to provide that, beginning in 2016, the entities created under those Acts and Codes shall adopt a uniform fiscal year beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30.

**HB 4267 (Chapa LaVia, L.)** would prohibit a governmental unit or an individual serving as a plumbing inspector for the unit of local government from acting as a plumbing contractor.

**HB 4187 (Kay, D.)** and **HB 3683 / HB 4430 (Sandack, R.)** would subject local government contracts with the State that are \$250,000 or more to the requirements of the Illinois Procurement Code.

### Local Government Consolidation

**HB 3251 (Franks, J.)**, which is a bill that was filed last year but that is still active, would make it very easy to eliminate units of local government by allowing a small number of voters, and even county boards by resolution, to place dissolution referenda on the ballot while **HB 5786 (Franks, J.)** would allow all counties to dissolve units of government with appointed board members. **HB 5785 (Franks, J.)** amends more than fifteen different statutes, including the Conservation District Act and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act, to allow a majority vote of the governing board of those entities to be annexed or consolidated into another unit of government in order to dissolve.

### Other

**HB 4656 (Riley, A.)** would give local governments an additional 5 days (from 30 to 35) under the Local Government Prompt Payment Act to approve or disapprove a bill from a vendor or contractor after receipt of such bill, goods or services.

**HB 4406 (Gabel, R.)** would require licensed day care centers to adopt policies regarding immunizations for day care staff.

**HB 3760 (Franks, J.)** would amend the Illinois Pension Code to place restrictions on the amount a retiree could earn if returning to work in a position in which he or she is eligible to accrue service credit or creditable service under any public pension system. The bill also provides that once an employee's retirement annuity or pension under the Code fully vests, the employee may maintain his or her employment in that position without contributing to any retirement annuity fund or any retirement pension fund under the Code.



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IAPD/IPRA

# Soaring to New Heights

## CONFERENCE AWARDS

*IAPD and IPRA honored legislators and leaders in the park, recreation and conservation industry at the Soaring to New Heights awards luncheon on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Governor Pat Quinn was awarded the Lifetime Friend of Illinois Parks award.*



### **IAPD Legislator of the Year Senator Michael Connelly**

For many years now, Senator Connelly has been a trusted supporter of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and its member agencies. This past year, Senator Connelly was the Senate sponsor for House Bill 2232, which provides park districts with the authority to enter into multi-year utility contracts. In 2012, while serving in the Illinois House of Representatives, he was also a chief co-sponsor of Senate Bill 3809, which provides agencies necessary access to the criminal records of job applicants. Senator Connelly is always very gracious with his time, and his support of Illinois park and recreation agencies has been outstanding.



### **IAPD Legislator of the Year Senator Dan Kotowski**

Since joining the General Assembly in 2007, Senator Kotowski has been one of IAPD's strongest supporters. He holds several key positions in the Senate, and time and time again IAPD has been able to count on his leadership and support. He has been critical to our efforts to protect the integrity of the OSLAD grant program from interfund borrowing and fund sweeps. This year, he was the chief Senate sponsor of Senate Bill 1637, IAPD's key legislative platform initiative. Senator Kotowski's dedication and service to IAPD and Illinois parks and recreation efforts has been remarkable.

## IPRA Young Professional of the Year

### Steve Golembiewski, Westmont Park District

This year's winner of the IPRA Young Professional of the Year award was Steve Golembiewski from the Westmont Park District. Steve is the assistant superintendent of recreation for Westmont Park District. He is a tireless worker and his positive attitude is contagious, providing a fresh and encouraging outlook on everything he does. Steve oversees the spray park and concession stand, manages the community center staff, administers special events and introduced a community theatre group. His commitment to the Westmont Park District and the residents is extraordinary.



## IAPD Rising Star Mike Reilly, Naperville Park District

The IAPD Rising Star award was presented to Mike Reilly from Naperville Park District. Mike has been on his park district's board for five years, board president for three years and in that time he has really made a difference. Mike understands the importance of the relationship between commissioners and state legislators. His proactive approach with regard to legislation has proven effective for passing bills that benefit the park district and he enthusiastically represents the park district at the vast majority of its events. Mike's dedication to the field of parks and recreation has been nothing short of exemplary.



## IPRA Professional

### Carrie Fullerton, Bloomingdale Park District

Carrie Fullerton, executive director of Bloomingdale Park District, received the IPRA Professional award. Carrie is a very passionate and engaged individual who is driven to be the best at what she does. She has a magnetic personality that brings people together and infuses them with energy and enthusiasm. She has had a true passion for parks and recreation since her first job at the Schaumburg Park District. Her track record of leadership, advocacy and engagement is unmatched. She has served as IPRA chairman of the board, co-chair of the leadership academy and on countless other committees. Her professionalism and leadership is truly outstanding.



