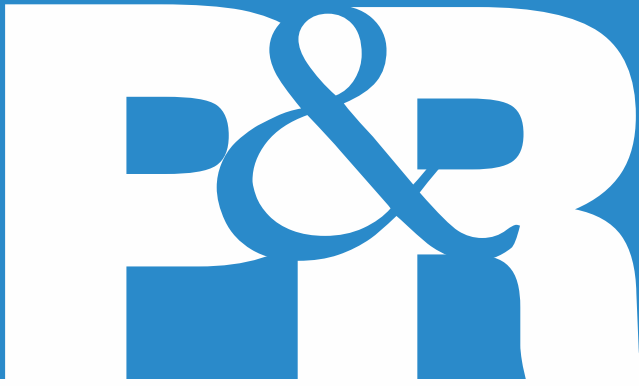


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Volume 48, Number 6 | November/December 2017



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

The air is crisp, clean and fresh. The holidays are upon us. With the change in season come new opportunities for marketing and promoting our businesses and agencies. As you plan for future events or programs here are some things to consider:



What are your overall goals with this promotion?

The main goal is usually to increase participation and build revenue, so take it a step further and make specific attendance and financial goals. Goals that involve numbers give you a precise way to measure the success of a particular campaign. I always look at past years performance and determine exactly what numbers I would like to see with each campaign.

Do you know your audience?

Examine your demographics and compare them with your offerings, be sure to target the correct age / interest group with your efforts. Make all attempts to reach the decision maker with your marketing, even if that is by going through the kids! That works well in many industries, in my store let's say, I let the kids hold the ferrets, they get attached and they beg for it until the parents come in and get it for them. Turns out they have three kids and now they all want them which leads a big sale for me, but also a fantastic experience for them!

Are you selling an experience or a product?

It has been proven that an 'experience' can sell better to an individual than simply a product or service. A person is much more likely to consider a purchase if they are getting family time, enjoyment, unlimited fun, etc. People will pay a price for something they view as a way to escape from the minutia of daily life.

For example, in my pet store, I sell many tangible products, services and pets. However, we focus on selling the experience of having the aquarium or pet rather than all the 'items' that a customer will need to care for that pet. We make the sale seem like just part of the process. Once you are able to attach human emotion to what you are selling, you have them.

Are you making it as easy as possible for customers to partake in your offerings?

People require convenience at every turn with today's busy lifestyle. Nobody has time for long enrollment process or the patience for anything other than a quick way to get involved. So, take a look at your processes, are they super easy for people to use? If not, they should be. Back to the aquarium, "Oh, you like fish but don't want the hassle of taking care of them?...No problem we will be happy to deliver it, set it up for you and maintain it for you every two weeks..." Find a way to beat down your main objections so they don't become an issue.

There are so many things to consider when marketing your agency. I hope you will enjoy this issue of *IP&R* magazine and find some good tidbits of information to incorporate in your plans.

Warm wishes for a wonderful holiday season!
Best regards,

— Rachel Laier, Editor



211 East Monroe Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1186 217.523.4554 FAX 217.523.4273 iapd@ilparks.org www.ilparks.org www.ILipra.org

Managing Editor
PETER M. MURPHY, President and Chief Executive Officer, IAPD

Editor
RACHEL LAIER, Publications Director, IAPD

Graphic Design
GOSS ADVERTISING, 217.423.4739, www.gossadvertising.com

Advertising Sales Representative
TODD PERNSTEINER, 952.841.1111, info@pernsterner.com

JOINT EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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IAPD HEADQUARTERS

211 East Monroe Street, Springfield, IL 62701-1186 217.523.4554 www.ilparks.org

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IPRA HEADQUARTERS

536 East Avenue, LaGrange, IL 60525-6815 708.588.2280 Fax 708.354.0535 www.ILipra.org

DEBBIE TRUEBLOOD, Executive Director
MATT FAIRBANKS, Membership and Education Director
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LEESA JOHNSON, Conference and Meeting Director

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Jeff Schroeder, Managing Director
312.523.2423

Amber Cannegieter, Key Account Manager
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Peter M. Murphy, Esq., CAE, IOM
IAPD President and CEO

Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth are Abundant at IAPD

In 2017, we dedicated ourselves to helping our members thrive and you can expect more of this commitment to excellence in 2018.

With the holidays upon us and the New Year ushering in many resolutions for self-improvement, many seasoned and newer board members renew their commitment to continue to be more knowledgeable and effective as a board member and leader.

The wonderful thing about January in Illinois is that the IAPD/IPRA Conference takes place over a three-day period with nearly 200 educational sessions that are geared to increase the knowledge and the effectiveness of both board members and professional staff.

It is simply the greatest opportunity of the year to network with like-minded, publicly-elected officials from across the state of Illinois, see an exhibit hall brimming with the latest park and recreation equipment and take home some great ideas on best practices to be shared with your communities.

The following is a brief sampling of these outstanding opportunities:

Developing the Leaders Around You **David Carter, CEO/President, Growing Leaders, llc** **January 19th, 2018, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM**

In order to succeed at the highest level, the "leader" must develop other people of influence. Leadership is a team sport, not a solo activity. Gain a deeper understanding of the value of developing leadership skills throughout your agency and the steps needed to get started.

Foundations: We Need One, We Have One, We Need a Little Help **Lori Berkes-Nelson, Foundation Director, Rockford Park District Foundation** **January 19th, 2018, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM**

From policies to boards structure and challenges, to internal and external relationships, this session will cover best practices needed for a successful Foundation.

Legal/Legislative, Part I **Jason Anselment, Legal/Legislative Counsel, Illinois Association of Park Districts** **January 19th, 2018, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM**

Stay current on a wide variety of changes in the law and how those changes will affect the operation of your agency.

Legal/Legislative, Part II **Andrew Paine, Attorney, Tressler, LLP** **January 19th, 2018, 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM**

This session will focus on a recap of important court decisions, PAC opinions, and recent legislation impacting park, conservation, and forest

preserve districts. Participants will learn about the latest developments in transparency and sunshine laws and how these decisions impact the day-to-day operations of their Districts.

Director and Commissioner Relationships: You Don't Need to Go Along to Get Along

Robert K. Bush, Equity Attorney, Ancel Glink
January 20th, 2018, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

This is a must session for park board members to learn the techniques and procedures on how to get along even in disagreements of direction. Come listen to a seasoned veteran who has assisted many boards accomplishing their goals.

Effective, Efficient and Orderly Board & Committee Meetings: Do Robert's Rules Really Work for Us

Stewart Diamond, Equity Partner, Ancel Glink
January 20th, 2018, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

A must session to control your meetings and meet your meeting goals. Learn the legal requirements for Board and Committee Procedures. Learn alternatives, methods and strategies to help your meetings be more productive, streamlined, and meet legal requirements.

Director Contracts: Who, What, When & Why **Keri Lyn Krafthefer, Equity Partner, Ancel GLink** **January 20th, 2018, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM**

This session will deal with the pluses and minuses in offering a contract for the hiring and exiting of the executive director. Learn the points needed in a contract for both parties and how to avoid the typical mistakes in contracts.

The Top Ten Craziest Employment Decisions of the Year **Margaret Kostopulos, Attorney, Ancel GLink** **January 19th, 2018, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM**

The old saying goes that bad facts make bad law. but nowhere is this more true in the area of labor and employment law. Join us to learn the consequences for you, as employers, when the courts make what seem to be crazy decisions.

Boardmanship Essentials, Part I **Steven Adams, Partner, Robbins Schwartz** **January 20th, 2018, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM**

Get your commissioner questions answered. Learn and apply must-know laws and rules pertaining to board meetings and commissioner activity, and practical tips to keep meetings legal and functional.

Boardmanship Essentials, Part II

Steve Adams, Partner, Robbins Schwartz

January 20th, 2018, 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Are your meetings too long and off track? Is one of your commissioners a bully? Are your board's decisions reactive? If your board is dysfunctional or struggling to move your agency forward, this is your session. Participants will learn what makes a board exceptional.

A Road Map to Effective Intergovernmental Collaboration

David Wick, Commissioner, Park District of Oak Park

January 20th, 2018, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Session participants will experience a "road map" that includes convening an intergovernmental body, meeting agendas, hosting all-taxing body assemblies that are open to the public, engaging the community and the press, ensuring understanding across the taxing bodies, and complying with the Open Meetings Act.

The Road to Referendum: Successful Case Studies and Strategies

Josh Hendricks, Director of Communications & Marketing,

Bloomington Park District

January 18th, 2018, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

The Legal Side of Using Social Media

Greg Jones, Attorney, Ancel Glink

January 19th, 2018, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

Learn the legal processes to use social media at the park district with reduced legal conflict.

Ethics for Commissioners

Steven Adams, Partner, Robbins Schwartz

January 20th, 2018, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

This session will explore specific ethics laws and their application to the park district commissioner, including conflict of interest, prohibited political activity, gift ban rules, official misconduct and criminal public contracting laws. This session will discuss specific cases and provide practical tips to help you stay on the right side of these ethics rules and criminal laws.

Budgets, Levies and Bonds

Steven Adams, Partner, Robbins Schwartz

January 19th, 2018, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

This interactive session will provide a comprehensive look at the financial operations of a park district, including budget and levy requirements and best practices, how PTELL works, and the options and rules pertaining to bonds, notes, and other forms of borrowing. We will discuss limited tax, alternate, revenue and voted bonds, bank borrowing, and other permitted forms of borrowing.

Commissioners Roundtable

Mike Selep, Executive Director, Mokena Park District

January 20th, 2018, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

New commissioners and veteran commissioners, this is your session! We know you have questions and topics you want to discuss. Our panel of experts will be ready to discuss these as well as any that come up from audience members. We'll try to talk about what's hot or relevant, what works at your agency and what doesn't.

Protests, Pepper Spray and Your Parks

Andrew Paine, Attorney, Tressler, LLP

January 19th, 2018, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

Participants will learn how to handle and respond to large gatherings, impromptu protests, controversial users, and surprise or unannounced events. Participants will also gain insight and advice on developing an effective permitting system, and the need for maintaining a comprehensive and up-to-date conduct ordinance.

The "Be" Attitudes of Influential Leadership

Ray Ochromowicz, Consultant, Executive Decisions Consulting

January 19th, 2018, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

People follow you because of who you are, and because of what you've done for them. Influential leaders grasp the importance of relationships.

Discover leadership attitudes that make a lasting impact. Participants will be able to recognize the characteristics and behaviors of influential leaders and be able to apply influential strategies to more be a more effective leader.

Bonds For Board Members

Mike Benard, Executive Director, Wheaton Park District

January 19th, 2018, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Learn from a seasoned expert on the JLC all you need to know as a board member before voting on a board ordinance.

A Board Member's Guide to Municipal Bond Financing

Bob Lewis, SVP, Managing Director - Public Finance, PMA Securities, Inc.

January 19th, 2018, 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

As a board member, you may have been introduced to municipal bonds for your personal investment portfolio, but have you ever been educated on the process of issuing municipal bonds? This session will cover a number of issues facing a board member in the bonding process.

Park District Referenda: What You Can and Cannot Do With Public Questions in Your District

Keri Lyn Krafttherfer, Managing Partner, Ancel Glink

January 20th, 2018, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Learn the legal parameters.



The Staff and Board of Trustees of the Illinois Association of Park Districts wish you and your family peace, joy and happiness during this holiday season and throughout the new year!

I hope you enjoy the holidays with family and friends and I look forward to seeing you at the 2018 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, January 18-20, at the Hilton Chicago.

2017/2018 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 18-20, 2018

IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference

Hilton Chicago

April 24-25, 2018

Conference Legislative

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield, IL

Thursday, November 8, 2018

Legal Symposium

Hyatt Lodge/Hamburger University
Oakbrook, IL

IAPD

Illinois Association of Park Districts



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE
IPRA Executive Director

In Marketing, the First Step is a Great Value

The theme of this issue is successfully marketing your agency. For IPRA, marketing our association to our community starts with ensuring that what we have to offer is a valuable service, then educating our professional community about the benefits, and finally, marketing specific services, but just like the way parks and recreation agencies serve the public- it starts with a value proposition and solid brand/reputation, without those two pieces, all the marketing in the world would be unsuccessful. So, let's focus on what IPRA's value proposition is all about, and some of the exciting news and events happening now.

IPRA's mission is to provide and promote exceptional standards of education, networking, and resources for all professionals in the Illinois park, recreation, and conservation communities. Our vision is: IPRA leads the nation in providing premier education, networking, and resources for professionals in parks, recreation, and conservation.

Our dues proposition to our members: IPRA exists to advance the professional careers of its members. We have a wide variety of ways for you to become more educated about, and involved within, your profession. IPRA provides a variety of opportunities to help you along your career path. We have more than 2,700 members throughout the state of Illinois participate in a variety of educational, networking, and resource-sharing opportunities.

