

illinois

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# PARKS AND RECREATION

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



# community partnerships

PLUS: CPI Index, Parks Day at the Capitol and the  
2017 IAPD Legislative Conference & Reception



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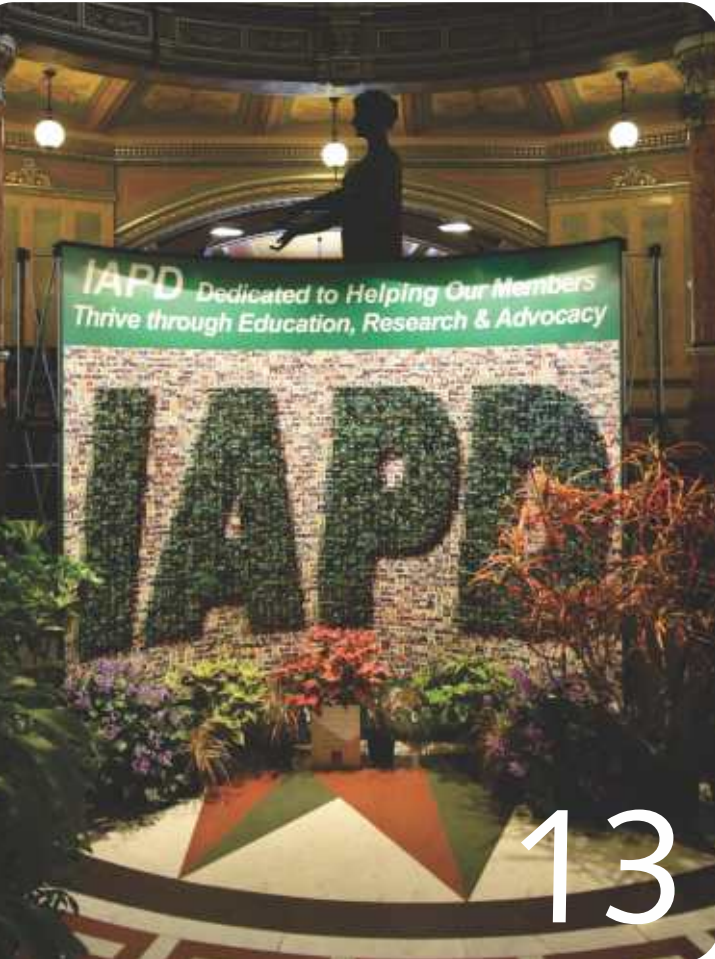


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# FROM THE EDITOR



Public and private partnerships with park agencies are emerging all over Illinois. One reason for establishing and growing these types of relationships is simple, they work. Park agencies are extremely successful in combining the assets of all parties involved to create new facilities, expanded program offerings and more – often in the face of budget constraints.

Community partnerships in the parks and recreation industry have the ability to bring people together like no other industry can. Parks and open spaces are at a premium and usually at the heart of the communities in which they are located. These are places for enjoyment, play, relaxation, gathering, education, socializing and so much more. As such, residents seem to have an increasing interest in making their neighborhoods rich with recreational opportunities and many have found ways to achieve their goals with a partnership.

These types of unique collaborations can achieve powerful results. It is astounding when I think of how many of these park district partnerships have benefitted communities across Illinois. Communities are quick to embrace their park districts, forest preserves, recreation and special recreation agencies because they understand how positive experiences in these settings can influence the well-being of a child, friend or family member.

The locally elected boards and park professionals involved are extremely passionate about their goals and they work together to make projects happen and achieve the ultimate goal of making lives better for their residents. We were able to share just a few of the stories about some of the amazing teams that agencies have formed with the community.

Also in this issue, you will see coverage on Parks Day at the Capitol and the IAPD Legislative Conference & Reception. We had a fantastic turnout at all of the events and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to showcase their agencies, network with their legislators and learn about the hottest Legislative topics affecting parks, recreation and conservation today.

On page 11, we have included the CPI index for your reference. Enjoy this issue and have a great summer!

Warm regards,

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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## Board Executive Partnerships: The Key to Success

### Board/Executive Relations

Boards best equipped to lead their organizations are self-aware and function in constructive partnerships with their chief executives and are committed to continually improving their performance.

Board members and the executive should have a total agency perspective. The quality of the working relationship between the board and the executive is of critical importance to the effectiveness of each. Although the board must take responsibility for basic policies and their consequences, it also must give the executive the authority and flexibility to act decisively. The board and the executive should recognize and respect the appropriate and unique role each has in governing and providing information. Trust and confidence should be honored by the board and the executive. Test yourself on the following concerns.

- Is there a climate of mutual trust and support between the board and the executive?
- Are the professional and personal relationships between the executive and the board president positive with supportive and effective communications?
- Has the board delegated to the executive the authority he or she needs to administer the agency successfully?
- Does the executive keep the board fully informed (and vice versa)?
- Does a clear statement of the presidential authority and responsibilities exist?
- Does the executive have a clear sense of where his or her responsibilities begin and end with respect to the board's responsibilities?
- Does the board have a clear sense of the delineation between policy issues and management issues?
- Is the board clear and consistent in its expectations of the performance of the executive?
- Does the board express approval, publicly and privately, for the successes of the executive and the agency?

### Chief Executive Job Description

The board must develop a written job description for the chief executive and together with the chief executive define the annual expectations. The chief executive can remain accountable for his or her performance only if the position is well-defined and annual goals and expectations are mutually agreed upon.

### Chief Executive Evaluation

The board must evaluate the chief executive's performance annually and the evaluation should be written and involve the full board. A formal evaluation based on well-defined and mutually agreed upon expectations, benefits and protects both the chief executive and the board. Even if the board president or a committee chair leads the evaluation, the full board must participate by being given the opportunity to provide feedback, approve the final evaluation, and ensure all compensation recommendations are appropriate.