**IAPD Honored Professional  
Greg Lewis, New Lenox Community Park District**

One of this year's IAPD Honored Professional awards went to Greg Lewis, executive director of New Lenox Community Park District. Greg has been with the park district for 25 years. He presented nine OSLAD grant submissions which brought an impressive \$2.2 million dollars in monies to the park district. Greg also submitted a PARC grant on behalf of the Lincolnway Special Recreation Association which resulted in a grant of \$2.5 million dollars. He knows how to manage grant money and plan for budget cuts during lean times. His leadership and legislative advocacy skills are unmatched.



**IAPD Honored Professional  
William (Bill) Nelson, Rock Island Park and Recreation Department**

A second IAPD Honored Professional award went to Bill Nelson, the executive director of Rock Island Parks and Recreation Department. Bill started his career in parks and recreation in 1977 and in 1998, he was promoted to his current position. He has served on the NRPA board of trustees and as president of the American Park and Recreation Society. Bill has been an active member of the IAPD, chairing the municipal park and recreation task force. In 2013, he was able to secure a \$600,000 grant for the dedication of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. He is also well respected by legislators as they know Bill will work to get the job done.

**IPRA Community Impact  
Diane Stanke, Park District of Oak Park**

Diane Stanke, the director of marketing and customer service for the Park District of Oak Park, received the IPRA Community Impact award. Diane has worked for her park district for 12 years, making a difference every step of the way. She was instrumental as the agency made strides in passing a referendum that has allowed the Park District of Oak Park to invest 50% of tax revenues into capital projects beginning in 2005. During the creation of the 2004 comprehensive plan, the park district's citizen committee was formed and she has been the staff liaison since its inception. Diane's steadfast dedication to her community is remarkable.



**IAPD Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service  
Linda Johnson, Crete Park District**

This year's IAPD Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service award went to Linda Johnson from the Crete Park District. Since 1997, Linda has served as park board president on multiple occasions. Elected to the IAPD board in 2006, Linda has served on many committees and was also the IAPD board chairman. She has been an active member of Crete Lions, teaching visually impaired athletes how to play baseball. She also took on the role of Crete Township planning and zoning commissioner. In addition, she has served as president of her PTO and also enjoys mentoring. In 2012, she inaugurated the umbrellas for peace project at a Crete Monee school. Linda's desire to make the community a better place is truly commendable.

# PASSING THE GAVEL



## **IPRA Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement John Curran, Tinley Park Park District**

John Curran, the director of parks and recreation for the Tinley Park Park District, received this year's Robert Artz Lifetime Achievement award. John has served the district since 1996 and previously held the same position for the Alsip Park District. John has spearheaded two successful referendums and completed more than \$40 million dollars in capital improvement projects. John serves as past chairman on the IPRA board. He has served on 12 different IPRA committees since 1979. He was also the president of the South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association. Additionally, he is a certified park and recreation professional and John is an active member of the Tinley Park Chamber of Commerce. He is a great example for others to follow.



## **IAPD Commissioner of the Year Colette Kubiesa, Elmhurst Park District**

The IAPD Commissioner of the Year award winner is Colette Kubiesa. She has served the park district for 16 years and is now the board president. Colette has worked hard to secure more than \$14 million dollars in grant funding to help make park improvements. Most recently, she helped the district secure a \$1.8 million dollar PARC grant for the ongoing restoration of historic Wilder Park. Under her watch, the Elmhurst Park District has been recognized with numerous awards and honors. Colette has also served as IAPD chairman and on numerous committees. Thanks to Colette's countless hours of volunteer service efforts, residents of Elmhurst will enjoy outstanding park and recreation opportunities for years to come.

## **People's Choice**

This year's Agency Showcase featured a "People's Choice" award. All attendees were given the opportunity to vote for their favorite display of parks, recreation and conservation marketing and communications materials. This year's winner is the Wilmette Park District.



## **2014 Chairman of the IAPD Board of Trustees Joe Petry**

Joe Petry will serve as the chairman of the IAPD Board of Trustees in 2014. Joe has been a commissioner of the Champaign Park District since 2003 and has served as president and vice-president. He is currently in his second six-year term on the board and is serving as president. He passionately seeks to promote open space and natural areas locally and statewide. In addition to his service to the Champaign Park District, he also served on the Champaign

County Design and Conservation Foundation board. He helped found and volunteered with the Boneyard Creek community day effort.

Joe currently serves on IAPD's board development committee, executive committee, nominating committee, joint coordinating council and research advisory council. He is a professor of economics at the University of Illinois at Champaign and received his Ph.D. in 1991 from the University of Illinois. He succeeds Don Andersen of the Oak Lawn Park District.