For our professional members, we offer the following benefits:

- Free educational and networking opportunities at our section meetings. This is a great way for your staff to stay on top of the latest trends and ideas that are happening with other agencies and communities. Members collaborate on topics and discuss issues that relate to their specific job focus.
- Login for online, searchable member directory.
- Reduced registration costs for attending annual conference and educational opportunities by up to 50% savings.
- Discounted rate for online job posts: IPRA provides job posting services allowing agencies to attract quality candidates. Members receive over a 30% discount.
- Subscriptions to IL Park & Recreation Magazine, as well as IPRA Today eNewsletter.
- Volunteer and leadership opportunities: Your involvement will lead toward career development and enhancement of the profession.
- Access to IPRAConnect: IPRAConnect is the Illinois Park & Recreation Association's members-only online community. IPRAConnect is an environment where members can connect, engage and share information, resources and best practices with their colleagues.

- Invitation to attend a variety of special events are offered through IPRA to draw public awareness, reinforce and demonstrate training competencies, and enhance teamwork skills among staff at park and recreation agencies.
- Be recognized for your contribution toward advancing the profession through the Awards and Recognition program.

We are thrilled to announce a new member program for part-time staff. They may now join at the Advocate level for a reduced rate of \$97 per year (vs. \$269 for full time professionals). Benefits include: section and committee membership, access to our online communities, IPRAConnect, discounted registration at the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference and other opportunities. At this time of year, we offer 15 month memberships for new members to join in the fall and have membership through the end of 2018. To sign up your part-time staff, go to the Membership page at www.ilipra.org

We are thrilled to announce a new member discount for part-time staff. They may now join at the Advocate level for a reduced rate of \$97 per year (vs. \$269 for full time professionals). We are pleased to create this option and hope to be able to better serve the full spectrum of our professional community.



This new opportunity to create more access to membership to part-time staff came at the request of the Membership Council- IPRA's governing body for our seven sections. We are pleased to create this option and hope to be able to better serve the full spectrum of our professional community.

In terms of our outcomes for our members in 2017, IPRA:

- Granted over a million dollars in playground funding to members' agencies through our partnership with PlayCore/GameTime
- Launched the Unplug Illinois public service announcement (PSA), that you can link to your agency's Facebook or YouTube page, play on your lobby television or even better - send to your local cable access television station and have them attach your agency name to it!
- Redesigned our website, ILipra.org! Some new features include: mobile capability improvements (to allow event registration or membership renewal from a mobile device), access order history from member profile, manage multiple registrations in one transactions, and dedicated Illinois Park & Recreation Foundation website.

- Donated over \$35,000 in 2017 to the Illinois Park & Recreation Foundation (IPRF) to support scholarships for students and professionals
- Invested continued support in our award-winning programs - the Leadership Academy, now in its sixth year, and the ProConnect mentoring program.

Further, we are so proud to have recently hosted the first ever Multi-State Leadership Summit in Lombard, Illinois on October 26-27. This had been a part of IPRA's long term plans for several years now as we planned towards its success. Imagine a board retreat for your own organization- a couple of days of coming together with experts in the field, along with your staff team, to do a deep dive into your leadership partnership between your board and staff and learn ways to be a better organization. But this was for our state association's board and staff, and we had the additional layer of having six associations from five states together in the room to learn from not just the experts, but also from each other. That's what the Summit was all about- it was two days of, idea-sharing, networking and professional development specific to the industry we serve. Attendees included representatives from Illinois Park and Recreation Association, Illinois Association of Park Districts, Indiana Park and Recreation Association, Iowa Park and Recreation Association, Michigan Park and Recreation Association, and the Kentucky Recreation and Park Society. For two days, this group of 35 learned from the best of the best in association management, and experts who led discussions on the challenges facing the industry, and how we can adapt our service models to better meet the needs of our members, ultimately so we can each strive to be the best park and rec state associations we can be.

The event's facilitator, Glenn Tecker, was Chairman and Co-CEO of *Tecker International (formerly Tecker Consultants)*. Glenn has more than 35 years of experience assisting associations and corporations in planning for change. Glenn is widely acknowledged as one of the world's foremost experts on leadership and strategy. Having worked in an executive capacity with businesses, public agencies, and non-profit organizations, he has also served as a board member for a number of non-profit and for-profit organizations.

Glenn's particular expertise in the areas of governance, program strategy, organizational design, research analysis, facilitation and presentation skills was especially relevant to this event. We at IPRA were so proud to host this first-time Multi-State Leadership Summit. We look forward to seeing the outcomes of the great relationships we are building with our sister states in the goal of always striving to serve you better.

As we now look towards 2018, I believe we will have even more to offer to you as we look to constantly evaluate, expand, and develop our member benefits to serve you better. We know sometimes the best marketing you can do is to serve your customers well, to create trust, to build relationships, and to listen and be guided by their needs. A quality program will speak for itself and the marketing should echo and compliment that message.

If you are looking for additional information or are looking to get more involved, please contact me at debbie@ilipra.org. I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you soon- it will be conference time again before you know it!

Upcoming Events

December 13 & 21, 2017 Give the Gift of Great Customer Service (Webinar)

This month's webinar, Give the Gift of Great Customer Service, is presented by Kurt Podeszwa of Journey Consulting, and he will discuss how to model and motivate your staff to develop and deliver excellent customer service across your agency.

December 14, 2017 Youth Programming Committee Meeting

December 14, 2017 Day Camp and School Age Committee Meeting

December 14, 2017 Human Resource Committee Meeting

December 21, 2017 CPRP October-December Exam Preparation - Class 4

This is the last of four in a series of classes designed to prepare individuals for the National Recreation and Park Association's Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam.

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

As the premier state conference for parks and recreation, forest preserves, and conservation agencies in Illinois, the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference brings together more than 4,200 professionals and elected officials for three days of exciting and quality educational programming, networking, and professional development.

For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at ILipra.org



The graphic features the IPRA logo at the top, which includes the word "ILLINOIS" above "ipra" in a stylized font with a green and blue swoosh. Below the logo, the text reads "Membership Reminder: MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRING!" in large, bold, yellow and white letters. At the bottom, it says "Renew online by Dec. 15, 2017 and receive a \$15 discount! There will be no dues increase." followed by the website "ILipra.org" in large yellow letters.



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Numerous IAPD Resources Available to Assist Members with Property Tax Discussions

As this issue goes to press, local governments are in the process of adopting their 2017 tax levy ordinances while the General Assembly continues to debate legislation that would impose a state-mandated property tax freeze.

Few, if any, local decisions have a greater impact on day-to-day local government operations than their annual property tax levies. Although locally elected boards are in the best position to make this annual determination for their own community, a one-size-fits-all, state-mandated property tax freeze has been a major legislative topic in Springfield for several years.

Because next year is a General Election year, there is little doubt that property tax freeze legislation will remain a hot issue at the Capitol in 2018. As the debate continues, it is important for park districts and other local park, recreation and conservation agencies to ensure that legislators and their residents understand that when it comes to property tax levies and proposed freezes, not all local governments are the same.

Key Facts and Proper Context Are Critical

During the past several years, there have been repeated claims that Illinois has the nation's highest property taxes. These claims are typically based on a comparison of property taxes to a snapshot of estimated home values.

These oversimplified claims rarely provide background or proper context to the Illinois property tax discussion and often leave out important facts. For instance, the main driver of property taxes in Illinois is the State's overreliance on local property taxes to fund its local school system. This point is critical given that almost *two-thirds of all property taxes in Illinois go to local schools*.

While an overwhelming majority of property taxes go to school districts, municipalities and other general purpose governments, i.e., 90% statewide, park districts receive only 3.7% of all property taxes collected. Despite these stark differences, property tax freeze legislation paints all taxing bodies with the same broad brush.

Because key facts such as these are important to establishing the proper context for legislators and residents, IAPD has developed numerous resources to assist member agencies in their advocacy efforts on this important topic. Last year we enhanced the IAPD database by adding nearly 40 different categories of financial, tax

levy and demographic information. To relieve the burden on member agencies to update their own member profile and to ensure the uniformity and accuracy of this tax levy information, we utilized information that each agency reports to the Illinois Department of Revenue for its tax levy and extension for each fund, together with the employment and other demographic data that is reported to the Illinois Comptroller in each agency's Annual Financial Report (AFR).

This year, IAPD used this information in a statewide analysis of tax rates and levy extensions to help illustrate that park district taxes are a relatively minimal part of a resident's overall property tax bill.

Based on this and similar data, there is ample evidence to make the case that park districts should be excluded from future property tax freeze legislation, particularly considering the tremendous value that citizens receive in return for this modest investment. While these statewide numbers are compelling, it is also important for agencies to educate their residents and legislators on specific facts as they relate to their agency's portion of their citizens' local property tax bills and the many benefits that their residents derive from their park district.

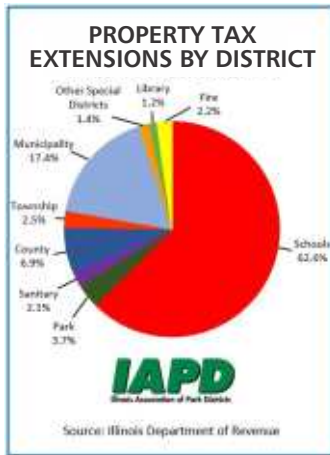
Below is a sampling of data and other resources that are available to IAPD members through the IAPD website at ILparks.org. There you will also find sources for this information along with other advocacy tools and key discussion points.

Does Illinois really have the nation's highest property taxes?

- On a per capita basis, **Illinois ranks 10th nationally** in the amount of revenue received from property taxes.
- As a percent of personal income, **Illinois ranks 9th nationally**.

Why Are Illinois Property Taxes High Relative to Many States?

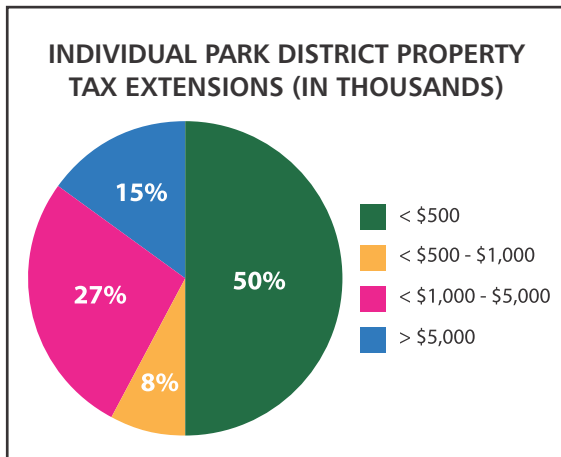
- Though Illinois does not have the highest property taxes nationally based on key indicators, property taxes are higher than many other states because of the overreliance on local property taxes to fund schools compared to those other states.
- **In Illinois, 63.3% of all school funding is derived from local property taxes** which is **nearly 20% higher than the national average (44.6%)**.
- As a result of this overutilization of the local property taxes to fund the State's education system, **nearly 2/3rds of all property taxes go to schools**.
- Though schools are the primary driver of property taxes, **another 25% of all Illinois property taxes fund general purpose governments** such as municipalities, counties and townships.



- This means that **about 90%** of all local property taxes go to either schools or general purposes governments.
- The remaining 10% of local property taxes fund a wide array of local services such as fire protection, sanitary, airports, cemeteries, roads and, of course, parks, recreation and conservation.
- **Only 3.7%** of all property taxes collected statewide go to park districts.

Park districts make up a small percentage of all property taxes collected.

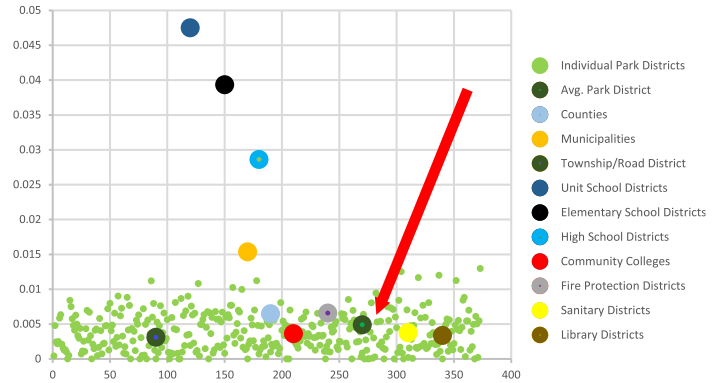
- On a district-by-district basis, a local park district's share of the property tax base is often even less. For instance, 1/3rd of all park districts extend less than \$100,000 in annual property taxes while 1/2 extend less than \$500,000 per year.