**"When everyone moves forward together, success takes care of itself."**



### The Board/Executive Expectations The Executive Director's Expectations of Board Members

- Provide expert advice and counsel as well as insight into the local community.
- Establish policy.
- Delegate responsibility for the management of the agency and implementation of board policies to the executive director.
- Assist in making organizations aware of the needs of the agency, particularly in making appeals to businesses and civic groups to raise funds for particular projects and support for the park and recreation foundation (if one exists).
- Refrain from micro-managing or managing any administrative functions. Refrain from working directly with staff members or favoring one staff member over another and understanding that the staff is responsible and reports to the executive director only.
- Communicate openly and with integrity with the executive director.



- At least annually, formally evaluate the executive director's performance.
- At least annually, evaluate the agency and the achievement of goals.
- At least annually, evaluate the board's performance.
- Develop a strategic plan for the agency and measure the executive's performance on achievement of goals and objectives of the plan.

### The Board's Expectations of the Executive Director

- Integrity, openness, full communication with the board on bad news as well as good news.
- Serve as the board's professional expert and advisor.
- Implement board policies and report back to the board the success or failure of policies and potential modifications.
- Interpret the needs of the agency and make recommendations on problems and issues giving the board feasible options for their decisions.
- Develop a sound and efficient budget keeping the board informed on at least a monthly basis of the financial status of the agency.
- Recruit, develop and adequately supervise and evaluate competent personnel.
- Assist the board in communicating with other agencies and businesses within the community and in keeping the public informed of the agency's progress.
- Assist the board in the annual evaluation of the executive director and provide the board with an annual self-appraisal.
- Keep the board posted on a periodic basis on the progress of the strategic plan.

### A Litmus Test for Who Does What

In a nutshell, policy decisions are those that affect your agency as a whole, while management decisions affect individual programs, services or people. If you're facing an issue and wondering if it's a policy decision, ask yourself these questions:

- Will this decision help determine procedures, activities, programs or services that affect the agency as a whole?
- Is this decision required by law or regulatory agencies?
- Is this an issue that the executive has asked for your assistance?

A "yes" answer to any of the questions means it's a **policy-making decision**, and it involves you as a board member.

On the other hand, when you suspect the issue may be a management decision, ask yourself these questions:

- Does the issue affect an individual staffer?
- Does it relate to the efficiency and quality of services provided by a specific department or program?
- Does it relate to an administrative area that is operational in nature or affect specific parts of, rather than the entire agency?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, it's a **management decision** that your executive should make.

## 2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, June 12, 2017  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #2**

Rockford Park District's  
Aldeen Golf Club

Thursday, July 13, 2017  
**IAPD Leadership Classic**  
Bensenville Park District's  
White Pines Golf Club

Saturday, August 19, 2017  
**Park District Conservation Day**  
IL State Fairgrounds,  
Springfield

Saturday, August 26, 2017  
**IAPD Legislative Picnic**  
Joliet Park District and  
Wheeling Park District

Monday, August 28, 2017  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #3**  
GolfVisions Mgt. Inc. Tanna  
Farms Golf Club, Geneva, IL

Monday, September 11, 2017  
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour #4**

Lockport Township Park  
District's  
Prairie Bluff Public Golf Club

September 26-28, 2017  
**NRPA Congress**  
Ernest M. Morton  
Convention Center  
New Orleans, LA

Friday, October 13, 2017  
**IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala**  
Wheeling Park District's,  
Chevy Chase Country Club

Thursday, November 9, 2017  
**IAPD Legal Symposium**  
McDonald's University/Hyatt  
Lodge

January 18-20, 2018  
**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**  
Hilton Chicago

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# EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE  
IPRA Executive Director

## IPRA Partners with Like-Minded Organizations to Serve You Better

This time of year is a beautiful time in the parks. Weather is not too hot, not too cold, and people of all ages can get outside and enjoy all the benefits of nature. It is this time of year that the partnership between parks and recreation really shines. As schools close up for summer, families have more time to spend together, day camps are about to begin, summer events are just around the corner, athletic fields and golf courses are being fully utilized, and park and recreation professionals are giving their time, talents, and energy to serve their communities. The theme of this issue is "Partnerships." Just like your organization may partner with schools, churches, for profit and nonprofit entities to serve your community, so too does IPRA partner with many organizations to serve you better.

Our most comprehensive partnership is with the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF). The foundation, formed in its current model in 2012, has been led ever since by Mike Clark, Executive Director of the Palatine Park District, along with a board of dedicated volunteers. The foundation has evolved so much since 2012 and now partners with IPRA and our sections as the provider of all of our student and professional scholarships. Scholarships for students are to help them afford to attend state conference, while professionals can apply for scholarships for nearly any professional development event both within IPRA's offerings as well as with outside programs. Scholarships are given out based on a timeline shown on our website on the foundation page throughout the year. If you are interested, we invite you to apply online, using the form on the foundation page. The Foundation also partners with IPRA as the sponsor of our ProConnect program and partners with our sections raising money together for scholarships at the Joint Section Golf Outing in the fall.

Our next closest partner is our sister organization, the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD). While our two groups are distinctly different and have different focuses, we have been partners for decades, working together on the annual conference, our joint magazine, and we have five shared joint committees together. Further, we also jointly support the annual Legislative Picnic and Park District and Conservation Day at the State Fair each year. This long term partnership has allowed both groups to streamline our respective focus areas while benefitting from the knowledge that our shared members will be served in a wider variety of ways than each of us offers on our own.

IPRA has many other partnership articles on a wide variety of programs and projects. We partner with the University of Illinois as our long term partner on the Leadership Academy program. The Leadership Academy program was designed to prepare professionals with three levels of leadership training: personal leadership, team leadership, and agency leader. This program is application based and we only accept up to 30 people in each level to prepare them as future leaders for our industry. We believe by training our future leaders, we can help support agencies

who are looking for qualified park and recreation professionals for the top jobs. These park and recreation professionals already have the skillset in recreation program development, facility management, and park maintenance, and now they also have skills in leadership, team building, accountability, construction/project planning, finance, risk, and legal issues to prepare them to effectively run a large agency. Graduates receive a certificate of completion from U of I. We also partner with U of I to host shared graduate students who conduct research and seek grant funding for IPRA and we are partnering with U of I on a data gathering project for us, meeting with members in focus groups across Illinois to gain feedback from the members.