## **2014 Chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors Jan Peterson Hincapie**

Jan Peterson Hincapie will serve as the chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors in 2014. A veteran of the parks and recreation field for over 30 years, she has been the director of parks and recreation for the Village of Lincolnwood since 2006. During that time, Jan's department has secured over \$8 million dollars in grant money. Under Jan's leadership in Lincolnwood, the department has completed a community center feasibility study, comprehensive master plan, updated the strategic plan twice, received accreditation from the American Camping Association, became accredited as an Illinois Distinguished Agency and was the recipient of two "Best of the Best" Arts in the Park awards from Illinois Arts Council and IAPD.



Prior to coming to Lincolnwood, Jan served as leisure services director for the Northbrook Park District, overseeing all recreation programs and communications. She also served as recreation program manager for the Glenview Park District. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. Jan served as IPRA's first intern and has been involved with both the Wisconsin and Illinois associations during her career. She succeeds Allison Niemela, executive director of the Batavia Park District.



Through intergovernmental cooperation, Illinois park districts can aspire to even greener initiatives by sharing in the powers and privileges of other units of government.

This article will review some of the possibilities for environmental stewardship that an agency can explore with other units of government.

#### **SOURCES OF AUTHORITY**

The Illinois Constitution encourages units of government to cooperate in pursuit of their various goals. Article VII, Section 10 states (in relevant part): “Units of local government and school districts may contract or otherwise associate among themselves, ...to exercise, combine, or transfer any power or function, in any manner not prohibited by law or by ordinance....Participating units of government may use their credit, revenues, and other resources to pay costs and to service debt related to intergovernmental activities.”



The Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (5 ILCS 220/1 *et seq.*) also authorizes units of government to exercise, combine, transfer and/or enjoy any of the powers, privileges, functions or authority which either of them has for the mutual benefit of them all. This statute authorizes counties to join in cooperation with units of local government where counties (and their forest preserves) might otherwise be lacking an express grant of power (welcome forest preserves!). A terrific example of intergovernmental cooperation benefitting the environment that involved multiple levels of government and multiple jurisdictions is the Grand Illinois Trail which the State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources—as a result of the cooperation of numerous park districts, counties, and other units of government—now owns and operates as a 500 mile bike trail that extends from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River.

In addition to the Illinois Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, there are several other statutes that authorize intergovernmental cooperation. For example, the Local Government Property Transfer Act (50 ILCS 605/1 *et seq.*) authorizes park districts, within certain parameters, to transfer (or acquire) ownership of property to (or from) another unit of government, as well the authority to lease property to (or from) another unit of government – without having to go through the lengthy and expensive procedures otherwise required by the Illinois Park Code. Similarly, 105 ILCS 5/10-20.42 authorizes school districts to enter into intergovernmental agreements with park districts and other units of government to own and operate a wind turbine or a solar energy farm. Among the many powers, privileges and functions that the Constitution and the various other statutes authorize park districts and other governments to share are the use of land, the use of personnel, and the use of funds for joint purchasing and contracting.

One recent example of how intergovernmental cooperation solved a problem and promoted environmental stewardship involves the City of Naperville and the Naperville Park District. Following several significant rain events that caused substantial property damage to multiple homes in the city, the Naperville Park District and the City of Naperville used their intergovernmental cooperation powers to exchange property in a manner that protected the environment, served each government's respective mission, and helped to remedy the storm-water problem. Specifically, the park district transferred one of its parks to the City of Naperville so that the city could add an environmentally friendly storm-water facility with bio-filtration and, in exchange, the City of Naperville transferred to the district unused and undeveloped land that the district added to its trail system and passive recreational green space. The exchange was quickly accomplished with a simple agreement and few ordinances and resolutions.

Furthermore, the ability to combine forces with other units of government can create an opportunity for environmental stewardship through economies of scale that may not otherwise be available to an agency acting alone. Economies of scale are particularly relevant to the use of alternative environmentally friendly sources of energy and

for reducing the impact of the energy infrastructure on the environment. Some boards – especially those under heavy budgetary pressures – may be unwilling to undertake a “green project” unless the cost differential between the present situation and a green alternative is minimal. In the case of alternative fuels, the cost of converting the fleet and the cost of installing the infrastructure, including the fueling stations, are often barriers to making the switch to a greener fuel. An intergovernmental agreement may be the means to overcoming that barrier.

For example, the use of compressed natural gas has long been viewed as an environmentally friendly alternative to gasoline. As a rule of thumb, the break-even/savings point for fleet conversion and infrastructure improvements associated with compressed natural gas occurs at about 250,000 gallons of gasoline. While an agency's fleet may not, by itself, consume that many gallons of gasoline it is possible that, in combination with the sister municipality or school district, the units of government can reach the tipping point. Typically, all that would be required are intergovernmental cooperation agreements for: 1) developing the infrastructure and converting the fleet; and 2) operating the new facility (including purchasing and accounting for the fuel). Such agreements could help shrink both the costs and the carbon footprint of all of the cooperating units of government.