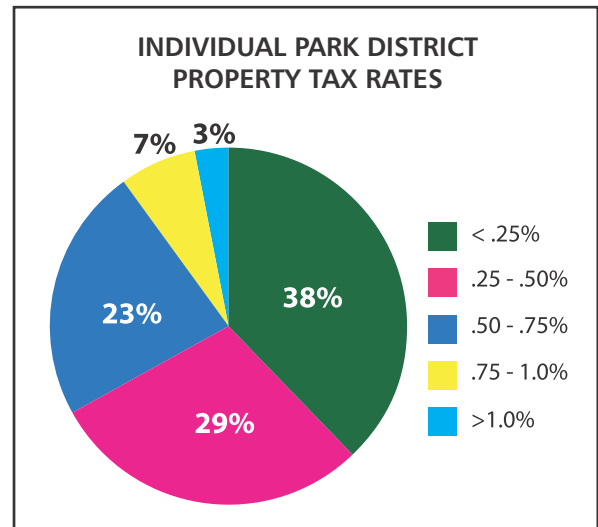
Homeowner tax rates for park districts are also relatively low.

- The average park district property tax rate is well below the average rate for school districts and most general purpose governments even though those entities receive state support such as general state aid and the Local Government Distributive Fund, which park districts do not receive.

PROPERTY TAX RATES



- In fact, all park districts are below the **average** rate for many other units. Nearly 2 out of 5 park districts levy less than .25%, and more than 2/3rds of park districts levy less than .50%.



Use Your Agency's Own Numbers to Tell Your Story

The analysis above represents statewide numbers. As you speak with your local residents and legislators about this issue, it is important to highlight where your own park district or forest preserve fits within a local resident's tax bill.

Of course, these figures are only part of the equation. In addition to the fact that your agency's portion of a resident's tax bill is relatively small and provides tremendous value to your community, it is also important to point out that most of these property tax dollars stay local. For example, other IAPD resources such as our recent W-2 and Revenue Analysis show that most of the 67,000 employees of park districts, forest preserve and conservation districts live within the district where they work. This means these dollars are reinvested right back into the community.

Again, these are just a few of the many resources IAPD has developed to help agencies in their advocacy both locally and in support of our efforts at the Capitol. Additional information is available to you at any time by visiting ILparks.org.

Legal calendar 2018

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

The following park district calendar includes key dates based on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30. For those park districts that have adopted another date for the commencement of the fiscal year (70 ILCS 1205/4-4), this calendar must be adjusted for those duties that must be performed at times related to the fiscal year. The calendar is also established around regular park board meetings held on the third Thursday of each month. Selected election dates are based on the General Primary Election to be held on March 20, 2018, and the General Election to take place on November 6, 2018. For additional election dates, consult the Practice Tools Section of the IAPD website, ILparks.org.

This Legal Calendar was compiled by the Illinois Association of Park Districts as a resource for our members. It is not an exhaustive list of every law that may impact park districts or a substitute for individual legal research. As with any question requiring legal advice, you should contact your park district's attorney. For questions or additional information, you may also contact the IAPD.

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

ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- Post the date, time and place of park district regular meetings for the year. Mail copies to the news media. (5 ILCS 120/2.02)
- Review the requirement that all closed sessions are to be recorded verbatim by audio or video. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review requirement that open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later, and made available for public inspection within 10 days after approval. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review the requirements that all Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act officers must complete the Attorney General's annual training requirements. Newly appointed officers must complete the training within 30 days after designation or assuming the position. (5 ILCS 120/1.05; 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Review requirement that newly elected or appointed members of a public body must successfully complete a course on the Open Meetings Act offered by the Illinois Association of Park Districts or the electronic training curriculum on the Open Meetings Act developed by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor within 90 days of their oath of office or otherwise assuming their responsibilities if no oath is required. (5 ILCS 140/1.05)
- Review requirement that all local governments with Internet websites are required to post on that website an email address for their elected officials for the public's use in contacting those officials and to post a hyperlink on the local government's homepage to allow the public easy access to the contact information. (50 ILCS 205/20)
- Review with the park district treasurer the requirement that all funds of the district not immediately needed for disbursement must be invested within two

working days at prevailing interest rates or better. (30 ILCS 225/1)

- Review the requirement that every person, other than the treasurer, receiving money for the district must keep a triplicate record of the money, and deliver the money to the treasurer not later than the middle of the month following the month of receipt. (30 ILCS 20/1)
- The American flag must be displayed and flown each day of the week from each City Hall or Village Hall and Village Square and at the principal entrance to all supervised public parks. (5 ILCS 465/3b)
- Contributions to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) must be deducted each pay period from covered employees' pay and remitted to the IMRF along with the contribution from the local government. This requirement is mandatory for municipalities over 5,000 population where Social Security is not provided, and elective for others. (40 ILCS 5/7-132, 7-172, 7-173)
- Districts that have employees under Social Security must send their FICA contributions at such times as may be designated by the Internal Revenue Service. (40 ILCS 5/21-105.2, 21-109)
- Review the requirements that all newly hired employees must be reported to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. (820 ILCS 405/1801.1)
- Review the requirement that while participating in a public works project, each contractor and subcontractor must submit a certified payroll to the public body in charge of the project every month. The public body must maintain these records submitted prior to January 1, 2014 for at least 3 years. Pursuant to Public Act 98-0328, the public body must maintain these records submitted on or after January 1, 2014, for at least 5 years, but can do so in paper or electronic format. (820 ILCS 130/5)
- For persons or entities required to report under the Lobbyist Registration Act, review reporting requirements for expenditures. (25 ILCS 170/6, 170/6.5)
- Beginning January 1, 2015, all employers must post a notice developed by the Illinois Department of Human

Rights (IDHR) and include information concerning an employee's rights in any employee handbook. Samples of these required notices are available on the IDHR's website. (Public Act 98-1050)

EVERY SIX MONTHS

Unpublished written minutes of all closed meetings are to be reviewed not less than semiannually. Minutes are to be reviewed to determine if (a) the need for confidentiality still exists as to all or part of those minutes, or (b) if the minutes or portions thereof no longer require confidential treatment and are available for public inspection. The results of the review are to be reported in the open session of the board of commissioners. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)

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

NOVEMBER 2017

NOVEMBER 20

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

NOVEMBER 20

Last day to file petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officer or board (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the General Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: The specific statutory provisions governing the creation of political subdivisions can be found in the relevant Code governing such subdivisions.

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

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election (November 27 – December 4, 2017). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

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

NOVEMBER 27

Last day to file objections to a petition to create a political subdivision in the office of the appropriate officer where the petitions were originally filed (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the General Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)

DECEMBER 2017

DECEMBER 18

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the General Primary Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same officer in which the original petitions were filed. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(a), 28-6, 28-7)

EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda held under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.

DECEMBER 26

Last day to file objections to petitions for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the General Primary Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same office that has the original petitions. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)

EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda held under the provisions of Article IX of the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.)

JANUARY 2018

JANUARY 2

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

JANUARY 2

Last day for County, Municipal, School, Township and Park Boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for the General Primary Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30; 105 ILCS 5/9-1.5)

JANUARY 11

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

JANUARY 18

Regular January board meeting.

JANUARY 18-20

Attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference, Hilton Chicago.

JANUARY 19

First day for the election authority to publish a notice of any question of public policy to be voted upon within the jurisdiction at the General Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

JANUARY 31

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

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

FEBRUARY 2018

FEBRUARY 1

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

FEBRUARY 15

Regular February board meeting.

MARCH 2018

MARCH 12

Last day for the election authority to publish a notice of any question of public policy to be voted upon within the jurisdiction at the General Primary Election. The election authority shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the election authority. The local election official shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the political or governmental subdivision. If there is no principal office, the local election official shall post the notice at the building in which the governing body of the political or governmental subdivision held its first meeting of the calendar year in which the referenda is being held. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

MARCH 15

Regular March board meeting.

MARCH 20

General Primary Election

APRIL 2018

APRIL 1

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

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

APRIL 2

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

NOTE 1: IMRF employers must post on their website or at their principal office the total compensation package of employees with a total compensation of \$150,000 or more per year at least 6 days before the employer approves the total compensation package. The employer must also post the total compensation package within 6 business days after approving their budget for employees with a total compensation package in excess of \$75,000 or more. If the employer maintains a website, it may choose to post a physical copy of this information at the principal office of the employer in lieu of posting the information directly on the website, but the employer must post directions on the website on how to access the information. (5 ILCS 120/7.3)

NOTE 2: Before an IMRF employer increases the earnings of an officer, executive or manager by more than 12%, the employer must obtain a "Pension Impact Statement" from the IMRF which states the effects of the salary increase on the employee's pension benefits. (40 ILCS 5/7-225)

APRIL 19

Regular April board meeting.

APRIL 24-25

Attend the IAPD Legislative Conference in Springfield. The Legislative Reception is held the evening of April 24 with the conference starting the next morning on April 25. April 24 is Parks Day at the Capitol with park district, forest preserve, conservation district and special recreation displays lining the Capitol Rotunda.

MAY 2018

MAY 1

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

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

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

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

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

MAY 1

Suggested date to send notice to the Illinois Department of Labor requesting determination of current prevailing rate of wages for the district's area. (820 ILCS 130/4; 130/9)

MAY 1

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

MAY 1

The date to start the annual audit. Every governmental unit receiving revenues of \$850,000 or more is required to make an annual audit to cover the immediately preceding fiscal year. The audit must be completed and the audit report filed with the Comptroller within 180 days after the close of the fiscal year. All governmental units are also required to file a copy of the completed report with the county clerk. (50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3)

NOTE 1: Any governmental unit receiving revenue of less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year is required to file a financial report with the Comptroller in lieu of an audit. Pursuant to Public Act 98-1019, beginning with fiscal year 2016 those governmental units receiving revenue less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year must also provide copies of this annual financial report to each member of that governmental unit's governing board of elected officials and present it either in person or by a live phone or web connection during a public meeting and have the financial report approved by a 3/5 majority vote. Otherwise, that unit must cause an audit of the account to be made once every four years in addition to filing the annual financial report with the Comptroller.

NOTE 2: Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/3)

NOTE 3: Pursuant to 50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3, these reports must be submitted to the Comptroller electronically unless the governmental unit provides the Comptroller's Office with sufficient evidence that the reports cannot be filed electronically and the Comptroller waives the requirement.

MAY 1

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

MAY 1

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

MAY 4

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

MAY 17

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

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

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

MAY 31

General Assembly scheduled to adjourn.

JUNE 2018

JUNE 7

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

JUNE 15

The last day for filing a copy of the district's budget and appropriation ordinance with the county clerk, as well as a certified estimate of revenue by source anticipated to be received in the following fiscal year (assuming a passage adoption date of May 17).

JUNE 21

Regular June board meeting.

JUNE 30

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

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

NOTE: Pursuant to Public Act 98-173, a public body is no longer required to also file a certified copy of its determination with the Illinois Secretary of State.

NOTE: Pursuant to Public Act 100-0154 a public body is no longer required to publish its determination if the agency provides electronic access to this notice on its website with a hyperlink to Illinois Department of Labor's uniform prevailing wage schedule for that locality.

JULY 2018

JULY 9

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

JULY 9

Last day to file a petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officer or board (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the General Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b))

NOTE: The specific statutory provisions governing the creation of political subdivisions can be found in the relevant Code governing such subdivisions.

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

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election. (July 16 – 23, 2018). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

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

JULY 15

Last day to file certified copy of prevailing wage rate determination with the office of the Illinois Department of Labor. (820 ILCS 130/9)

JULY 16

Last day to file objections to a petition to create a political subdivision in the office of the appropriate officer where the petitions were originally filed (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the General Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)

JULY 19

Regular July board meeting.

AUGUST 2018

AUGUST 6

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the General Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same officer in which the original petitions are filed. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(a), 28-6, 28-7)

EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda held under the provisions of Article IX of the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.)

AUGUST 13

Last day to file objections to petitions for the submission of questions of public policy for the General Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same office that has the original petitions. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)

EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda held under the provisions of Article IX of the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.

AUGUST 14

If filed with Illinois Department of Labor on the last possible date (July 15), the last date to: (i) mail copies of prevailing rate of wages to requesting parties, and (ii) publish determination of rates unless the public body has provided electronic access to this notice on its website with a hyperlink to the Illinois Department of Labor's uniform prevailing wage schedule for that locality. (Public Act 100-0154). (Publication must be within 30 days of date of filing with Department of Labor.) (820 ILCS 130/9)

AUGUST 16

Regular August board meeting.

AUGUST 20

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

AUGUST 30

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

SEPTEMBER 2018

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

SEPTEMBER 7

First day for the election authority to publish a notice of any question of public policy to be voted upon at the General Election within the jurisdiction. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

SEPTEMBER 20

Regular September board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2018

Attend the NRPA Congress in Indianapolis, Indiana

OCTOBER 2018

OCTOBER 1

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

OCTOBER 18

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

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

OCTOBER 18

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

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

NOTE 2: It is recommended that the park district attorney review all determinations and proceedings relating to this reference, which is the Truth in Taxation Law. (35 ILCS 200/18-55 *et seq.*)

OCTOBER 27

The last day to file annual audit report (or financial report if district received revenue of less than \$850,000) with the Comptroller of the State of Illinois and county clerk (within 180 days of close of fiscal year) and make a copy open to public inspection. Pursuant to Public Act 98-1019, beginning with fiscal year 2016 those governmental units receiving revenue less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year must also provide copies of this annual financial report to each member of that governmental unit's governing board of elected officials and present it either in person or by a live phone or web connection during a public meeting and have the financial report approved by a 3/5 majority vote. Otherwise, that unit must cause an audit of the account to be made once every four years in addition to filing the annual financial report with the

Comptroller. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/2; 310/3; 310/6)

NOTE: Pursuant to 50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3, these reports must be submitted to the Comptroller electronically unless the governmental unit provides the Comptroller's Office with sufficient evidence that the report cannot be filed electronically and the Comptroller waives the requirement.