"Just like your organization may partner with schools, churches, for profit and nonprofit entities to serve your community, so too does IPRA partner with many organizations to serve you better."



We also partner with the University of St Francis as our partner on the ProConnect mentoring program. The university adds credibility to the curriculum, keeping us accountable to having a high quality program for our students. ProConnect is a program for people at all levels of their careers to participate in either being mentored or mentoring others. Each team has three people, typically they are early career, midlevel, and season professionals or retirees. The three person team meets together at five events between September and March. Those events are an educational event, two social/networking events, a service project, and culmination/graduation which also has an educational component. Once people apply and are accepted, all events are mandatory as your team is there to network with you, so it's important to your teammates that you all make the commitment to be there for each other at all five events. Additionally, we encourage you to get together with your team for outside events if possible. At the end of the program, participants receive a certificate of completion from our partner, the University of St. Francis. All over our state, we partner with our affiliates. We have shared meetings of the IPRA's Park and Natural Resource Management Section held in partnership with the Midwest Institute of Park Executives (MIPE). We provide regular newsletter articles to our friends and shared members of the Illinois Afterschool Network (IAN). We have hosted a shared networking events at the national conference with the Suburban Park and Recreation Association (SPRA) and South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association (SSPRPA). We also have a shared



scholarship for young professionals in conjunction with our foundation and SSPRPA. In Central Illinois, we have held events jointly with CIRCLE and hold an annual event in southern Illinois with our friends at Southern Illinois Park and Recreation Association (SIPRA).

In 2016, we formed a partnership with PlayCore and their affiliates GameTime and Cunningham Recreation, creating the "IPRA Promotes Play Statewide Training and Action Grant program". This partnership formed a comprehensive initiative that aligned like-minded organizations to leverage our collective resources to make an impact on healthy play across Illinois. The initiative ensured a robust partnership to engage as many constituents as possible and was an enhancement to IPRA's public education campaign, Unplug Illinois. First, IPRA hosted five free educational events statewide, providing CEUs. These sessions featured high level education on two evidence-based topics: a) "Words on Play: Putting Research to Practice" and b) "Motivation to Move: Increasing Physical Activity for Intergenerational Users". PlayCore's Center for Professional Development provided the master trainers and research-based education. At each of the five educational events, we used 15 minutes to talk about IPRA's public education campaign, "Unplug Illinois" ([www.unplugillinois.org](http://www.unplugillinois.org)) to teach our members how to better communicate the value of parks and recreation statewide. To turn research into action, in phase two, GameTime offered playground 'action grants' to park and recreation agencies across Illinois following a competitive application process, ultimately providing over \$1 million in matching grants to 18 agencies statewide. Each of the awarded playgrounds will be national demonstration sites for data collection, and will contribute toward the publication of a white paper to highlight best practices and outcomes achieved. The findings will be presented at the 2018 state conference. Lastly, GameTime and Cunningham Recreation collectively donated \$10,000 to the scholarship program for park and recreation students and professionals to further support professional development. Combined, this program served 18 communities, educated professionals, invested in future professional development, and will create impactful research on play. Through this partnership, it was a win for all involved. Collectively, we are building a stronger case for parks and recreation and together, we can align resources in unique ways that leverage the impact we are making across the state of Illinois.

In 2017, we started a new partnership with a group called the Management Association. They are a well-known HR company that many of our members already work with. We will be working with them on a new version of our salary survey which will be published in book form, annually. The Management Association has extensive experience in this area. We will keep the current database on Public Salary live until the end of 2017 while we also gather data for the publication this fall for publication in January.

I hope you have a great summer and find many new and exciting ways to serve your communities and all the families who look to you for their summertime opportunities for parks and recreation.



## Upcoming Events

**June 14 & 15, 2017**

**Skills Development Webinar Series (June): Effective Workplace Communication**

The world and our families are made up of interesting personalities, our workplace is no different. Gaining perspective on when to push, nudge, compromise or concede will ultimately benefit our own emotional health but also lend itself to more productive work relationships. This webinar will walk you through sticky workplace scenarios and discuss techniques for handling them with professionalism and sound mind.

**July 6, 2017**

**Teen Kayak Trip**

**July 7-26, 2017**

**Six County Senior Games**

**July 12 & 20, 2017**

**Skills Development Webinar Series (July): Social Media Across the Generations - Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and More**

We'll compare and contrast the ways different generations are using various methods of social media including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and others.

**July 19, 2017**

**Teen Camp Challenge**

The Teen Committee is excited to hold its 6th annual Teen Camp Challenge! The Teen Committee wanted to develop a teen program, targeted at 5-8 graders, that would be convenient for Teen Supervisors to offer as well as bring teens together for a fun and rewarding experience.

**August 9 & 17, 2017**

**Skills Development Webinar Series (August): Survey Says: Writing Questionnaires and Avoiding Common Pitfalls**

Whether you are an executive director canvassing your community for feedback on its parks and recreation services, a program manager looking for feedback from program participants, or an early childhood professional interested in gathering input from those you serve, surveys are useful tools to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. This session will provide insight into how to best design and disseminate your survey, as well as which types of questions to choose and how to word them.

**For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at [ILipra.org](http://ILipra.org)**





Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

# Use Summer Programs and Activities to Highlight Your Agency's Value to the Community

Summer camps, recreational programming, youth sports activities and numerous other events are now in full swing at park districts and other local recreation and conservation agencies throughout the State.

As a parent of four children, I know firsthand just how essential these programs and activities are to families, particularly during working hours when school is not in session. While these services offer a safe and affordable environment for school age children during the summer and afterschool hours, the benefits of these programs extend well beyond just childcare in terms of physical health, social interaction and education.