Park districts, municipalities and county governments are already combining to purchase fuel and share fueling stations. The Batavia Park District and the City of Batavia cooperate in this way through an intergovernmental agreement. Likewise, McHenry County is in talks with the McHenry County Conservation District about making the switch to propane and sharing the Conservation District's propane fueling facility. In addition to reducing the impact that fueling facilities have on the environment, these arrangements demonstrate the practical reality that different units of government can operate their respective fleets successfully while sharing a fueling station.

The use of intergovernmental cooperation to benefit the environment is not unique to Illinois. For example, in Pennsylvania, park districts joined together with their municipalities to share planning expertise and personnel to develop public housing projects that included LEED certified buildings, rain gardens, surface playgrounds and parks, and rooftop parks and recreation amenities. Similarly, in Virginia, park districts and municipalities have combined forces, budgets, personnel, time and equipment to set tree canopy standards and, with the cooperation of private parties, joined together to achieve those goals through the installation of new trees and greenways.

Due to their mission, park districts and forest preserves will always be on the front-lines of the effort to promote and protect the environment. That does not mean, however, that they have to go it alone. The State of Illinois has given units of local government broad powers to cooperate in hopes that through such cooperation they can all achieve more of their goals and implement more of their initiatives—including the green ones—for the benefit of all.



Due to their mission, park districts and forest preserves will always be on the front-lines of the effort to promote and protect the environment. That does not mean, however, that they have to go it alone.



# Sustaining *the* Future through the Rockford Park District

by **Laura Gibbs Green**, *Public Relations and Social Media Manager with Rockford Park District*



Sustainability is a way of life in the Rockford Park District! From project design to day-to-day operations, sustainability means success and longevity. In the Rockford Park District, “sustainability” means the wise use of money, staff, materials, land, programs, partnerships, etc. to meet the needs of today without putting the burden on future generations.

## Going Green District-Wide

District-wide efforts to be more environmentally friendly started in 2000, when the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity gave the Rockford Park District a \$145,000 grant to establish and maintain a recycling program at office buildings, sportscore complexes, major recreation facilities, parks and special events. Over the years, pop bottle recycling containers were added at all five golf courses, which reduced the waste stream by at least 25%, for a total of 22.5 tons annually. Pop bottle shaped containers were also added to Magic Waters Waterpark, which increased recycling efforts by more than 20% as well.

From 2007 to 2010, the Rockford Park District diverted 7,111 cubic yards of material from trash containers; these materials would have otherwise ended up in area landfills. The Rockford Park District recycles paper, aluminum, plastic, batteries, light bulbs, ink cartridges, paint and tires. More recently, efforts to be green to save green in the district have focused on utilizing technology to reduce costs and eliminate paper trails.

## Welcome New Sustainability Team

The Rockford Park District is committed to providing well-maintained facilities and assets that are clean and attractive, in good repair, preserved, and positioned for long-term use and sustainability. In 2004, the Rockford Park District Board approved an environmental policy and formed a green team. Within the last year, the team's focus and name have changed due to the Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners wanting to emphasize sustainability "in development, construction, operation, repair and replacement, adaptive re-use and/or retirement of parks and facilities."

Last fall, commissioners approved a new sustainability policy which incorporates the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development's (UWCED) concept created in 2007 called the "Triple Bottom Line" which is now the benchmark for all organizations to target. The Triple Bottom Line refers to the considerations of economic sustainability, environmental sustainability and social equity aspects of a particular decision. It is the goal of the Rockford Park District to incorporate these concepts and principles where feasible within the organization for the well-being of the community and the environment.

The district's new sustainability team, comprised of a cross section of employees, meets bi-monthly to review the district's efforts and updates the policy annually. The sustainability team had a huge role in the 2013 IPRA Environmental Report Card which was completed in September 2013. The Environmental Report Card is a voluntary standard the district can comply with for IAPD/IPRA Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation. The district scored 93%, which qualifies the district as "an environmental leader in the field, and has reason to be proud" per IPRA standards. "The IPRA report card which outlines environmental initiatives or green practices, will be an excellent point of reference for us to use when applying for grant funding. It can also help to identify areas for further assessment that impacts the district's budget, such as energy efficiency improvements," says deputy director of capital planning and asset management, Laura Williamson.

This year, the team is committed to the following initiatives:

- Expand recycling opportunities in the parks with a priority to shelters, picnic areas and active sports fields
- Incorporate green purchasing language into vendor contracts and specifications
- Expand recycling at events and facilities through vendor expectations, rental expectations and staff training
- Work with facility maintenance staff, purchasing department and vendors to complete conversion of facility air filters to MERV 8 or better to improve indoor air quality for patrons/staff and extend the useful life of HVAC systems



## Capital Improvement Projects with Sustainability Features - Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens

In 2011, Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens opened making it the *third largest* conservatory in Illinois with a total of *22,000 square feet*, and at the highest point stands *52 feet*. It includes an *11,000-square-foot* plant exhibition area complete with water features, seating areas, and sculptures, all in a tropical plant setting.