OCTOBER 29

Last day for the election authority to publish a notice of any question of public policy to be voted upon within its jurisdiction at the General Election. The election authority shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the election authority. The local election official shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the political or governmental subdivision. If there is no principal office, the local election official shall post the notice at the building in which the governing body of the political or governmental subdivision held its first meeting of the calendar year in which the referendum is being held. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

OCTOBER 31

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

OCTOBER 31

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

NOVEMBER 2018

NOVEMBER 5

The suggested date to publish notice of hearing (Truth in Taxation Law) if the district's proposed levy is greater than 105 percent of last year's extension or estimated extension. Must publish not more than 14 days, nor less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Publication date assumes a hearing date of November 12-16, 2018. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (35 ILCS 200/18-70; 200/18-75)

NOTE: The form of the notice is set forth in the Truth in Taxation Law. Be sure to check special publication requirements

found in statute. Further, any notice that includes information in excess of that specified and required by the Act shall be considered an invalid notice. (35 ILCS 200/18-80)

NOVEMBER 6

General Election

NOVEMBER 8

Attend the IAPD Legal Symposium
Hamburger University, Oak Brook

NOVEMBER 15

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

NOVEMBER 15

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

NOVEMBER 27

Last day for appropriate canvassing board to canvass the results of referenda submitted to the voters at the November 6, 2018 General Election. (10 ILCS 5/22-17)

NOVEMBER 30

(If levy ordinance was enacted on November 15, 2018) the last day to publish Truth in Taxation notice if levy amounts as enacted exceed prior published figures, or if levy exceeds 105 percent of last year's extension and there was not prior publication. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (Notice must be given within 15 days of the date the levy ordinance was enacted.) (35 ILCS 200/18-85)

DECEMBER 2018

DECEMBER 1

The suggested date to verify that, for real estate acquired in 2018, appropriate applications have been filed to exempt the real estate from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-5)

DECEMBER 4

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

DECEMBER 20

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

DECEMBER 21

The suggested date to prepare and file with the Supervisor of Assessments the annual affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been a change in the ownership or use of the district's exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (Last day for filing is January 31, 2019.) (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

DECEMBER 21

The suggested day by which bond ordinances should be filed with county clerk in order to receive extensions of taxes for the payment of principal and interest on general obligation bonds or limited bonds for 2018 taxes collected in 2019. The filing must actually take place prior to March 1, 2019. (30 ILCS 350/16)

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

DECEMBER 21

Because many offices will be closed on Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25, in most counties the last day to: (a) file certified copy of tax levy ordinance with county clerk (70 ILCS 1205/5-1; 35 ILCS 200/18-15), and (b) file board president's certificate of compliance with county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

NOTE 1: State statutes require a certified copy of the tax levy ordinance to be filed with the county clerk on or before the last Tuesday in December.

NOTE 2: State statute requires that all local governments file either certificate of compliance or a certificate indicating the inapplicability of the Truth in Taxation Law with the certified copy of the tax levy ordinance filed with the county clerk.



Copies of the statutes referenced in the Legal Calendar are included in the Park District Code, which is available for purchase at ILparks.org



FIVE REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES IN
MARKETING
SINCE THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

BY AL RIES, AUTHOR, POSITIONING: THE BATTLE FOR YOUR MIND.

Two developments have changed marketing forever. One is the arrival of the Internet. And the second is the rise of global branding.

Both developments have contributed to the revolutionary changes that have taken place in marketing since the turn of the century.



THE PRODUCT, THE PACKAGING, THE DISTRIBUTION, THE BRAND ARE THE TOOLS IN A MARKETING CAMPAIGN. BUT THEY ARE NOT THE OBJECTIVE. THE OBJECTIVE IS TO CONQUER A CATEGORY.

(1) PR is more important than advertising.

Word-of-mouth has always been the silent companion of advertising. For every consumer influenced by an advertisement, three or four friends, neighbors or relatives of that consumer might get the message "via word of mouth."

Today, geography is no limitation to word of mouth. Today, it's "word of fingers" and one consumer can influence hundreds of people around the world.

That's only part of the problem for advertisers. Advertising itself is not considered "credible" by most consumers. Today, PR is the medium that most consumers respond to.

In the past, almost every new brand was launched with a big advertising campaign. In today's environment, that doesn't work anymore.

Today, most successful new brands were launched with PR. Brands like Google, Facebook, Snapchat, Uber and Twitter.

(2) The category is more important than the brand.

Marketing is often called "brand building." The emphasis is on creating a better-known, more-authoritative brand.

But what role do brands play in the marketing process? Consumers can't buy brands. Consumers buy products with brand names attached.

Consider the analogy between marketing and warfare. A country launches a military campaign to conquer a territory. A company launches a marketing campaign to conquer a category.

The soldiers, the tanks and the aircraft are the tools in a military campaign. But they are not the objective.

The product, the packaging, the distribution, the brand are the tools in a marketing campaign. But they are not the objective. The objective is to conquer a category.

Even worse from a branding point of view, is that a brand has little value outside of the category it stands for.

Consider Nokia, a company that dominated the cellphone market with its Nokia brand. So what did Nokia do when the market shifted from cellphones to smartphones?

They did what most companies do. Nokia tried to use its cellphone brand name on its smartphones with disastrous results.

That's not what Apple did. When the computer market shifted from the home to the office, they didn't use the Apple name. They called their office computers *Macintosh*.

When Apple decided to get into the smartphone business, they also didn't use the Apple name. They called their smartphone, *iPhone*.



WHILE THE OBJECTIVE OF A MARKETING PROGRAM IS TO PUT A WORD OR A VERBAL CONCEPT INTO CONSUMERS' MINDS, THE BEST WAY TO DO THAT IS NOT WITH WORDS AT ALL. IT'S WITH A VISUAL THAT HAS EMOTIONAL APPEAL.

(I should have said *Steve Jobs*, not Apple. Because when Apple got into the smartwatch business, they promptly adopted the line-extension strategy used by almost everybody else.)

After the success of the iPhone, you might think some of the iPhone's competitors would have also used new brand names. But they didn't.

Every major global smartphone competitor used their existing brand names: BlackBerry, HTC, Huawei, Lenovo, LG, Motorola, Nokia, Samsung, Sony, and Xiaomi.

Most marketing people are totally brand oriented. All they think about is what other categories they can conquer with their brands. That's particularly true in global companies like Sony in Japan. Samsung in Korea. Tata in India. General Electric in America.

(3) The name is more important than the strategy.

It probably didn't surprise you that RadioShack went bankrupt. (For the second time.)

What is surprising is that the executives who ran the company thought they could be successful using the RadioShack name. When was the last time you bought a radio without an automobile attached?

Take Orville Redenbacher, the leading popcorn brand for decades. But not today. Consumers are getting concerned about the food they eat, especially high-calorie, low-nutrition food like popcorn. Today, the leading popcorn brand is Smartfood.

No brand lasts forever. Times change and companies need to be in tune with the times. And one way to do that is to launch new brands to deal with changes in the marketplace.

But even when companies do use new brand names, they often fail to appreciate the importance of the brand names they choose.

Quite often, a company will create a new brand name before it even develops a marketing strategy for the brand. That's a serious mistake.

Strategy first, brand name second is the best approach. The brand name should be picked to help communicate the brand's marketing strategy. *Duracell*, for example, was picked to help communicate the fact that an alkaline battery lasts twice as long as a zinc-carbon battery.

And, of course, *Duracell* almost immediately overtook its competitor, the *Eveready Alkaline* brand, another line-extension disaster.

Consumers don't read your marketing plans. They just pick and choose between brands they see for sale in the marketplace. And the best way to communicate your marketing strategy is by choosing a brand name that reflects it.

(4) The visual is more important than the verbal.

For 65 years in a row, Heineken was the No.1 imported beer in America. Then Corona arrived with a lime on top of the bottle.

Today, Corona outsells Heineken in the American market by 120 percent. That's the power of a visual.

But not just any visual. After all, advertising and other forms of marketing are loaded with visual images. What a brand needs is a visual that reinforces its verbal positioning concept.

The “position,” a verbal concept, is the nail. The tool that hammers the positioning nail into consumers' minds is the visual hammer.

While the objective of a marketing program is to put a word or a verbal concept into consumers' minds, the best way to do that is not with words at all. It's with a visual that has emotional appeal.

The duck which transformed Aflac from a relatively unknown insurance company to a company with 94-percent name recognition.

The green jacket which made the Masters the most-important golf tournament in the world, even though it's the only tournament hosted by a private club, the Augusta National Golf Club.

The pink ribbon which made Susan G. Komen for the Cure a charity that “most consumers were likely to contribute to.

The chalice which made Stella Artois one of the top ten imported beers in America.

(5) Multiple brands are more important than single brands.

The era of the single-brand company is over. In the future, global companies will have multiple brands. Companies like Apple, Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, Unilever, Nestlé and many others.

Consider two famous single-brand companies from the past: General Electric and IBM.

In the past decade, from 2007 to 2016, revenues at General Electric have declined 28 percent and revenues at IBM have declined 19 percent.

The actual declines are even worse. In the past decade, inflation has caused the value of the dollar to decline by 16 percent.

Take the Internet. Almost every major company in the world has launched a website using its existing brand name. Have any of these websites become enormously successful?

Of course, not.

To develop a successful website, you need a new brand name. Take Walmart which launched Walmart.com in the year 2000. Today, more than 16 years later, Walmart.com accounts for less than 3 percent of Walmart's total sales.

And recently the company admitted its website strategy was a mistake by buying Jet.com, an Internet site that was launched in 2014, for \$3.3 billion.

The five revolutionary changes.

- (1) *PR is more important than advertising.*
- (2) *The category is more important than the brand.*
- (3) *The name is more important than the strategy.*
- (4) *The visual is more important than the verbal.*
- (5) *Multiple brands are more important than single brands.*

Ignore them at your peril.



AL RIES

Al is a legendary advertising, marketing and branding strategist and the bestselling author (or co-author) of 11 books which have sold over 3 million copies worldwide. Including: *Positioning, Marketing Warfare, Focus, The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding, The Fall of Advertising & the Rise of PR and War in the Boardroom.*

After graduating from DePauw University, Al worked in the advertising department of General Electric before founding his own advertising agency in New York City, Ries Cappiello Colwell in 1963. The agency later changed to marketing strategy firm, Trout & Ries.

The concept of positioning revolutionized how people viewed advertising and marketing. Marketing was traditionally thought of as communications, but successful brands are those that find an open hole in the mind and then become the first to fill the hole with their brand name.

Al was president of the Association of Industrial Advertisers (now the Business Marketing Association) and the Advertising Club of New York. He was also chairman of the Club's Andy Awards. In 1989, Sales & Marketing Executives International gave him its “Tops in Marketing” award. In 1999, PR Week magazine named him one of the 100 most influential PR people of the 20th century.

Al currently writes a monthly marketing column for AdAge.com and appears on the RiesReport.com. Al's favorite activities include snorkeling, horseback riding and driving with the top down. He resides in Atlanta, Georgia, with his wife, Mary Lou.