With so many activities taking place at your agency this summer and as property tax bills hit mailboxes in most counties, there is no better time to remind legislators and citizens about the tremendous value your agency offers to your local community in return for the relatively small portion of their overall property tax bill. Similarly, these activities help demonstrate the programs and services that would be negatively impacted by legislative proposals to freeze property taxes and increase the teen minimum wage.

## Affordable Summer Programs Meet Many Needs for Working Families

The value of summer programming and activities during critical hours when school is not in session cannot be overemphasized. Without them, many working families would find it difficult if not impossible to work and raise their children. Not only are park district programs and services typically more affordable than comparable alternatives, their safety and convenience offers peace of mind to working parents.

It would be easy to assume that families who utilize these services understand that their affordability is made possible because of the investment of their local tax dollars, but that would be a mistake. Part of advocacy is connecting these dots. It is also important to help make a connection between these programs and services and other issues. For instance, programs that offer physical activity help combat childhood obesity. Constructive youth activities like park and recreation programs help mitigate against juvenile crime and violence. These are just two of numerous examples.

Although often overlooked, many summer camps are also educational. In fact, as I traveled with my family to several park districts last summer, I observed hundreds of children in camp programs related to the arts, history, conservation and many other subjects. These campers were not just learning – they were having fun doing it!

In fact, while it is fitting to focus on the importance of exercise and physical activities, the educational contributions that park districts,

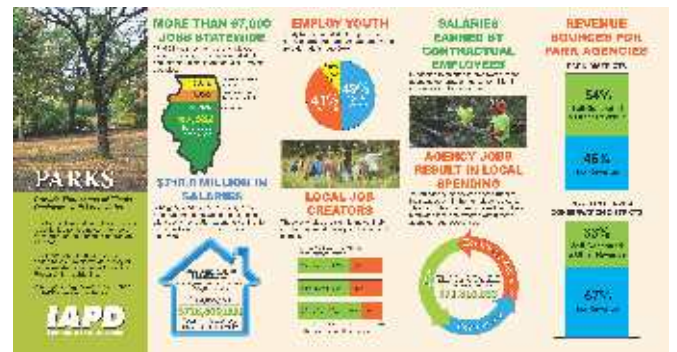
forest preserves, conservation districts and recreation and special recreation agencies offer should not be ignored. These agencies are very much a part of the Illinois educational system and not just during those months when school is not in session. Many agencies partner with schools during the school year through intergovernmental cooperation and provide access to nature, conservation and other learning opportunities at museums, zoos, historical sites and other facilities, thereby expanding curriculum while saving school districts much needed tax dollars.

## Teen Jobs Provide Valuable Training and Experience

Most park district summer programs and activities serve a dual role for youth. Beyond the benefits to program participants, these activities offer thousands of jobs to teens.

In fact, IAPD's recent W-2 and Revenue Analysis found that park districts and forest preserves provide 33,000 jobs statewide to young people who are 25 and under. Many of these positions are filled by teens in jobs that are often their first. These jobs offer valuable training and experience for our future workforce as teens serve as lifeguards, referees and umpires which teach responsibility, leadership and other life skills. Other teens assist camp counselors, which helps agencies keep the cost of providing summer camps affordable.

Again, the summer is the perfect time to invite legislators to your facilities to show them the critical role that these teens play in your agency's operations. Such visits are an important part of our advocacy efforts on issues like the minimum wage by helping to distinguish between the living wage that adults need to support families and the way in which a minimum wage increase would specifically impact park districts because of the number of teens that are employed.



IAPD continues to develop tools to aid in your local advocacy efforts. Our latest resource is a 5-panel brochure that helps highlight the findings of the W-2 and Revenue Analysis, including the number of jobs statewide, agency revenue sources, number of youth employed, jobs created locally and more. Order copies today by visiting the IAPD website at [ILparks.org](http://ILparks.org).



Another key finding of IAPD's W-2 and Revenue Analysis shows that most of the wages paid to these younger employees are spent within the district's community, which helps demonstrate that property tax dollars and user fees are reinvested right back into the local economy.

### Youth Sports Activities and Tourism

In addition to summer camps and other programs, youth sports activities that coincide with warmer weather also present an opportunity to highlight your agency's economic impact. Activities like youth sports tournaments generate significant sales taxes and other revenues such as hotel/motel, food/beverage and other taxes. Many of these dollars come from non-residents who are visiting your community for events that are held at your facilities.

As you meet with community leaders and legislators, it is important to make sure they recognize both the positive economic impact and the cost that your agency bears in hosting these events. Many cities, villages and local tourism agencies reap the economic rewards from these events but are hesitant to share revenues by reinvesting dollars back into the park district or other recreational agency that makes the event possible. This is shortsighted public policy because a reinvestment of a portion of these dollars back into your agency to help offset the costs would make additional events possible and compound the return on investment.

So, as your agency hosts youth sports activities and other community events this summer, take time to remind community leaders and other stakeholders about your agency's investment of time and resources to make the events possible.

### Programs for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities Help Meet Growing Demand

Of course, summer and afterschool programs for youth are not the only essential services that park and recreation agencies provide to communities. These agencies also deliver a wide variety of programs and services to seniors, persons with disabilities and active adults as well. While youth activities are typically at their peak for most local park and recreation agencies during the summer months, other programs that serve citizens of all ages are ongoing throughout the year. In fact, in many communities, the demand for these services are greater than ever because the ongoing State budget impasse has caused many nonprofit organizations to drastically reduce their services or close altogether due to a lack of state support.

### IAPD Resources Aid Your Local Advocacy Efforts

With so much activity at your agency, the summer is the perfect time to invite legislators out to your facilities to discuss the benefits of these programs and to continue to remind citizens of the return on investment they receive from their local property tax dollars. IAPD offers numerous tools, tips and resources to aid in your advocacy efforts, which members may access by visiting the Public Policy section of the IAPD website at [ILparks.org](http://ILparks.org).

There is no better time than the busy summer season to demonstrate your agency's value to the community.