In December 2013, Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens was designated a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED building, achieving a Gold level of certification. The facility was rated on design, construction, operation and maintenance.

Many sustainable features were worked into the design of this tropical destination, resulting in the facility saving about 64% in energy costs, primarily on heating and cooling. Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens uses an open loop geothermal heating & cooling system since it sits on top of a large shallow aquifer just below the Rock River.



#### **Additional Sustainable Features at Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens:**

- Bioswales controlling stormwater runoff and soil erosion
- A water-permeable parking area which controls soil erosion and waterway pollution
- A 4,300-square-foot green roof garden that absorbs water, insulates the building and combats urban heat island effect
- A facility that is outfitted with low-flow water-efficient fixtures
- Solar panels which provide about 20% of total required electrical power
- Energy Star equipment is used where available
- Large windows allow daylight to be used in place of electrical lighting
- A motion-sensor lighting system
- High efficiency HVAC equipment
- Daylight dimming system
- Sustainable and/or recycled materials used throughout the building
- Indoor air quality improved by an 80% efficient energy recovery ventilator unit, which circulates outdoor air into the facility.

On the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens campus sits an 82-space parking lot featuring two electric vehicle charging stations and a three-foot tall "living" retaining wall where plant life can grow. The Conservatory is also home to the district's first GEOTEA Compost Tea Machine. Compost Tea is a liquid suspension brewed in about 24 hours from water, high quality compost and natural nutrients.

#### **Capital Improvement Projects with Sustainability Features - Loves Park Playground**

In July 2011, the Rockford Park District and the City of Loves Park teamed up to transform a brownfield site in Loves Park into a community park. The Loves Park playground project meant redeveloping a brownfield site that was once the former Hines Lumber Company property. The expansion of the park was made possible by the City of Loves Park, Hines Lumber Company, Woodward Inc., and the Rockford Park District Foundation. Funding for the Loves Park playground development came from an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Open Lands Acquisition and Development grant, and \$100,000 of additional state funding was secured and allocated to the project by Illinois Senator Dave Syverson.

The 6.5 acre park was one of eleven sites selected in Illinois to be a model for the design and development of sustainable parks in Northern Illinois. Sustainable sites use less energy, conserve water and natural resources, reduce pollution, and restore natural habitats, among other environmental benefits.

Property amenities include:

- Youth softball/baseball diamond
- Basketball court
- Playground
- Six pickleball courts
- Two grass volleyball courts
- Parking lot with bioretention
- Bubblers

Some of the sustainable efforts include reusing cement from the lumberyard for the new parking lot and courts, creating rain gardens and other eco-friendly rainwater management efforts to slow and filter storm water before it leaves the property.

"This playground project fit perfectly with the direction the park district was already headed focusing on conserving our resources to build a better future in our urban park district," said Dan Erwin, capital planning and asset management project manager.

**Awards and Recognition Received for Environmental and Sustainability Efforts in the Rockford Park District:**

- The Outstanding Corporate Friend of the Environment award from Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful
- Winnebago County Green Business award (twice)
- IAPD Best of the Best award (First Runner Up) – Best Green Practices for Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens
- Community Sustainability award from Keep Northern Illinois Beautiful
- Sustainable Sites Initiative for Loves Park Playground
- IAPD/IPRA Outstanding Facility & Parks award for Atwood Center Birds of Prey Exhibit
- LEED Certification (Gold Level) for Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens
- Winnebago County Renewable Energy Expo award for Advanced Energy Efficient Building (Nicholas Conservatory)



**The Wilder Park Conservatory & Greenhouse Project: Planting the Seeds for a More Efficient Future**

By Megan McNamara, Marketing Specialist with Elmhurst Park District

The Elmhurst Park District prioritizes and promotes sustainable activities that lead to better outcomes for future generations. Most recently, the district is focused on the renovation of the Wilder Park Conservatory and Greenhouse.

The district is updating its Wilder Park Conservatory and Greenhouse, an 83-year-old set of structures that is currently undergoing a major renovation to incorporate more efficient heating and cooling systems. Built in 1923, the Wilder Park Conservatory was the very first Elmhurst Park District capital project and serves as a symbol of the community's enduring commitment to horticultural programs. The conservatory logs approximately 13,000 annual visits and serves as a memorable place for prom, wedding, holiday and graduation photos.

**Read the Full Story Online**

Go to [ILparks.org](http://ILparks.org) and select Publications/IP&R Magazine/WebXtras from the left column.

**Other articles to read regarding green initiatives available online:**

- Going Green at the Waukegan Park District by Jan Krapf
- Saving Going Green by Sandy Manisco
- Creating a Greener Tomorrow by Wendy Kummerer

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by Jayne Bohner,

Public Affairs Specialist with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



*Through*  
**GREEN-COLORED**  
**GLASSES**

The Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is committed to being green. Across the county's 60 forest preserves, 25,000 verdant acres vacillate with the stems and leaves of over a thousand different species of plants. But it's more than mere aesthetics. Trees dampen noise pollution and absorb carbon dioxide.