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 AWARDS GALA

2017 Best of the Best
 Awards Gala Winners



Top Journalist

Ford Heights Park District
 for John W. Fountain, Chicago Sun Times



Best Friend of Illinois Parks - Small Business

Bloomington Park District for Eagle Falls Dentistry
Schaumburg Park District for Schaumburg Bank & Trust Company, N.A.
Warrenville Park District for NorthStar Credit Union



Best Friend of Illinois Parks - Mid-Sized Business

Buffalo Grove Park District for Whitehall of Deerfield
Glenview Park District for Glenview State Bank
NWSRA for Ala Carte Entertainment

Best Friend of Illinois Parks - Large Business

Joliet Park District for ATI Physical Therapy



Intergovernmental Cooperation

Forest Preserves of Cook County with the Cook County Department of Public Health
McHenry County Conservation District with Boone County Conservation District, Openlands and the McHenry County Department of Transportation
Mundelein Park & Recreation District with the Village of Mundelein
Waukegan Park District with the Lake County Health Department and Gurnee Park District



Partnership

Barrington Park District with Barrington Jr. Women's Club
Lemont Park District with Lemont Lions Club
Rockford Park District with the City of Rockford, Winnebago County, West Rock Wake Park, Perks Family Foundation, Southwest Ideas for Today and Tomorrow and Rockford Sharefest



Best Green Practices

Park District of Oak Park
Sycamore Park District



Good Sportsmanship

Hoffman Estates Park District for Marc Friedman
Rockford Park District for Anthony Stone
Waukegan Park District for Becky Ziegler



Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year



L-R: **Forest Preserves of Cook County** for Barbara Birmingham, **Dolton Park District** for Dawn Avery, **Plainfield Park District** for Jon Stratton, **Urbana Park District** for Beth Chato

Helen Doria Arts in the Park



L-R: **Deerfield Park District** – 1st Place, **Naperville Park District** – 2nd Place, **North Berwyn Park District** – 3rd Place

Board Member Service Anniversaries

10 Years

Beardstown Park District
John Hardwick

Carol Stream Park District
Tim Powers

Country Club Hills Park District
Jennifer A. Braun-Denton

Dundee Township Park District
Erin O'Leary

Dundee Township Park District
John Meschewski

Fox Valley Park District
Theodia Gillespie

Glenview Park District
Robert J. Patton

Grayslake Community Park District
Terry Toth

Hazel Crest Park District
Lillian Bacon

Hazel Crest Park District
Marva Smith

Hoffman Estates Park District
Lili Kilbridge

Lake Bluff Park District
Susan Ehrhard

Murphysboro Park District
Clarence J. (CJ) Calandro

Oak Brook Park District
Kathleen J. Carson

Park District of Forest Park
John Doss

Rockford Park District
Jack Armstrong

Rolling Meadows Park District
Bill Cooley

Schaumburg Park District
Sharon DiMaria

Streamwood Park District
William Wright

Streamwood Park District
Richard Janiec

Sycamore Park District
Ted Strack

Sycamore Park District
Michelle Schulz

Urbana Park District
Robert P. Stewart

Waukegan Park District
Patricia C. Foley

Waukegan Park District
William "Bill" Sarocka

Worth Park District
Steve Werner

15 Years
Mundelein Park & Recreation District
Patrick McGrath

Forest Preserve District of Will County
Charles Maher

Forest Preserve District of Will County
Donald Gould

20 Years
Bartlett Park District
Lori Palmer

Bloomington Park District
Buzz Puccio

Deerfield Park District
Rick Patinkin

Dolton Park District
Lester L. Long, Sr

Dolton Park District
Carnell Woodbury, Sr.

Dolton Park District
Allen T. Sheard

Dundee Township Park District
Jim Bonkoski

Lockport Township Park District
Jeff Rigoni

Mundelein Park & Recreation District
Kevin Dolan

Sterling Park District
David Stutzke

25 Years
Forest Preserve District of Will County
James Moustis

30 Years
Buffalo Grove Park District
Dr. Larry Reiner

Central Stickney Park District
Bruno Biezynski

Olympia Fields Park District
Timothy Bradford

Woodridge Park District
Jim Duffy

Agency Anniversaries

50 Years
Frankfort Park District
Lisle Park District
Oregon Park District

80 Years
Riverdale Park District

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"Seven Utility Management Consultants has greatly benefited our park district during these tough economic times. Our park district has realized substantial natural gas and electricity savings because of the services that Seven provides. Thank you for making this opportunity available to IAPD member agencies."


*—Oakbrook Terrace
Park District*

A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. On the table, there are several colorful circular objects (plates or mats) in shades of blue, green, and grey, each with a white cutout shape. A person's hand is visible on the right, touching one of the blue objects. Another person's hand is visible on the left, near a blue laptop. In the foreground, a hand is holding a tablet displaying a map or diagram. The background shows the legs and arms of several people, suggesting a collaborative work environment.

COMPETING FOR ATTENTION IN AN AGE OF

BUSY

By Christa Lawrence, Marketing Manager, Mundelein Park & Recreation District



Not only do we have more choice in how to get out our message, but our audience has more choice in where they look for information.

Never before have we had so many marketing tools at our disposal. This dazzling display of seemingly never-ending options is both a blessing and a curse. With so many channels to reach our audience available, we must choose which options will be most effective. Attempting to use every form of media can be costly and time prohibitive. Using too few or choosing the wrong channels can result in missing a target audience. Not only do we have more choice in how to get out our message, but our audience has more choice in where they look for information. Compound that with message fatigue and short attention span and therein lies the challenge. What is the solution? At the Mundelein Park & Recreation District, we have found that with a little creativity and a willingness to try something fun, we have been able to create campaign success stories.

Are you barking up the right tree? Start by defining your audience.

Did you ever work tirelessly to market an event only to have a community member tell you, "Well I didn't know about it"? Responses like that can be frustrating and deflating. At Mundelein Park & Recreation District we start by defining the audience we seek to engage to determine which marketing platforms to use. For example, since a larger percentage of mature audiences primarily depend on the newspaper for their information, we use newspaper ads as one tool to promote adult programming. To make this affordable, we negotiated a trade package with a local newspaper. This allows us to

successfully promote adult programs to a wide audience. Since utilizing this marketing strategy we've received several phone calls from people who said that they saw our ads.

How many people are you expecting...40 or 4000? Define the marketing needs of the event.

Are you preparing a campaign for a small event with a small budget? Is the program or event for your constituents, or are you trying to reach a larger geographic area? At Mundelein Park & Recreation District, many of our events are for our community and we spread the word by using free or low cost methods of promotion. We use digital marketing tools like our website, social media sites as well as e-newsletters. With Facebook, for example, you can boost a post or run an ad for very little money. We also share with other Facebook groups and pages. One group, Mundelein Moms, is very robust and an excellent way to have a conversation with community members. By sharing with them we often get many positive testimonials and personal experiences that aid us in selling a program, our fitness center, our water park or our preschools. In addition to digital, we use traditional marketing such as outdoor marquees, posters, banners and flyers that we post in local businesses around town and at our facilities. We also pass along information to media through press releases and online posting, as well as share with our local partners like the Village and Townships.



Sometimes we need to draw more people from a larger area. For example, we recently held the 7th annual Mundelein Arts Festival. This weekend-long event attracts between 3000-4000 people. We have a larger marketing budget for this event, so in addition to extensive social media campaigns, outdoor signage and ad buys, we printed 10,000 postcards that were inserted into newspapers in a 6 town area and purchased radio ads from a local radio station. The event was a resounding success and patrons and artists alike were satisfied with attendance over the weekend. During the event, we heard from people who shared with us that they learned about or were reminded of the festival through one or more means of our marketing. One person told me they heard it advertised on the radio, another from the postcard inserted in the paper and yet another from the street signs.

Remember, going bigger isn't always better. There is such a thing as too much success.

We learn from our mistakes, but also our successes. Two of our free events, October's Boo Bash and the Spring Egg Hunt were aggressively marketed in 2016/17. Since there was no registration for these community events, we did not anticipate the number of attendees. In both cases we were overwhelmed by record-breaking attendance. Many participants were from outside our community. This caused parking issues and long lines. While we were thrilled to have the marketing campaign create such an impact, we realized that we needed to more narrowly define our audience and that marketing too widely can negatively affect the event.

When you market to your existing audience, make it fun!

Mundelein Park & Recreation District has recently added many new events for young children and their families. To encourage the parents to read about them, we created coloring sheets based on the program theme with the marketing information. We used these at our daycare and preschool as well as our before and after school care program, Rec Connect. The children loved the opportunity to color and our hope was that these masterpieces might attract parent attention as they display them on their refrigerators. This strategy contributed to the success of our new event held in September, "My Little Pony."

Make every staff member a Park District Ambassador.

Keeping staff aware of upcoming programming is a very effective way to ensure success. For example, our preschool teachers are Park District Ambassadors for youth programming. They make sure that parents are aware of opportunities and events geared toward the very young. Earlier this spring we added a new Mother's Day event called Wild About Mom, (a reptilian twist on Mother's Day). In addition to treats for mom and a raffle for gift baskets that were donated by local businesses, we had a reptile show for the whole family to enjoy. At first, the event was struggling to make the minimum registration requirement. But once our Preschool staff promoted it, families signed up in droves and the event filled. The families really enjoyed the event and thanked us for it. Many said that they are looking forward to coming again next May.

To keep all of our staff informed, they receive a synopsis of park district happenings through our monthly e-newsletter and updates and reminders through all-staff emails.

Make every event an opportunity to cross-promote and reward your participants for their patronage.

Every event is an opportunity to communicate to the public about what your park district has to offer. But it is also an opportunity to reward your audience for their attention and time.

Coupons: We use all events as a way to promote Park View Health & Fitness. Adult participants are given a coupon to try a free group exercise class. Not only does this provide awareness to our fitness facility, but it also provides incentive to come in and try it out. We theme the coupons to the event so we know which events drew the most interest.

Contests: At the Mundelein Park & Recreation District we make it a point to be out in the community. Recently staff attended two back-to-school events. Not only did we come bearing the usual promotional gift items, we created a coloring contest in which the winners received four free day passes to our aquatic park, Barefoot Bay Family Aquatic Center. The coloring sheets were themed to promote park district programs. The kids were excited to get a chance to be in a contest and we received some very creative entries. The winners were also happy to receive their prize for summer 2018. Giving people something extra enhances brand recognition and good will within the community.

If you can't get their attention....Flash them!

Each December we begin season pass sales for our summer aquatics facilities. These sales are important to our bottom line and insurance against what Mother Nature might rain down on us. Last year we tried two promotions to motivate early sales. The first was to offer a holiday gift bag with the purchase of a season pass. Along with the season pass coupons, the gift included Barefoot Bay sun glasses, a refillable mug, lip balm and a chocolate lobster, (in honor of our mascot, Leroy the Lobster). Our patrons loved the promotion. They got a little extra and still benefited from the early bird discount. We sold all 50 gift bags in December and got the pass sales off to a great start. The second promotion occurred on an unseasonably warm day in February when we launched an eye-catching Flash Sale promotion on Facebook. Using a GIF, the message "Flash Sale" blinked on and off. The offer stated that in honor of the 70 degree weather we were selling the season passes for an additional 7 % off. This 24 hour sale netted over 100 season pass sales. The result, the 2017 season pass sales were at a four-year high and a 24% increase over 2016. Marketing your agency today is an exciting and ever-changing arena. Just keep in mind the goal of each promotion and the audience you are trying to reach. Remember that people are giving you the gift of their time and attention. Creative and fun marketing will go a long way to building your fan base and keep them coming back. This will result in greater participation and program success.



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THE SILVER BULLET TO GROW YOUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

COMMUNICATION

BY KIMBERLY SMITH

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND CUSTOMER CARE, BOLINGBROOK PARK DISTRICT

It is the secret that everyone wants, the elusive silver bullet to getting more people into programs or using services. I must admit, the title of this article is a little misleading. The truth is there is no silver bullet. There are too many variables within your community to provide that one thing that will guarantee your success. Each community has a unique demographic portfolio as well as public and private competitor makeup that play into your success. With that being said, there is something that is pretty darn close to a silver bullet and it is something that everyone in the organization plays a role in. That secret is communication and the best part is it is free.



RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME TO BUILD BUT CAN BE BROKEN QUICKLY OVER A SIMPLE COMMUNICATION ERROR. COMMUNICATION IS SO POWERFUL, YET SO FRAGILE.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Any successful organization's ultimate goal is to build long-term relationships with their customers and in our case, residents. Talk to any couple who has been happily married for 50 years and they will tell you the key to a successful marriage is communication. The willingness to be real and honest with each other is a must when times get tough. The same is true with our residents. You are ultimately looking for a life partner in a customer. That is where true long-term revenue is generated. Residents who trust their park district will vote yes on a referendum. Members who feel you see them as a person and not a transaction will continue their membership. The preschool mom who knows their child's teacher cares for their well-being will tell all her friends. We are in the business of building relationships that we hope continue throughout the years. Relationships take time to build but can be broken quickly over a simple communication error. Communication is so powerful, yet so fragile. I am sure you are sitting there saying this all sounds nice, but how do you know this is the silver bullet and exactly how does it work. Let me show you.

THE ART OF THE CONVERSATION

We are in the middle of a big-data trap and are losing the art of the conversation. The parks and recreation field attracts people who love to be with people. That is why many are drawn to the field. Use that as your strength over your competitors. Talk to your constituents on a daily basis. Managers should stop into classes and talk to their participants regularly. Go out to a park and talk to the parents who are there with their kids. Numbers on a spreadsheet only tell you part of the story. Usually, by the time it shows up on a spreadsheet, it is too late to take quick corrective action. I am not saying you shouldn't analyze your reports, but don't let them serve as the entire basis for

your decisions. Put a half hour on your calendar each day to talk to a constituent. Make it genuine. Ask them how their day is, what brought you here today, why did they choose you over others. You won't know until you ask. The same is true if someone leaves. Ask them why, but be sincere. Really listen to what they are saying. Take time to bring back the art of the conversation to your district and you will see results. I have proof.