## CPI Rate for 2017 Extensions is 2.1%

A number of bills are pending in the 100<sup>th</sup> General Assembly that would freeze property tax levies by eliminating the Consumer Price Index (CPI) "cost of living" or inflation percentage in the annual tax levy calculation. If no state mandated property freeze becomes law, the CPI increase that locally elected officials would use to compute the 2017 levy (taxes payable in 2018) under PTELL's current state-mandated cap would be 2.1%.

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" (emphasis added).

For 2017 extensions (taxes payable in 2018), the CPI to be used for computing the extension limitation is 2.1%. The CPI is measured from December 2015 to December 2016. The U.S. City Average CPI for December 2015 was 236.525 and 241.432 for December 2016. The CPI change is calculated by subtracting the 2015 CPI of 236.525 from the 2016 CPI of 241.432. That amount, 4.907, is then divided by the 2015 CPI of 236.525, which results in 2.1% CPI.

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

Year	December CPI-U	% Change From Previous December	% Use for PTELL	Comments	Levy Year	Years Taxes Paid
1991	137.900	--				
1992	141.900	2.9%	2.9%		1993	1994
1993	145.800	2.7%	2.7%	(5 % for Cook)	1994	1995
1994	149.700	2.7%	2.7%		1995	1996
1995	153.500	2.5%	2.5%		1996	1997
1996	158.960	3.6%	3.6%		1997	1998
1997	161.300	1.5%	1.5%		1998	1999
1998	163.900	1.6%	1.6%		1999	2000
1999	168.300	2.7%	2.7%		2000	2001
2000	174.000	3.4%	3.4%		2001	2002
2001	176.700	1.6%	1.6%		2002	2003
2002	180.900	2.4%	2.4%		2003	2004
2003	184.300	1.9%	1.9%		2004	2005
2004	190.300	3.3%	3.3%		2005	2006
2005	196.800	3.4%	3.4%		2006	2007
2006	201.800	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
2013	233.049	1.5%	1.5%		2014	2015
2014	234.812	0.8%	0.8%		2015	2016
2015	236.525	0.7%	0.7%		2016	2017
2016	241.432	2.1%	2.1%		2017	2018

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# PARKS DAY AT THE CAPITOL

This outstanding public awareness event took place **Tuesday, May 2** at the Illinois State Capitol and as always, it was sold out! More than 50 IAPD member agencies set up exhibits and distribute informative literature that showcased the programs, facilities and services that are essential to improving the quality of life for Illinois citizens.



*The Princeton Park District meets with Senator Chuck Weaver*



*The Rockford Park District connects with Senator Dave Syverson*



*The Lemont Park District enjoys a visit from Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno*



*The Decatur Park District receives a visit from Senator Chapin Rose*



*The Mt. Prospect Park District shares their display with Senator Tom Rooney*



*The Village of Romeoville receives enthusiastic support from Senator Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant*



*The Buffalo Grove Park District shares some time with Senator Julie Morrison*



*The Forest Preserve District of Kane County talks with Senator Pat McGuire*



*"The best networking opportunity for park and recreation agencies and Legislators all year!"*





# IAPD

Illinois Association of Park Districts

## LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE & RECEPTION

On Tuesday, May 2 IAPD held their annual Legislative Reception at Illini Country Club in Springfield, IL. The reception was followed by the 39<sup>th</sup> annual IAPD Legislative Conference on May 3 at the Springfield Crowne Plaza Hotel. This powerful event covered an array of topics including the use of research data to make your agency's case, your role in legislative advocacy, expert perspectives on the State of the State, Illinois' fiscal future and its impact on funding and much more. Attendees were invigorated by the experience and eager to bring this new information back to their respective agencies.



*LtoR: Senator Laura Murphy, Senator Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant, Representative Tim Butler, Senator Jil Tracy, Representative Sara Wojcicki Jimenez*





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**www.IPARKS.org**  
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**BY SCOTT HAYS, PHD**  
CENTER FOR PREVENTION RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL  
WORK, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT  
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**SCHOOLS, PUBLIC HEALTH AND PARK DISTRICTS:  
ENGAGING YOUTH FOR  
POSITIVE CHANGE  
CREATES A WINNING  
PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTH**





## WITH A SINGLE DECISION SUCH AS SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE PARKS, A CHANGE IN LOCAL POLICY CAN IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF AN ENTIRE COMMUNITY.

In recent years, park boards, local health departments and community youth have been teaming up to improve the health of Illinois citizens who visit our parks and outdoor areas.

In October of 2015, the St. Charles Park District Board -- "thanks to the efforts of teen members of the STC Underground Teen Center" -- approved a new policy that strictly prohibits the use of tobacco and tobacco products in all park district outdoor parks, facilities, buildings and vehicles. According to Superintendent of Parks and Planning Laura Rudow, "We are grateful to the STC Underground teens for raising awareness of this issue and working toward the betterment of the health and welfare of the entire community."

Working in partnership with the Kane County Public Health Department and the Park District on the smoke-free parks ordinance and using the *Engaging Youth for Positive Change* program, the STC Underground teens not only increased their own awareness of the dangers of tobacco use, they learned important civic lessons in how to bring about real change at a policy level.

And there's more.

In February of 2015, youth in Wilmington drove the effort to promote smoke-free parks there, leading to a unanimous vote by the Wilmington City Council to make Northcrest Park, Memorial Park, and Brookside Park 100% tobacco-free! The Reality group leader reported: "the group is super excited as this is a major accomplishment and something that for a long time didn't seem possible in the town of Wilmington!"

As of December of 2015, Glen Ellyn parks are now 100% smoke-free and e-cigarette free thanks to the efforts of DuPage Reality Illinois students.

"As a result of the work by Kendall County Health Department Reality Illinois chapter at Yorkville High School, a city ordinance was passed banning smoking at all Yorkville Parks" in November of 2015.

And in Braidwood in June of 2016, "The Braidwood Reality group presented their tobacco-free parks presentation to Braidwood Park

District Board and they agreed to make smoke-free zones in their biggest park and make two of their smaller kid-friendly parks 100% tobacco-free."