Native grasses and flowers feed and shelter wildlife. Open lands hold and filter rainwater before it percolates into aquifers that feed wells, rivers and streams. And every year, to better support the large-scale benefits of these areas, the district has been looking at how to "green up" daily activities that manage and maintain the forest preserves.

### The *Spartina Pectinata* is Always Greener

Using native plants to restock the county's woodlands, prairies and wetlands has been a district standard operating procedure for decades, but many of these species are well-suited for smaller landscaping projects, too. Native plants require less water and fertilizers and are more resistant to pests and diseases than their cultivated counterparts, advantages the district has touted in its efforts to encourage private landowners to incorporate these species in their own landscapes. Since 2007, it's hosted a native plant sale each May for home gardeners, and in 2010 it unveiled the 13-acre Danada Visitors Garden at its Danada House in Wheaton, a peaceful retreat that also provides practical examples of native gardening and other environmentally friendly landscaping ideas.

Within the larger garden, a 5,000-square-foot rain garden planted with culver's root, golden alexander, obedient plant, blue flag iris and other deep-rooted flowers and grasses holds stormwater before slowly releasing it into the ground, where the plants and subterranean layers of soil and rock trap sediment and filter pollutants. The rain garden is fed by a system that collects water from downspouts and then filters, stores and recirculates it between an underground cistern and a 36-inch-tall water feature. Overflow channels accented with sandblasted wave patterns carry water from other downspouts and the cistern. Near the garden, a permeable brick paver parking lot allows rain to filter slowly into the soil through 2 feet of coarse graded stone instead of flowing unimpeded into storm sewers. (St. James Farm Forest Preserve in Warrenville and Willowbrook Wildlife Center in Glen Ellyn also have permeable lots.)

Similar features surround the district's Urban Stream Research Center at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville, which opened in 2012. There, the landscaping doesn't merely look nice: It helps protect the waterways ecologists at the center are working to restore. Rain barrels, permeable brick pavers and rain gardens work alongside "bioswales," shallow, plant-filled culverts that meander around the building. Bioswales hold stormwater as it makes its way to larger manmade wetland basins, which filter out pollutants while providing wildlife habitat and other benefits of healthy wetlands.

### Alternative Fuel: It's a Gas

To maintain its natural and developed areas, the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County relies on a diverse fleet of cars, trucks and specialty vehicles. In 2001, its board of commissioners voted to lessen the effect that fleet has on the environment by approving a policy to gradually convert it to run on alternative fuels.

"When the core of your mission is conservation, it makes you focus not only on how your efforts are going to affect the environment today but what they're going to mean five, six generations down the road," says Michael Webster, the district's manager of fleet services.



Today, roughly 83 percent of the district's fleet use compressed natural gas, liquid propane gas, ethanol E85 or biodiesel B20. In fiscal year 2012 – 2013 alone the district reduced its use of conventional gasoline, diesel and hybrid fuels by 53,000 gallons and prevented 280.78 metric tons of greenhouse gases from entering the atmosphere.

Finding alternative-fuel stations at first was a challenge, but with matching grants the district was able to build CNG, LPG, E85 ethanol and B20 fueling stations at its two fleet maintenance facilities, the only two sites in Illinois to offer four different alternative fuels. Because alternative fuel sources remain rare, intergovernmental agreements allow other municipalities to use the stations, and to cover out-of-county emergencies, district cars and light trucks retrofitted for CNG retain their original conventional tanks.

The district's fleet has earned recognition as a Chicago Area Clean Cities' Top Clean Fleet and the highest designation from the Illinois Green Fleets Program. For the past two years it's made Government Fleet magazine's list of 100 Best Fleets, and in 2013 it received the Governor's Sustainability award from the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center for its commitment to environmental excellence through its long-standing dedication to the use of alternative fuels.



### Soak Up the Sun

DuPage County Forest Preserve District employees who work in the field are frequently reminded of an energy source anchored 93 million miles overhead. The district has relied on the sun to power devices from trash compactors and solar-thermal hot-water systems to trail-crossing signs, but it recently went a step further by outfitting the roof of a small horse barn, the Danada Equestrian Center in Wheaton with a 20-kilowatt solar photovoltaic array.

Funded in part with \$300,000 from the U.S. Department of Energy through its Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy grant program, the project's intent was not only to power the equestrian center but also to demonstrate to visitors how the sun can provide a clean, reliable power source for homes, offices and parking lots. The 85 240-watt panels are tied into the electric grid and hooked up to a smart meter from ComEd, which purchases any excess electricity. Software monitors and records their output.

"The data is then displayed graphically on the web," says Kevin Horsfall, the landscape architect supervisor with the district's office of planning who manages the project. "People can see the array's performance live, minute by minute, as well as historically by year, month, week or day from anywhere in the world."