The Bolingbrook community has changed over the last twenty years. The community once filled with young families has grown into not only a diverse community but an older one. The community-wide survey has shown a desire for more active adult programming, but in all honesty, we weren't sure what that looked like. So what did we do? We asked. John Chase, Superintendent of Facilities, spent time daily talking to residents, members and friends throughout the community. He found that our active adult community wants to do so much more than the stereotypical "senior" programming. They want to experience life to the fullest and they want relationships. In response, John added trips including a Zipline experience and indoor skydiving and future ATV tracks. The biggest takeaway is that the active adults have developed a relationship with John. They can't wait to see what his next trip will be. John is also on every trip and uses that time on the bus as his time to promote his next trip or discuss ideas for future trips. These conversations help create a bond that generates loyalty because they trust him. He listens and follows up with action. The action is what is vital to building trust. If you listen and do not act, you have lost all credibility. The value of the art of conversation reaches far beyond filling his trips. These individuals also come into the fitness center and are our sales staff outside our doors as they share their experiences with their friends.



HOW DO YOU GET ALL PLAYERS MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION? YOU GUESSED IT. COMMUNICATION.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS A COMMUNICATION TOOL, NOT A SALES TOOL

Speaking of telling friends, let's move on to social media. Social media is a wonderful communication tool. It allows you to "listen" to what others are saying about you. You can ask questions and get feedback instantly. You can see which programs peak some interest by monitoring likes and shares. There is no doubt that it is an excellent tool, but don't fall into the trap that social media will "sell" your programs. Social media should be viewed as a communication method to share information with your friends. Your followers are interested in you. Keep it conversational and don't sound like a salesman. They want to connect with you, not be sold. You hope that they will tell their friends by sharing your content. Make it something worth sharing. It is the modern day version of word-of-mouth marketing, which still reigns as the marketing medium with the highest ROI.

SPEAK TO MARKET YOU ARE TRYING TO REACH

Along with social media, there are numerous other tools available to you to communicate information to your community. These tools can include website, seasonal guide, email marketing, print materials, direct mail and more. Too many times we get wrapped up in the notion that we must be on the latest and greatest marketing and communication channel available to us. It is easy to fall into that trap. When we focus on the marketing channel instead of the market we are reaching, our marketing simply turns into activity. We burn ourselves out trying to ensure that we are everywhere and we don't really see actionable results. What we really need to focus on is if our marketing activity speaks to the market we are trying to reach. In order to do that, we must first understand who our markets are. This will help not only create programs and services your constituents actually want, but also how to best communicate with them.

In an effort to understand different market segments within the Bolingbrook community, we have developed seven market segmentations.

Stay-at-home Susie/Steve: Families with a stay-at-home parent

Working Wendy/Wendell: Families where both parents work

No Kids Nora/Nick: Residents who never had children or empty nesters

Active Andy/Annie: Our older adults that want nothing to do with the term "senior"

Retired Rick/Rita: Our traditional "senior"

Texting TJ: The teen market

Living-at-home Lexi/Lewis: The twenty-something that still lives at home

These segmentations help us visualize and understand which market we are targeting. Our day camp program targets a different segment than our fitness members. Managers are able to think of each target market when developing their programs and build the program to meet their needs. Then marketing and communication team's role is to ensure that our message speaks to the market they are programming for. For example, our preschool program's target market are stay-at-home parents since it is a two hour program. We discovered parents were looking for longer program times for their children to allow time for errands. The recreation team developed a plan to add more value to parents. They created Preschool Snack & Leap and Preschool Snack & Dance. Parents could sign up for these programs and our staff would provide a healthy snack after preschool and walk the kids to a gymnastics or dance class. Parents knew their kids were cared for, having fun and parents were given an extra hour to complete errands. The results were increased revenue and added value to our customer. The only marketing needed was a flyer communicating the program details and preschool teachers talking to parents about the program.

You will notice another key thread throughout this article. It is internal communications. This is often the component that is missing. Program managers, marketing team members, front line staff and instructors all play a role in successful communication to your customers. It truly takes a team effort to drive success. How do you get all players moving in the same direction? You guessed it. Communication.



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The IPARKS iGrant Program permits IPARKS Members to apply for up to \$500 in grant money to fund, or partially fund, safety items that will aid the Member in loss control or risk management efforts.

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PEOPLE & PLACES

MARKETING SPOTLIGHT



Justin Sienkiewicz has worked in parks and recreation for 20 years, starting in high school as a camp counselor for Northwest Special Recreation Association in Rolling Meadows. He holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Sociology from Northern Illinois University, where he devoted a significant amount of his studies to market research.

Justin worked in marketing and communications for A.C.

Nielsen, NWSRA and Wheeling Park District before coming to Schaumburg Park District in 2015. An avid photographer who loves engaging the public through great images and design, Justin was promoted to Director of Communications and Marketing for the District in March 2017.

Justin lives in Rolling Meadows with his wife, Hollis and their son, Ozzie. In his spare time Justin enjoys pursuing his photography passion, dining at new restaurants and discovering unique places in Chicago.

Justin's Top Five Marketing Tips:

- Know your audience—any good marketing plan should be based on solid data about your community, not hunches and anecdotes.
- Segment your audience—create specialized messages that are more targeted and meaningful and deliver them just to the people that need or want to hear them
- Be intentional with your social media content—delight and engage your audience with fun and relevant at regular, non-aggressive intervals
- Video is the future—it doesn't have to be complex, but it should be thoughtful – plan your script, keep it quick and find the best distribution channels for your audience
- Track & analyze your marketing efforts—was it successful? Why/why not? What improvements could be made?

"People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it."
– Simon Sinek



Kathy Dixon-Long works as the Marketing and Public Relations Executive at Dolton Park District. Her main role is being instrumental in keeping the District connected to the Community. She attends village board meetings, school board, and business meetings to disseminate park district information. She has been a community advocate for over 30 years. A former upper classman at Chicago State University,

Mrs. Dixon-Long maintained the dean's list status of Academic Excellence. She is a certified Master Trainer with impeccable communication skills, and has delivered various workshops and trainings for Southeast CEDA, Illinois Department of Human Services, ABJ Community Services, Metropolitan Family Services, BRASS Foundation, and The Chicago Urban League. She believes that the Dolton Park District is a major staple in the community and kept her own children involved in park programs and summer camps. Having worked with individuals from all walks of life from the wealthy to the homeless, has afforded her the opportunity to know her audience when marketing a program or service.

Kathy's Top Five Marketing Tips:

- Know your audience
- Staff abreast with the changing Social Media
- Always have giveaways, people like free stuff
- Follow-through
- Send Thank-you cards or emails

"When marketing a program, product or service, always inform people on how they will benefit and what is in it for them" – Kathy Dixon-Long

Want to Read More?

Keep up with the latest milestones, new hires, promotions and award winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry online. Visit our website, www.ILparks.org, and click on the Publications tab on the left. Select IP&R Magazine and then People and Places.

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

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

ACCOUNTANTS

KNUTTE & ASSOCIATES, P.C.

Matt Knutte
7900 S. Cass Ave.
Suite 210
Darien, IL 60561
630-960-3317 PH
630-960-9960 FX
donnyt@knutte.com
knutte.com

LAUTERBACH & AMEN, LLP

Ron Amen
27W457 Warrenville Rd.
Warrenville, IL 60555
630-393-1483 PH
630-393-2516 FX
ramen@lauterbachamen.com
lauterbachamen.com

SIKICH LLP

Fred Lantz
1415 W. Diehl Rd.,
Suite 400
Naperville, IL 60563
630-566-8400 PH
630-566-8401 FX
flantz@sikich.com
sikich.com



AQUATICS

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Theresa Rees
2200 West Harrison
Chicago, IL 60612
312-729-6174 PH
theresa.rees@redcross.org
redcross.org

AQUA PURE ENTERPRISES

Thomas Todner
1404 Joliet Rd., Suite A
Romeoville, IL 60446
630-771-1310 PH
630-771-1301 FX
tom@aquapure-il.com
aquapure-il.com

HALOGEN SUPPLY COMPANY, INC.

Rich Hellgeth
4653 W. Lawrence Ave.
Chicago, IL 60630-2532
773-286-6300 PH
773-286-1024 FX
rhellgeth@halogensupply.com
halogensupply.com

McCLOUD AQUATICS

Phil McCloud
705 E. North St.
Elburn, IL 60119
847-891-6260 PH
golfnutii@aol.com
mccloudaquatic.com

SPEAR CORPORATION

Sam Blake
12966 North 50 West
Roachdale, IN 46172
765-577-3100 PH
765-577-3101 FX
sblake@spearcorp.com
spearcorp.com

WHITEWATER WEST

Justin Yeager
6700 McMillan Way
Richmond BC V6W 1J7
Canada
604-273-1068 PH
justin.yeager@
whitewaterwest.com
www.whitewaterwest.com

**ARCHITECTS/
ENGINEERS**

**CHARLES VINCENT
GEORGE ARCHITECTS**

Bruce George
1245 E. Diehl Road,
Suite 101
Naperville, IL 60563
630-357-2023 PH
630-357-2662 FX
bgeorge@cvgarchitects.com
cvgarchitects.com

**DEWBERRY
ARCHITECTS INC.**

Daniel Atilano
25 S. Grove Ave., Ste. 500
Elgin, IL 60120
847-841-0571 PH
847-695-6579 FX
datilano@dewberry.com
dewberry.com



DLA ARCHITECTS, LTD.

Dave Dillon
Two Pierce Place
Suite 1300
Itasca, IL 60143
847-742-4063 PH
847-742-9734 FX
d.dillon@dla-ltd.com
dla-ltd.com

DLA ARCHITECTS, LTD.

Lou Noto
Two Pierce Place
Suite 1300
Itasca, IL 60143
847-742-4063 PH
847-742-9734 FX
l.noto@dla-ltd.com
dla-ltd.com

**ERIKSSON ENGINEERING
ASSOCIATES**

Michael Renner
145 Commerce Drive, Suite
A
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-223-4804 PH
847-223-4864 FX
mrenner@eea-ltd.com
eea-ltd.com

ESI CONSULTANTS, LTD.

Joseph Chiczewski
1979 N. Mill Street,
Suite 100
Naperville, IL 60563
630-420-1700 PH
630-420-1733
jchiczewski@esiltd.com
esiltd.com

**FARNSWORTH GROUP,
INC.**

Christine Kleine
7707 N. Knoxville Ave.,
Suite 100
Peoria, IL 61614
309-689-9888 PH
309-689-9820 FX
ckleine@f-w.com
f-w.com

FGM ARCHITECTS

John Dzarowski
1211 W. 22nd St.
Oak Brook, IL 60523
630-574-8300 PH
630-574-9292 FX
johnd@fgmarchitects.com
fgmarchitects.com

**GEWALT-HAMILTON
ASSOC., INC.**

Tom Rychlik
625 Forest Edge Dr.
Vernon Hills, IL 60061-3105
847-478-9700 PH
847-478-9701 FX
trychlik@gha-engineers.com
gha-engineers.com

HR GREEN

Dave Reitz
420 N. Front St., Suite 100
McHenry, IL 60050
815-385-1778 PH
815-385-1781 FX
dreitz@hrgreen.com
hrgreen.com

**NAGLE HARTRAY
ARCHITECTURE**

Eric Penney
55 West Wacker Drive,
Suite 302
Chicago, IL 60601
312-425-1000 PH
312-425-1001 FX
epenney@naglehartray.com
naglehartray.com

RATIO

Matthew Zetzl
101 South Pennsylvania
Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204
317-663-4040 PH
mzetzl@ratiodesign.com
ratiodesign.com

**STANTEC CONSULTING
SERVICES, INC.**

Jim Maland
2335 Hwy 36 West
St. Paul, MN 55113
651-636-4600 x4900 PH
651-636-1311 FX
jim.maland@stantec.com
stantec.com

STUDIO 222 ARCHITECTS

Tim Schmitt
222 S. Morgan St., Suite 4B
Chicago, IL 60607
312-850-4970 PH
312-850-4978 FX
tschmitt@
studio222architects.com
studio222architects.com

WIGHT & COMPANY

Bob Ijams
2500 N. Frontage Rd.
Darien, IL 60561
630-739-6703 PH
630-969-7979 FX
rijams@wightco.com
wightco.com

**WILLIAMS ARCHITECTS,
LTD.**

500 Park Boulevard,
Suite 800
Itasca, IL 60143
630-221-1212 PH
630-221-1220 FX
williams@williams-
architects.com
williams-architects.com

W-T ENGINEERING, INC.