By the summer of 2016, youth in local Engaging Youth for Positive Change groups in 25 cities and counties across the state, most of them funded by the Illinois Department of Public Health's "Reality Illinois" grant program, had testified before their city councils and 9 of these cities voted to pass smoke-free parks and other ordinances presented by youth. Where they were not passed, most were tabled for further action and only 4 were voted down.

And now, with new requirements for service-learning based civic education experiences in our public schools, partnerships among schools, local health departments and parks and recreation agencies are poised to become an even more vital part of our local community connections.

### Why Smoke-free Parks?

Increasingly, good health means adopting healthy policies where people live, work and play. With a single decision such as supporting smoke-free parks, a change in local policy can improve the health of an entire community.

But why smoke-free parks? According to the American Lung Association, secondhand smoke is the third leading cause of preventable death in the US, killing 38,000 to 65,000 nonsmokers every year and secondhand smoke levels in outdoor public places can reach levels as high as those found in indoor facilities where smoking is permitted.

Smoke-free park policies establish a community norm that tobacco is not an acceptable behavior for young people or adults. Coaches and recreational leaders become tobacco-free role models that send a powerful message to youth that tobacco use is not part of a healthy lifestyle.

In addition, cigarette butts are the most littered item in the world. They create a fire hazard, increase park maintenance expenses and can be eaten by toddlers, birds, and pets. Filters are not biodegradable and can take 5-10 years to decompose.

**WORKING WITH LOCAL PARKS AND RECREATION DISTRICTS AND THEIR LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO BRING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE MAY BE ONE OF THE MOST PERSONALLY REWARDING AND MEMORABLE EXPERIENCES A YOUNG PERSON CAN HAVE.**



The National Recreation and Park Association's Urban and Government Affairs Department says "prohibiting smoking in public outdoor spaces will enhance the user experience while also benefiting the environment." And "advocacy of tobacco free policies in our parks and open spaces is the logical next step in the stewardship of community health and well-being."

However, adopting such ordinances can be challenging for parks and recreation agencies who already have a full plate.

Megan Owens of the Office of Recreation of Park Resources at the University of Illinois states, "the process for developing any policy can be time intensive because of the necessary work of gathering information and input from multiple sources."

She goes on to say "Agencies interested in establishing policies may consider collaborating with local organizations such as a health department, municipalities, school districts or nonprofit clubs that utilize parks. A collaborative approach may increase buy-in among community members and ensure all information and issues are considered during the planning and writing phases." Which is where local students come in.

### **New Requirements for Civic Education for Illinois Schools**

In 2016, a new law was passed requiring service-learning-based civic education in all Illinois public schools. This requires all high school students, beginning with the 2016 freshman class to complete a civics course that includes community-based service learning. Classroom civics teachers working with parks on smoke-free ordinances provides an excellent opportunity to fulfill that requirement.

In addition, in January of 2016, new Illinois Social Studies Standards were also adopted which follow an "inquiry-based approach" to civic education. This includes "gathering and evaluating sources, developing claims and using evidence, communicating conclusions and taking informed action." Civics education must "help young people acquire and learn to use the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will prepare them to be competent and responsible citizens throughout their lives."

Specific skills that youth can learn by being involved in adopting local smoke-free ordinances include analyzing "how individuals use and challenge laws to address a variety of public issues." "Evaluating public policies in terms of intended and unintended outcomes and related consequences," and "explaining the role of compromise and deliberation in the legislative process."

### **The Illinois Department of Public Health: Reality Illinois and Engaging Youth for Positive Change**

Finally, the Tobacco Program at the Illinois Department of Public Health has been supporting local public health departments through

"Reality Illinois", which provides funds to local health departments to work with high school age young people on local policies designed to reduce the impact of tobacco on their lives. All of the initiatives described above were initiated through Reality Illinois youth group funding.

Schools, park districts and public health all come together with the help of a new youth informed action, service learning program developed at the Center for Prevention Research and Development at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign called *Engaging Youth for Positive Change* (EYPC). EYPC guides youth through the experience of advocating to adopt a local ordinance that improves the health of their community and themselves. With this program, young people across the state of Illinois are doing their part to make their communities healthier places.

The EYPC program consists of strategies, lessons, activities, guidelines and many supportive materials for guiding youth through the local policy-change process in their community.

Ideal for a short-term (semester or school year length) school extracurricular activity or for established youth groups working in communities, the EYPC Program can also help teachers and their students meet the newly established service learning requirement.

### **Schools, public health and park districts: a collaboration for health!**

Working with local parks and recreation districts and their local government to bring about positive change may be one of the most personally rewarding and memorable experiences a young person can have. Youth in the EYPC program learn that engagement in local policy change is both possible and real.

And community collaboration between parks and recreation agencies, local schools and local health departments can definitely clear the air for a path forward to a healthier future for our parks and for all Illinois citizens.

The U of I Office of Recreation and Parks Resources has compiled smoke-free parks model ordinances at [www.orpr.uiuc.edu/ResourcesReportsResearch/Resources.aspx](http://www.orpr.uiuc.edu/ResourcesReportsResearch/Resources.aspx).

For more information on the Illinois civic education requirement for schools, visit: [www.illinoiscivics.org](http://www.illinoiscivics.org)

For anyone interested in EYPC, the process begins with the next facilitator training, currently scheduled for Wednesday, June 7 from 9 to 3. Through the generous support of the Illinois Department of Human Services, all EYPC materials and training are available free of charge.

For more information on the Illinois civic education requirement for schools, visit: [www.illinoiscivics.org](http://www.illinoiscivics.org)



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A woman with long dark hair, wearing a pink polo shirt, is running alongside two young girls. The girl in the foreground is wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, with her hair in pigtails. The girl behind her is wearing a purple long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. They are all smiling and appear to be in motion. The background is a lush green park with trees.