Transferring surplus power to ComEd eliminates the need to buy and periodically replace expensive storage batteries, which lose energy every time they discharge and leave owners with the problem of recycling bulky batteries filled with lead, mercury or other metals. At night when the panels aren't collecting, the equestrian center buys the little power it needs from ComEd at cheaper off-peak rates. Since the array started collecting power on Nov. 29, 2012, it's generated about 23,000 kilowatt hours. "It's really a great example of how an organization large or small can successfully use an alternative energy source to help reduce demand to the energy grid at peak use times when it is needed most," Horsfall adds.

### Waste Not, Want Not

As the district looks for alternative ways to power its needs, it's also looking for ways to reduce its need for power. "We're always exploring energy-efficient building components and mechanical and electrical equipment that we can incorporate into our routine maintenance work and repairs," explains Jason Berger, the district's manager of structural maintenance.

Familiar technologies the district has adopted over the years include motion-activated lights, programmable thermostats and energy-efficient light bulbs. One grant from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation allowed the district to replace over 600 fluorescent fixtures with more efficient models and 100 incandescent exit signs with high-efficiency LED alternatives. The new fixtures last longer and require less energy and maintenance, which saves the district \$5,000 to \$7,000 annually at current electricity rates. The district's efforts led the U.S. Department of Energy to designate it as an Energy Star partner in 2008. When possible, the district purchases Energy Star-rated equipment to replace building materials, appliances and electronics. Sensors on vending machines turn off the lights and manage cooling cycles when they're not being used, and photo cells, timers and motion sensors on most exterior lights turn them on only when needed. "Dark sky" exterior LED lights even help the district fight light pollution as it saves energy. Multifunction equipment that prints, copies, faxes, scans and emails that multiple offices can share dramatically lowers the district's inventory of electronics overall.

### Looking Ahead

As it prepares for the start of its second 100 years, the district will continue to find greener ways to care for the county's forest preserves and to work within the DuPage community to assist other organizations seeking to adopt like-minded practices.





# The 2013 IP&R Magazine Photo Contest Awards

The Illinois Association of Park Districts and Illinois Park and Recreation Association are proud of the high caliber of content that our readers submit to *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine.

We are especially grateful to those in the field who have an eye for capturing the beauty of the parks, the wonder of nature and the smiles on the faces of young and old alike, who have participated in the programs offered by Illinois' outstanding park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies.

**Congratulations to our 2013 Give Us Your Best Shot photo contest winners!**



## RECREATION/PEOPLE AT PLAY



### 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Bojan Kojovic  
Park District of Franklin Park  
"Just Keep Swimming"

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Mike Terson  
Buffalo Grove Park District  
"No Brakes Required"



## SPORTS



### 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Mike Frankowski  
St. Charles Park District  
"BMX Bash at East Side  
Sports Complex"

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Amy Weiland  
Oswegoland Park District  
"Little Soccer Star"



## WILDLIFE



### 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Mike Frankowski  
St. Charles Park District  
"Hummingbird Moth at  
Hickory Knolls Natural  
Area"

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

John Greene  
Deerfield Park District  
"Peek a Hooo"

## NATURE/LANDSCAPE



### 1<sup>st</sup> Place

Tara Purtell  
Waukegan Park District  
"Steps into the Ravine Scene"

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

Lisa Haring  
Des Plaines Park District  
"Connie's Garden"

*A heartfelt thanks to everyone who submitted a photo in 2013.*

*And, as always, we thank the judge who made the tough decisions. He reviewed more than 200 outstanding photos.*

### Photo Judge

Chris Young,  
State Journal-Register



## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Springfield Park District Names Derek Harms as New Executive Director

The Springfield Park District Board of Trustees has appointed **Derek Harms** as the executive director of the Springfield Park District. Derek brings a diverse 14 years of experience in the park and recreation field to his new position. Throughout his career, he has managed a wide range of facilities and programs at four park districts located in North Eastern and Central Illinois. During his tenure, he has been involved with the vision, funding, and construction phases of several multimillion dollar projects including a large scale water park, athletic complexes and multiple recreation centers.

Derek earned a bachelor's degree in recreation, parks and tourism administration from Western Illinois University. Although Harms worked at three different park districts in the Chicago Northwest Suburbs for several years, he has always considered Central Illinois his home. In 2007, Harms moved to Springfield to accept the position of director of recreation at the Springfield Park District and was later appointed as the district's interim executive director where he provided leadership and vision to the agency during a challenging transitional period.

### Bensenville Park District Names Rick Robbins as New Executive Director

The Bensenville Park District Board of Commissioners has appointed **Rick Robbins** executive director of the Bensenville Park District. Rick has worked in the parks and recreation field for over 30 years and brings experiences from very distinct parts of the country to his new position in Bensenville. He most recently served the Collinsville Area Recreation District for 6 years as their superintendent of recreation, and as interim executive director during his final year with the district. Prior to Collinsville, Rick spent 17 years as the supervisor of athletics and fitness services for the Peoria Park District. Rick began his career with the Park District of Highland Park as their athletic supervisor.