Troy Triphahn
2675 Pratum Ave.
Hoffman Estates, IL
60192-3703
224-293-6333 PH
224-293-6444 FX
troy.triphahn@
wtengineering.com
wtengineering.com

ATTORNEYS

**ANCEL GLINK DIAMOND
BUSH DICIANNI &
KRAFTHEFER**

Robert Bush
140 South Dearborn Street
6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60603
312-782-7606 PH
312-782-0943 FX
rbush@ancelglink.com
ancelglink.com



**BROOKS, TARULIS &
TIBBLE, LLC**

Rick Tarulis
101 N. Washington Street
Naperville, IL 60540
630-355-2101 PH
630-355-7843 FX
rtarulis@napervillelaw.com
napervillelaw.com

CHAPMAN AND CUTLER

Kelly K.Kost
111 W. Monroe St.
Chicago, IL 60603-4080
312-845-3814 PH
312-576-1814 FX
kost@chapman.com
chapman.com

FRANCZEK RADELET P.C.

Chris Johlke
300 S. Wacker Drive,
Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60606
312-786-6152 PH
312-986-9192 FX
caj@franczek.com
franczek.com

**HERVAS, CONDON &
BERSANI, P.C.**

Michael Bersani
333 Pierce Road, Suite 195
Itasca, IL 60143
630-773-4774 PH
630-773-4851 FX
mbersani@hcbattorneys.com
hcbattorneys.com

IAPD CORPORATE/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

HODGES, LOIZZI, EISENHAMMER, RODICK & KOHN LLC

Robert Kohn
3030 W. Salt Creek Ln.,
Ste. 202
Arlington Heights, IL
60005-5002
847-670-9000 PH
847-670-7334 FX
rkohn@hlerk.com
hlerk.com

ICE MILLER LLP

Shelly Scinto
200 West Madison Street,
#3500
Chicago, IL 60606
312-726-8116 PH
312-726-2529 FX
Shelly.Scinto@icemiller.com
icemiller.com

ROBBINS SCHWARTZ

Steven B. Adams
Guy C. Hall
55 West Monroe Street,
Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60603
312-332-7760 PH
312-332-7768 FX
sadams@robbins-
schwartz.com
ghall@robbins-
schwartz.com
robbins-schwartz.com

TRESSLER LLP

Charlene Holtz
233 S. Wacker Drive
22nd Floor
Chicago, IL 60606
312-627-4168 PH
312-627-1717 FX
choltz@tresslerllp.com
tsmp.com

BACKGROUND CHECKS

SSCI – BACKGROUND CHECKS

Chris Goodman
1853 Piedmont Rd.
Suite 100
Marietta, GA 30066
866-996-7412 PH
cgoodman@ssci2000.com
ssci2000.com

BANKING

MB FINANCIAL BANK

Sean P. Durkin
1151 State Street
Lemont, IL 60439
630-335-4935 PH
847-653-0469 FX
sdurkin@mbfinancial.com
mbfinancial.com

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Rick Gurrieri
1842 N. Elston Ave.
Chicago, IL 60642
773-276-7972 PH
773-276-9656 FX
Rgurrieri@aol.com
bronzememco.com

CONCESSION EQUIPMENT & SUPPLIES

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Matt Loew
450 N. York Rd.
Bensenville, IL 60106
800-767-5352 PH
630-860-5980 FX
mloew@grp popcorn.com
goldmedalchicago.com

CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

CORPORATE CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

Michael Rink or Douglas Rink
1323 Butterfield Rd.
Suite 110
Downers Grove, IL 60515
630-271-0500 PH
630-271-0505 FX
ccs@corporateconstruction
services.com
corporateconstruction
services.com

FREDERICK QUINN CORP.

Jack Hayes
103 South Church Street
Addison, IL 60101
630-628-8500 PH
630-628-8595 FX
jhayes@fquinncorp.com
fquinncorp.com

GILBANE BUILDING COMPANY

Derek Ward
8550 E. Bryn Mawr Ave.,
Ste. 500
Chicago, IL 60631
773-695-3528 PH
773-695-3501 FX
dward@gilbaneco.com
gilbaneco.com

HENRY BROS CO.

Marc Deneau
9821 S. 78th Ave.
Hickory Hills, IL 60457
708-430-5400 PH
708-430-8262 FX
info@henrybros.com
henrybros.com

LAMP INCORPORATED

Ian Lamp
PO Box 865
Elgin, IL 60121-0865
847-741-7220 PH
847-741-9677 FX
ilamp@lampinc.com
lampinc.com

LEOPARDO COMPANIES, INC.

Leigh McMillen
5200 Prairie Stone Parkway
Hoffman Estates, IL 60192
847-783-3816 PH
847-783-3817 FX
lamcmillen@leopardo.com
leopardo.com

NORWALK CONCRETE INDUSTRIES

Scott Kinnamon
80 Commerce Drive
Norwalk, OH 44857
800-733-3624 PH
419-663-0627 FX
skinn@nciprecast.com
nciprecast.com

V3 COMPANIES

Ed Fitch
7325 Janes Ave.
Woodridge, IL 60517
630-729-6329 PH
630-724-9202 FX
efitch@v3co.com
v3co.com

CONSULTANTS

AQITY RESEARCH & INSIGHTS, INC.

Jeff Andreasen
820 Davis St.
Suite 502
Evanston, IL 60201
847-424-4171 PH
847-328-8995 FX
j.andreasen@aqityresearch.com
aqityresearch.com

INSPEC

David Foler
8618 W. Catalpa
Suites 1109-1110
Chicago, IL 60656
773-444-0206 PH
773-444-0221 FX
dfoler@inspec.com
inspec.com

KEMPERSPORTS MANAGEMENT, INC.

Douglas Hellman
50 Skokie Blvd., Suite 444
Northbrook, IL 60062
847-480-4853 PH
dhellman@kempersports.com
kempersports.com

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

COMED ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

Tassany Campbell
Three Lincoln Centre
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181
630-437-2494 PH
Tassany.Campbell@ComEd.com
comed.com

ENERGY RESOURCES CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF IL AT CHICAGO

Salvatore Rinaldi
1309 S. Halsted Street
(MC 156)
Chicago, IL 60607
312-996-2554 PH
312-996-5620 FX
samr@uic.edu
erc.uic.edu

SMARTWATT

Elan Kapadia
3168 Doolittle Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
518-406-8190 PH
ekapadia@smartwatt.com
<https://www.smartwatt.com>

ENTERTAINMENT

GAMETRUCK CHICAGO

Serenity Foster
70 Willard Dr.
Marietta, GA 30066
770-755-5100 PH
Serenity.c@gametruck.com
Gametruckparty.com/chicago

MEDIEVAL TIMES DINNER AND TOURNAMENT

Susan O'Herron
2001 N. Roselle Rd.
Schaumburg, IL 60195
847-882-1496 PH
847-882-0202 FX
Susan.OHerron@
medievaltimes.com
medievaltimes.com

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Allison Abel
2617 W. Woodland Dr.
Anaheim, CA 92801
888-315-9037 PH
866-308-9719 FX
allison@greenfieldsfitness.com
gfoutdoorfitness.com

MATRIX FITNESS

Neala Endre
1600 Landmark Drive
Cottage Grove, WI 53527
773-919-7370 PH
608-839-6027 FX
neala.endre@matrixfitness.com
matrixfitness.com

FINANCE

BAIRD PUBLIC FINANCE

Stephan Roberts
300 E. Fifth Ave., Suite 200
Naperville, IL 60563
630-778-9100 PH
630-848-6450 FX
scroberts@rwbaird.com
rwbaird.com

EHLERS & ASSOCIATES INC.

John Piemonte
525 West Van Buren Street
Suite 450
Chicago, IL 60607-3823
312-638-5250 PH
312-638-5245 FX
Jpiemonte@ehlers-inc.com
ehlers-inc.com

MESIROW FINANCIAL, INC.

Todd Krzyskowski
353 North Clark Street
9th Floor
Chicago, IL 60654
312-595-7842 PH
312-595-6988 FX
mobile (708) 204-4973
tkrzyskowski@
mesirofinancial.com
mesirofinancial.com

SPEER FINANCIAL, INC.

David Phillips
One North LaSalle
Suite 4100
Chicago, IL 60602
312-780-2280 PH
312-346-8833 FX
dphillips@speerfinancial.com
speerfinancial.com

FLOORING

SPORT COURT MIDWEST

Patrick Walker
747 Church Rd, Suite G10
Elmhurst, IL 60126
630-350-8652 PH
630-350-8657 FX
info@courtofmsport.com
courtofmsport.com

HARDSCAPE MANUFACTURER

TECHO-BLOC

Norm Kleber
PO Box 39
Waterloo, IN 46793
877-832-4625 PH
norm.kleber@techo-bloc.com
techo-bloc.com

HOSPITALITY

HILTON CHICAGO

John G. Wells
720 South Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60605
312-922-4400 PH
312-431-6940 FX
john.wells@hilton.com
hiltonchicago.com

INSURANCE

COORDINATED BENEFITS COMPANY, LLC

Jim Patrician
923 N. Plum Grove Road
Suite C
Schaumburg, IL 60173
847-605-8560 PH
jpatrician@cbcco.com
cbcco.com

ILLINOIS PARKS ASSOCIATION RISK SERVICES (IPARKS)

Eddie Wood
2000 W. Pioneer Parkway
Suite 25
Peoria, IL 61615
800-692-9522 PH
309-692-9602 FX
ewood@bfgroup.com
bfgroup.com



PARK DISTRICT RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY (PDRMA)

Brett Davis
2033 Burlington Avenue
Lisle, IL 60532
630-769-0332 PH
630-769-0449 FX
bdavis@pdrma.org
pdrma.org



INVESTMENTS

ILLINOIS METROPOLITAN INVESTMENT FUND (IMET)

Sofia Anastopoulos
1220 Oak Brook Road
Oak Brook, IL 60523
630-571-0480 x229 PH
sofia.ana@investIMET.com
investimet.com

PFM ASSET MANAGEMENT LLC

Michelle Binns
222 N. LaSalle, Suite 910
Chicago, IL 60601
312-523-2423 PH
312-977-1570 FX
binns@mfm.com
mfm.com

PMA FINANCIAL NETWORK, INC.

Courtney Soesbe
2135 Citygate Ln., 7th Floor
Naperville, IL 60563
630-657-6421 PH
630-718-8710 FX
csoesbe@pmanetwork.com
pmanetwork.com

LAND PRESERVATION

OPENLANDS

Gerald Adelman or
Lenore Beyer-Clow
25 E. Washington
Suite 1650
Chicago, IL 60602
312-427-4256 PH
312-427-6251 FX
jadelman@openlands.org
lbeyer-clow@openlands.org
openlands.org

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

3D DESIGN STUDIO

Dan Dalziel
529 Barron Blvd.
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-223-1891 PH
847-223-1892 FX
ddalziel@3ddesignstudio.com
3ddesignstudio.com

GREENBERGFARROW

Lori Vierow
21 S. Evergreen Avenue
Suite 200
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
847-788-0913 PH
847-788-9536 FX
lvierow@greenbergfarrow.com
greenbergfarrow.com

HITCHCOCK DESIGN GROUP

Bill Inman
221 W. Jefferson Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540-5397
630-961-1787 PH
630-961-9925 FX
binman@hitchcockdesigngroup.com
hitchcockdesigngroup.com

LANDSCAPE SERVICES/SUPPLIES

FOREVERLAWN CHICAGO

Justin Lettenberger
3438 Colony Bay Drive
Rockford, IL 61109
920-901-0361 PH
justin@chicago.
foreverlawn.com
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HOMER INDUSTRIES, LLC

Todd Hahn
14000 S. Archer Ave.
Lockport, IL 60441
815-838-0863 PH
815-838-0863 FX
ToddHahn@homertree.com
homerindustries.com

KAFKA GRANITE

Tiffany Kafka
550 E. Hwy 153
Mosinee, WI 54455
800-852-7415 PH
tiffany@kafkagranite.com
kafkagranite.com

MCGINTY BROS., INC. LAWN AND TREE CARE

Brian McGinty
3744 E. Cuba Rd.
Long Grove, IL 60047
847-438-5161 PH
847-438-1883 FX
brian@mcgintybros.com
mcgintybros.com

NELS JOHNSON TREE EXPERTS

John Johnson
912 Pitner Avenue
Evanston, IL 60202
847-475-1877 PH
847-475-0037 FX
jjohnson@
nelsjohnsonstree.com
nelsjohnsonstree.com

THE MULCH CENTER

James Seckelmann
21457 Milwaukee Ave.
Deerfield, IL 60015
847-459-7200 PH
847-229-0219 FX
jim@mulchcenter.com
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2135 City Gate Ln.,
Suite 300
Naperville, IL 60563
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renee@cunninghamrec.com
cunninghamrec.com

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915 Hillgrove
PO Box 2121
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800-526-6197 PH
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sheilahw@nutoys4fun.com
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Jackie Musch
25715 S. Ridgeland Avenue
Monee, IL 60449
708-534-1070 PH
708-534-1138 FX
rainbowfarms@nettech.com

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John Cederlund
17421 Marengo Rd.
Union, IL 60180
888-438-7345 PH
815-923-2204 FX
john@getreil.com
getreil.com

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VISUAL IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY, INC.