# Moving IN BLUE ISLAND

By **Sara Brown**, *President, Browntown Communications*

Blue Island Park District wants you to move in town. Not just move to the historic city just 15 minutes south of Chicago, but to keep moving while you're here. And not only you – Blue Island Park District believes fitness opportunities should be available to everyone, no matter your age, experience, or abilities. Take a look at Blue Island Park District's programming, events and trips, and you'll see several classes and opportunities to “move in Blue Island,” all year long.

**Fitness Can Be Fun** – Zumba and Aqua Zumba  
Proving fitness really can be fun, Blue Island Park District partners with certified Zumba instructor Jessy Borkowsky to bring area residents a cardio workout with one very simple rule – just keep moving!





Zumba, created by celebrity personal trainer Alberto "Beto" Perez, combines easy-to-follow dance moves with Latin beats for a body-toning, calorie-burning cardio workout like no other. Zumba uses intervals of dance moves like salsa, merengue, cha-cha, and hip-hop, and is great for people who love to dance and aren't enamored with traditional cardio workouts.

Borkowsky's energy is infectious as she leads the class with non-verbal cuing, like points, hand claps, and hand signals, so you know what to do next. The class moves along with the instructor, many of them smiling – yes, smiling – as they burn calories and say goodbye to the stress of the day.

When the weather warms up, Blue Island Park District moves this high-energy dance workout to the water, where attendees of all ages can't get enough of the low-impact movement of "Aqua Zumba" in Memorial Park's sparkling blue 38,000-gallon pool.

Before and after class, you'll often catch glimpses of residents taking advantage of the ½ mile walking path surrounding the athletic fields for baseball, football and during the summer, the always popular...

### **Futball Fitness – Blue Island Park District Soccer**

In Blue Island, futball – soccer – is a perennial favorite program year after year, for fitness and fun.

"Blue Island's a city where if you have open space and four trash cans, you have a soccer game going on with the local kids," says Blue Island Park District Director of Marketing and soccer coach William Cazares. "The park district offers a chance for young children all the way through adults to enjoy the fitness, skills, and competition playing a sport that really has no cost barrier to entry like hockey or American football."

To make such a wide variety of soccer programming available, Blue Island Park District partners with the City of Blue Island and other park districts, making use multiple fields and venues across the city – including the John D. Rita Recreation Center for indoor soccer during the winter months.

When the trees start budding, it's time for outdoor soccer practice and league play. Bitty and Mid league soccer for children ages 6-14 includes practice, conditioning, game play, and fun for every skill level.

Blue Island Park District Men's Soccer program is designed for men over the age of 30, with gameplay in a friendly atmosphere for all skill levels. No prior experience is needed to play, and veteran players are on hand to help those just learning the rules of game play.

Women also enjoy recreational soccer all year long, with friendly scrimmages in balanced teams. No matter the league or location, there's consistency throughout the experience with partners like dedicated coaches and active parent volunteers.

"What I like most about the program are the coaches and how they welcomed me in," says Blue Island Soccer parent Rhonda Ombima. "They made us feel like we were really joining a family, not just a team and we're done, but these are people [my son and I] have grown up with."

Speaking of family...

### **Fit Families = Happy Families – Family Olympics**

Families who play together, stay together! That's the idea behind the Blue Island Park District's annual Family Olympics celebration. Competing families match up on fun outdoor games like Quarterback toss, three-legged race, potato sack races and more, all for the chance to win medals and some great prizes.

To make sure the event is as inclusive as possible, the park district offers the competition free of charge.

"We're able to offer great family fitness opportunities throughout the year, and many of them are free of charge," says Blue Island Park District Executive Director Tom Wogan. "There's a collective mindset in Blue Island that we want our residents to be active, to stay healthy, and to keep moving. We're proud to be a great resource to do all three."

Families of all shapes and sizes enjoy fitness and fun at Blue Island's parks, including, your family's best friend...

### **Fitness with Fido – Bark Park and SpokesPup contest**

Sometimes your best partner in fitness can be your furry friend Fido, and Blue Island Park District wants to make sure that both of you are moving in Blue Island at their popular Bark Park. There, you can find active residents getting in playtime with their pups while socializing with friends and neighbors of both the two and four-legged variety!

Blue Island Park District's Bark Park features a double-gated entry, activity modules, a water source, an area for smaller dogs to enjoy, benches for families, complimentary litter bags, and plenty of trees for... um... sniffing. Pups of all sizes can find an escape from the ordinary at this park that's really gone to the dogs.

To help promote the park, Blue Island Park District recently held a contest to find Bark Park's next "SpokesPup!" Area residents were invited to submit a photo of their dog for the competition, and with the finalists selected, the Park District opened up the vote to the public via Facebook. The doggy with the most "likes," on their photo was named the winner! We think you'll agree the winning pup, Lola, is beyond furbulous ; )

### **Fitness For Everyone – We're All Blue**

No matter your skill level, age, or ability, Blue Island Park District is committed to creating fitness programs for all to enjoy to their greatest potential. Blue Island Park District works with families to create requested accommodations whenever possible, and also partners with the South West Special Recreation Association (SWSRA) to offer special recreation programming to area residents.

You can learn more about Blue Island Park District's fitness programming and partnerships on their website, [www.blueislandparks.org](http://www.blueislandparks.org). Seasonal programming guides are available on the website, and at the park district office in print in both English and Spanish. Or, check out their annual Recreation Open House, where you and your family get to meet program instructors and coaches in person, register for upcoming sessions, and take home some fantastic swag and prizes.

**Blue Island Park District invites everyone to move in Blue Island!**



# INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

## ENHANCES COMMUNITY RESOURCES

By **Joan Scovic**, *Communications & Marketing Manager, Palatine Park District*

This multi-million dollar cooperative project began, as many such ideas do, during a casual introduction at a community event. On June 13, 2013, Palatine Park District's Board of Commissioners hosted an intergovernmental dinner, bringing together a wide variety of local organizations including high level staff and elected officials from Village of Palatine, Community Consolidated School District 15, Township High School District 211, Palatine Public Library District, Palatine Township, Village of Hoffman Estates, Hoffman Estates Park District, Salt Creek Park District, and Harper College. At this meeting, Palatine Park District's Executive Director, Mike Clark, was introduced to the President of Harper College, Dr. Kenneth Ender. Little did they know that this community introduction would lead to one of the District's largest formal intergovernmental agreements in its 70 year history.