Throughout his career, Rick has been very active within several affiliates, sections, and committees of IPRA, serving as president of SIPRA and CIRCLE, SIPRA's scholarship committee chair, IPRA's recreation section board, and athletics committee chair. He also wrote an article that was published in the 2011 World Waterpark Magazine.

Rick is a graduate of parks and recreation from Southern Illinois University. He brings a great deal of experience and passion to his new position and is excited to be back in the Chicago region.



### Winnetka Park District Names Robert Smith as New Executive Director

The Winnetka Park District Board of Commissioners appointed **Robert Smith** as the new executive director for the Winnetka Park District. He has been with the park district since 2003 as the superintendent of parks. His in-depth knowledge of all aspects of the park district's operations will enable him to hit the ground running.

During his tenure with the park district, Robert has successfully demonstrated his leadership abilities through staff development, project management, public outreach and budget preparation, along with operational management of the district's park assets.

Prior to his stint with the Winnetka Park District, Robert served as the superintendent of parks for the Park District of Franklin Park (2000-2003) and Morton Grove Park District (1990-2000). His parks and recreation career has spanned over 34 years, getting his start at the Bensenville Park District as a supervisor of buildings and grounds.

Robert has both a bachelor's and master's degree in public administration from Governors State University. Additionally, he is a certified parks and recreation professional and certified playground inspector.

## BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AWARDS

IAPD's Board Member Development program recognizes local board members who continuously go above and beyond the call of duty. Board members earn points by attending educational and legislative programs, events, and board or committee meetings.

**This year we have six board members that have achieved DISTINCTIVE status:**

- Jennifer Blum, Round Lake Area Park District
- John Jaszka, Carol Stream Park District
- Jackie Jeffery, Carol Stream Park District
- Bob Knudson, Mundelein Park & Recreation District
- Georgia Schroeder, Wood Dale Park District
- Patti Sutherland Weicker, Rolling Meadows Park District

**This year we have twelve MASTER board members:**

- Don Andersen, Oak Lawn Park District
- Libby Baker, Gurnee Park District
- Tom Barz, Frankfort Park District
- Kathleen Carson, Oak Brook Park District
- Kevin Dolan, Mundelein Park & Recreation District
- Richard Drazner, Buffalo Grove Park District
- Eric Entler, Park District of Forest Park
- Scott Jacobson, Buffalo Grove Park District
- Adriane Johnson, Buffalo Grove Park District
- Patrick McGrath, Mundelein Park & Recreation District
- Joe Petry, Champaign Park District
- Brian Sokolowski, Carol Stream Park District

**This year we have two NOTABLE board members:**

- Jesse Ortega, Mundelein Park & Recreation District
- Matt Walsh, Park District of Forest Park

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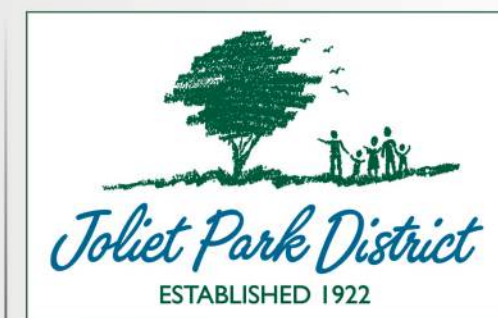
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The 65,000-square-foot Inwood Athletic Club features an indoor pool, a 10,000-square-foot fitness floor, an indoor walk/run track and a variety of group fitness programs.

Matthew Pehle, Finance Director, states “Due to our size and numerous operations, we need to be flexible and adaptive to numerous situations. IPARKS has been able to be very helpful in developing the right type of coverage for us and providing great training resources to keep our operations running safely and smoothly.”



## ...to the very small.



Limestone Park District, located in northeastern Illinois, serves a rural population and manages to do so with no full-time staff members, just 2 part-time employees, and a number of dedicated volunteers. “It is remarkable to see what we are able to accomplish,” exclaimed Mr. Francis Ciaccio, President of the Board of Directors. “It is rewarding to hear out-of-towners comment on the beauty of the recreation areas and see all of the people who regularly use the park for softball, football, and other sporting

events.” Mr Ciaccio added, “The IPARKS representatives and our local agent are good people to work with. I am very proud of the way we are able to provide quality recreation areas on a small budget.”

**Large and small, urban and rural — IPARKS Members are as diversified as the state of Illinois.**

If your park district, forest preserve, conservation district or special recreation agency is not yet an IPARKS Member, we encourage you to learn more about IPARKS at [www.iparks.org](http://www.iparks.org) or by calling **800.748.0554** to speak with an IPARKS Representative.



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