David Szeszol
11612 Becky Lee Trace
Huntley, IL 60142
888-515-2425 PH
847-515-2446 FX
dave@vipis.com
vipis.com

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TIPS

Jeff Shokrian or Randy Ramey
4845 US Hwy 271 North
Pittsburg, TX 75686
866-839-8477 PH
866-839-8472 FX
jeff.shokrian@tips-usa.com
randy.ramey@tips-usa.com
tips-usa.com

SIGNAGE

DIVINE SIGNS, INC.

Jeff Miller
601 Estes Avenue
Schaumburg, IL 60173
847-534-9220 PH
jmiller@divinesignsinc.com
divinesignsinc.com

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2270 Hassell Rd.
Hoffman Estates, IL 60169
312-405-1773 PH
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david.t@anovafurnishings.com
anovafurnishings.com

IAPD CORPORATE/ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

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Sarah Monson
1051 W. 7th St.
Monroe, WI 53566
608-329-8112 PH
smonson@monroetruck.com
monroetruck.com

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Jen Gerber
100 Park Avenue
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
920-887-7375 PH
920-887-7999 FX
info@wtiworld.com
wtiworld.com

SPORTS FIELD DESIGN

LOHMANN COMPANIES

Todd Quitno
18250 Beck Road
Marengo, IL 60152
815-923-3400 PH
815-923-3662 FX
tquitno@lohmann.com
lohmanncompanies.com

TECHNOLOGY

LINKS TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS, INC.

James Burke
440 East State Parkway
Schaumburg, IL 60173
847-252-7285 PH
847-574-5824 FX
jburke@linkstechnology.com
linkstechnology.com

VERMONT SYSTEMS

Kathy Messier
12 Market Pl
Essex Junction, VT 05452
802-879-6993 PH
kathym@vermontsystems.com
vermontsystems.com

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Des Plaines, IL 60016
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847-789-8592 FX
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bestbussales.com

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Dan O'Toole
6530 Briargate Drive
Downers Grove, IL 60527
630-286-9900 PH
630-590-9187 FX
dan@otsbuscharter.com

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Wheaton, IL 60187
mark@actservicesconsulting.com
630-303-3677 PH
actservicesconsulting.com

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Business Mgr CIM
6010 NW 1st Place
Gainesville, FL 32607
brian.bokowy@allchem.com
352-213-0121 PH
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COO/Exec. VP Marketing/Sales
1317 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132
mark@funcarnival.com
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314-991-6884 FX
www.funcarnival.com

CAMOSY CONSTRUCTION

John Bosman
Business Development
43451 N. US Hwy 41
Zion, IL 60099
johnbosman@camosy.com
847-395-6800 PH
847-395-6891 FX
camosy.com

CHARLES VINCENT GEORGE ARCHITECTS

Bruce George
1245 East Diehl Rd.
Suite 101
Naperville, IL 60563
nhand@cvgarchitects.com
630-357-2023 PH

CUNNINGHAM RECREATION

Michele Breakfield
Director of Marketing
2135 City Center Lane
Suite 300
Naperville, IL 60563
michele@cunninghamrec.com
800-438-2780 PH
704-525-7356 FX
cunninghamrec.com

DESIGNSPRING GROUP, LLC

Kathy Bussert
Graphic Designer
313 S. Oakland Ave.
Villa Park, IL 60181
kbussert@designspringinc.com
630-479-9446 PH
designspringinc.com

ENGINEERING RESOURCE ASSOCIATES, INC.

John Mayer
3S701 West Ave Ste 150
Warrenville, IL 60555-3264
jmayer@eraconsultants.com
630-393-3060 PH
630-393-2152 FX
eraconsultants.com

EXCEL AERIAL IMAGES, LLC

Eric Lee Wilson
President/Chief Pilot
1137 E Woodrow Ave
Lombard, IL 60148
ericlee@excelaerialimagesllc.com
224-775-4623 PH

FGM ARCHITECTS

John Dzarnowski
Director, Recreation & Municipal
1211 W. 22nd Street-Suite 705
Oak Brook, IL 60523
johnnd@fgmarchitects.com
630-574-8300 PH
630-574-9292 FX
fgmarchitects.com

FINISHING SOLUTIONS NETWORK

Steve Kulovits
Director of Business Development
1905 Sequoia Dr. Suite 201
Aurora, IL 60506
skulovits@finishingsolutionsnetwork.com
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Robert Slusser
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rslusser@flexcourt.com
1-800-847-4404 PH
flexcourt.com

FRANCZEK RADELET P.C.

Chris Johlle
Attorney
300 S Wacker Drive
Suite 3400
Chicago, IL 60606
caj@franczek.com
312-786-6152 PH
312-986-9192 FX
www.franczek.com

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Stoughton, MA 2072
csavage@franklinsports.com
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George Petecki
President
1410 Mills Rd
Joliet, IL 60433-9561
bridget@georgeslandscaping.com
815-774-0350 PH

GOLD MEDAL CHICAGO

Matt Loew
Branch Manager
450 N. York Rd.
Bensenville, IL 60106
mloew@gmpopcorn.com
800-767-5352 PH
630-860-5980 FX
goldmedalchicago.com

GREEN-UP

Bernard Schroeder
Director
23940 Andrew Road
Plainfield, IL 60585
sandy@green-up.com
815-372-3000 PH
815-372-3005 FX
green-up.com

HITCHCOCK DESIGN GROUP

Bill Inman
Senior Vice President
225 W. Jefferson Ave.
Naperville, IL 60540
binman@hitchcockdesigngroup.com
630-961-1787 PH
630-961-9925 FX
hitchcockdesigngroup.com

ID EDGE

Dianne Lippoldt
1849 Cherry Street
#10
Louisville, CO 80027
dlippoldt@idedge.com
303-665-0405 PH
303-665-4026 FX

KI FURNITURE

Jim Heyden
PO Box 4135
St Charles, IL 60174
jim.heyden@ki.com
847-867-7898 PH
ki.com

LAMP INCORPORATED

Ian Lamp
President
460 N. Grove Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
ilamp@lampinc.net
847-741-7220 (305)
847-741-9677
lampinc.net

LAUTERBACH & AMEN, LLP

Ron Amen
27W457 Warrenville Road
Warrenville, IL 60555
ramen@lauterbachamen.com
630-393-1483 PH
630-393-2516 FX
lauterbachamen.com

LEGAT ARCHITECTS, INC.

Marc Rohde
2015 Spring Road #175
Oak Brook, IL 60523
mrohde@legat.com
630-990-3535 PH

MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Christopher Schneider
Director of Membership and
Business Development
3025 Highland Parkway
Suite 225
Downers Grove, IL 60515
CSchneider@hrsresource.org
630-963-7600 x232 PH

MELROSE PYROTECHNICS

Bob Kerns
Dir of Operations
P.O. Box 302
Kingsbury, IN 46345
bob@melrosepyro.com
219-393-5522
219-393-5710
melrosepyro.com

MUSCO SPORTS LIGHTING, INC.

Doug Miller
Regional Sales Manager
100 1st Avenue W
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
promotions@musco.com
641-673-0411 PH
musco.com

NAGLE HARTRAY ARCHITECTURE

Eric Penney
Architect
55 West Wacker Drive
#302
Chicago, IL 60601
epenney@naglehartray.com
312-425-1000 PH
312-425-1001 FX
naglehartray.com

PDRMA

Brett Davis
CEO
Park District Risk Management
Agency
2033 Burlington Ave
Lisle, IL 60532-1646
bdavis@pdrma.org
630-769-0332 PH
630-435-8999 FX
pdrma.org

IPRA COMMERCIAL MEMBERS

PLAY & PARK STRUCTURES

Steve Casada
303 Bass St
Park Hills, MO 63601
scasada@playandpark.com
573-631-1968 PH

PLAY & PARK STRUCTURES OF NORTHERN IL/PLAY & PARK STRUCTURES

Patrick Puebla
4516 21st Avenue
Moline, IL 61265
ppuebla@playandpark.com
309-339-0536 PH

PLAY ILLINOIS

Margaret Chaidez
4716 Roslyn Rd,
Downers Grove, IL 60515
mchaidez@playil.com
630-730-3645 PH

POSSIBILITY PLACE NURSERY

Kelsay Shaw
Owner
7548 W Monee-Manhattan Road
Monee, IL 60449
terry@possibilityplace.com
708-534-3988 PH

RAIN BIRD CORPORATION

Scott Akey
1061 S 250 W
Albion, IN 46701
sakey@rainbird.com
260-409-2196 PH

RAMUC POOL PAINT

Rebecca Spencer
Marketing Manager
36 Pine Street
Rockaway, NJ 7866
rspencer@ramucpoolpaint.com
800-745-6756 PH
800-445-9963 FX
ramucpoolpaint.com

SANTA'S VILLAGE LLC DBA AZOOSMENT PARK LLC

Rob Kramer
Director of Sales and Marketing
601 Dundee Ave
East Dundee, IL 60118
rob@azoosmentpark.com
847-426-6751 PH
847-426-4703 FX
santasvillagedundee.com

SIERRA ITS

Steve Clemensen
Sr. Business Development Manager
8600 W Bryn Mawr Ste540n
Chicago, IL 60631
sclemensen@sierraits.com
312-734-1989 PH
www.SierraITS.com

SIKA SARNAFIL ROOFING AND WATERPROOFING

Tyler Sweeney
200 W. 22nd St.
Lombard, IL 60148
sweeney.tyler@us.sika.com
224-239-4488 PH

SIKICH LLP

Frederick Lantz
Partner-in-Charge, Government Services
1415 W Diehl Road
Suite 400
Naperville, IL 60563
fred.lantz@sikich.com
630-566-8557 PH
630-499-7557 FX
sikich.com

SMITHGROUPJJR, LLC

Mark Woodhurst
Landscape Architect
35 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 900
Chicago, IL 60601
Mark.Woodhurst@smithgroupjjr.com
312-641-0770 PH
734-780-2422 FX
smithgroupjjr.com

SOD SOLUTIONS, INC.

Joel Lane
Executive Director of Production
PO Box 460
MOunt Pleasant, SC 29465
jlane@sodsolutions.com
904-631-4343 PH
sodsolutions.com

SOOS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Robert Soos
Vice President
105 Schelter Rd
Suite 101
Lincolnshire, IL 60069
rsoos@soosarchitects.com
847-821-7667

SOS AEDS

Luke Fonash
4900 N. Elston Avenue
Chicago, IL 60630
lfonash@sos4safety.com
773-685-8600 PH
773-685-2424 FX
sos4safety.com

SPEER FINANCIAL

David Phillips
Executive Vice President
One North LaSalle, Suite 4100
Chicago, IL 60602
dphillips@speerfinancial.com
312-780-2280 PH
312-346-8833 FX

STUDIO 222 ARCHITECTS

Bridget Fallon
Business Development Manager
222 S Morgan St Ste 4B
Chicago, IL 60607-3093
bfallon@studio222architects.com
312-850-4970 PH
312-850-4978 FX
studio222architects.com

STUDIO BLOOM, INC.

Patty King
President
115 East Ogden Avenue
Suite 117-360
Naperville, IL 60563
patty.king@studiobloominc.com
312.882.2424 PH
studiobloominc.com

THE AT GROUP

Jerry Aulio
President
7 N Wisner Street
Park Ridge, IL 60068
jaulio@theatgrp.com
847-692-7515 PH
847-630-7932 FX
theatgrp.com

THE LAKOTA GROUP

Scott Freres
President
116 W. Illinois St., 7th Floor
7th Floor
Chicago, IL 60610
bhurley@thelakotagroup.com
312-467-5445 PH
312-467-5484 FX
thelakotagroup.com

THE MULCH CENTER

Jim Seckelmann
21457 N Milwaukee Avenue
Deerfield, IL 60015
laura@mulchcenter.com
847-459-7200 PH
mulchcenter.com

TIPS

Joni Elms
4845 US Highway 271 N
Pittsburg, TX 75456
conferences@tips-usa.com
866-839-8477 PH
866-839-8477 FX
tips-usa.com

TYLER TECHNOLOGIES

John Randolph
Account Executive
1348 Wilderness Run Drive
Attn: John Randolph
Eagan, MN 55123
john.randolph@tylertech.com
651-357-5849 PH
tylertech.com

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Englewood, CO 80110
steve.brinkel@whitewaterwest.com
604-273-1068 PH

WIGHT & COMPANY

Robert Ijams
Director of Parks & Recreation
2500 N. Frontage Road
Darien, IL 60561-1511
rijams@wightco.com
630-739-6644 PH
630-969-7979 FX
wightco.com

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Olga Henderson
Marketing
500 Park Blvd
Ste 800
Itasca, IL 60143
ohhenderson@williams-architects.com
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630-221-1220 FX
williams-architects.com

WINTRUST FINANCIAL CORPORATION

Aimee Briles
Vice President, Government Funds
9700 W. Higgins Road
4th Floor
Rosemont, IL 60018
abriles@wintrust.com
630-560-2120 PH
877-811-4710 FX
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