The conversation began as the two men discussed the long and rich history of cooperation between Palatine Park District and Harper College including shared space, rentals, field use, and cooperative programs. This discussion eventually touched on the current state of the wellness center, also known as "Building M." This Harper College facility houses athletics, the kinesiology curriculum, a community health center, and student and faculty recreation. Although a building with these amenities is usually one of the busiest buildings that a college offers its students, Dr. Ender has often referred to Building M as "the loneliest building on campus." At the time of these discussions, the facility was over 35 years old, antiquated, and in need of significant repair and replacement.

Dr. Ender indicated to Clark that the college was going to be renovating and expanding Building M within the next few years. This was very positive news for the community – to be able to cooperatively use a modern facility would be a powerful asset for the Park District. However, Clark's excitement was flattened when Ender said that he was planning to recommend elimination of the indoor pool due to the lack of use for college purposes. While Palatine Park District operates three outdoor pools, the District does not own an indoor aquatic facility. Harper College is within the Park District's boundaries and through a cooperative agreement the facility was used by park district residents for swimming and by the nationally acclaimed Palatine Park District Tiger Sharks competitive youth swim team. During potential partnership discussions, Dr. Ender shared that "the pool no longer contributes to the assets of our institution." Clark agreed, but added "it is a wonderful community asset and one I urge you to preserve and protect. If we can help you, we will." With that, the seeds for a new intergovernmental agreement were planted.

In 2014, an ad hoc committee was formed to study the potential needs of the renovation project. Members of this committee included representation from Harper College, Palatine Park District, and the community. After further discussion and ad hoc committee work, it became apparent to all that despite the fact that the students, faculty, and curriculum were not heavy users of indoor aquatics, the current indoor pool was undeniably a community asset and a long-term need for the Park District.

This concept was then reaffirmed during Palatine Park District's recent strategic master planning process. A community-wide needs assessment survey conducted in 2015 indicated that an indoor pool was overwhelmingly rated the number one recreational asset that the park district should consider for the future. In the survey, residents were asked to indicate how they would allocate \$100 of their taxes towards various indoor recreational amenities. The findings showed that the top three ranked amenities included the indoor pool at \$55, a fitness center at \$12, and dedicated fitness rooms at \$5. The new Health and Recreation Center at Harper College will deliver all of the desired amenities for the community with limited tax dollar impact. As Mike Clark put it during a recent event, "With this one facility, we hit the trifecta." In addition to the support from the District's resident base in the survey process, the Daily Herald's Editorial Board also endorsed the project, stating in a June 24, 2016 article that the agreement demonstrates "public bodies can work with each other and with private interests to benefit all parties, and taxpayers too."

As these discussions were taking place between Palatine Park District and Harper College, it became apparent that there was a missing piece of the puzzle. Building M also housed classroom and practical study space that was utilized by educational departments at the

college, and the building housed the health services center that served both students and staff. Realizing there was a need for a third partner to fulfill these needs, Northwest Community Healthcare joined the project to offer health services on campus along with opportunities for students to learn and gain practical experience as part of their degree programs. Stephen Scogna, CEO of Northwest Community Healthcare, stated, "This one really was a no-brainer. It was just perfect for everyone."

On June 28, 2016, after over two years of coordination and negotiations, the Palatine Park District Board of Commissioners and the Harper College Board of Trustees entered into an intergovernmental agreement to be full partners in the construction and operation of a newly renovated and expanded Health and Recreation Center. The planned 130,000 square foot facility includes an indoor aquatics facility to be exclusively operated and programmed by Palatine Park District. The Park District will contribute \$9 million of the \$38 million facility cost and will enhance the Tiger Shark Swim Team's use while expanding park district programs and services to community members for year round swim lessons, family and lap swim, and aquatic fitness classes. Once all parties were in place for this project, Clark noted, "This opportunity provides the infrastructure to enhance and expand our programs and services while reaching new users in a fiscally responsible way through thoughtful intergovernmental cooperation."

The Health and Recreation Center will also feature a state of the art fitness center with multiple fitness and group exercise rooms; a health center; and smart classrooms and studios to meet curriculum needs, support athletics, and provide student, faculty and community member participation in fitness, wellness, and recreation programming. These amenities are all attached to an existing gymnasium, fieldhouse, and indoor track complex. The agreement also ensures that Palatine Park District will be a priority program and service provider in all non-aquatic amenities of this facility and will offer non-credit continuing education programs for students and community members.

On April 10, 2017, almost four years after Mike Clark and Dr. Kenneth Ender met, the groundbreaking ceremony for the Building M renovation was hosted by Harper College. Representatives from Harper College, Northwest Community Healthcare, Palatine Park District, and the community were invited to celebrate the beginning of what will be an advantageous partnership for all parties. The building is scheduled to open in Fall 2018 providing a host of state of the art amenities, services, and programs in what Dr. Ender hopes will become "one of the most highly trafficked and engaged buildings on our campus."

The Health and Recreation Center at Harper College, through thoughtful and dedicated intergovernmental cooperation, accomplished three major community priorities identified in Palatine Park District's Comprehensive Strategic Master Plan at a fraction of the cost it would have taken for the Park District to construct and operate such a building on their own. This intergovernmental agreement and the resulting facility will have a tremendous impact on meeting the community's needs for generations to come, and such a result would not have been possible without this creative and cooperative agreement between the disciplines and industries of higher education and local park and recreation providers. "At the end of the day, what we have created together is something we never could have done by ourselves," Dr. Ender said. "We're showing our educational community and the taxpayers what the future of public institutions looks like, not only in this district and state, but across the country."



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