

illinois

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P&R

PARKS AND RECREATION

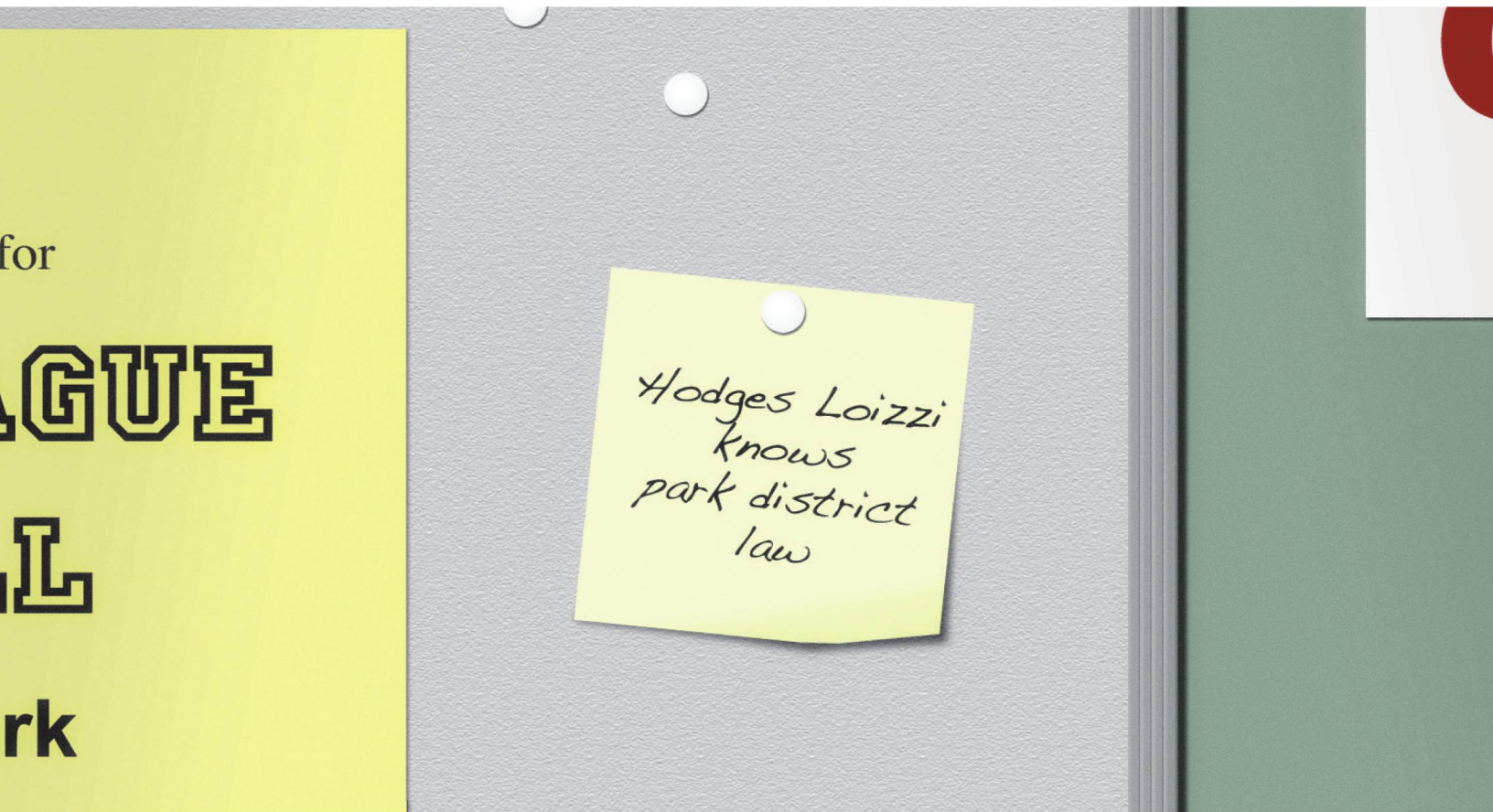
The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



going green

PLUS: Conference Coverage & Results of the 2011 IP&R Photo & Writing Contest

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12



16



22

IN THIS ISSUE

- 4 From the Editor**
A look back at winter's big events with an eye on spring and all things green
- 6 Get on Board**
Raise the Bar Through Networking
- 8 Eye on the Profession**
Advice from IPRA: Prepare for change and arm yourself with education
- 10 Statehouse Insider**
IAPD is Your Direct Connection to the State Capitol
- 12 Conference Coverage**
Recap of the all-conference awards luncheon and other highlights
- 16 And The Winner Is ...**
Results of the 2011 *IP&R* magazine photo and writing contests
- 18 Green Infrastructure Brings Partners and Possibilities**
Stormwater management, native landscaping and wetlands plus partners to help pay the way
- 22 Going Green in St. Charles**
An environmental education center that "LEEDs" by example in the community
- 25 WebXtra:
Creating a Community Earth Day Festival**
Learn how to increase attendance without a budget increase
- 26 People and Places**
Faces and places making news around the state

ON THE COVER: "Spicebush Swallowtail Butterfly" by Bryan Werner, Metro East Park and Recreation District.

FROM THE EDITOR

By show of hands, how many of you attended the **2012 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference** at the Hyatt Regency in January? If your hand is up, you were in good company. Nearly 4,350 of you participated in the educational event of the year. That's 250 more attendees than last year – further proof that the already-successful conference continues to get better every year.



And speaking of successful ... the **2011 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest** received a record-busting 220 entries, most of which were submitted electronically (we're going green, see?). What's even more impressive than the volume of photos received is the quality of the submissions. Judges had a tough time narrowing the entries down to first and second place in the four contest categories. Turn to page 16 to see who took top honors.

Now with the annual conference and magazine photo contest in the rear view mirror, our thoughts turn to spring -- that idyllic time when all things green return from winter hiatus. It's no coincidence, then, that the March-April **IP&R** magazine is green-themed.

In this edition, you'll learn about green infrastructure, the potential for new partnerships it brings and even funding possibilities. We're also featuring the St. Charles Park District's new environmental education center, which was designed to be ecologically sensitive and environmentally sustainable. Finally, the Carol Stream Park District shares the story of its successful Earth Day celebration.

As always, if you have feedback on **IP&R** magazine, I'd love to hear from you. Is there a topic you're interested in reading about or an article you'd like to write? Send me your suggestions, compliments or complaints. My mailbox is always open - LHarlan@ilparks.org.

Best regards,
— LORI HARLAN

2012 IP&R Magazine Editorial Themes:

May/June – Golf



July/August – Maintenance

September/October – Leadership/
Board Development

November/December – Programming



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Peter M. Murphy
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Raise the Bar Through Networking

One of the great rewards of being a park commissioner and an elected official is bringing to your community a true quality of life that would not exist without the many programs and activities that your park district provides. Networking provides an unparalleled opportunity to discover the latest programs and trends at park and recreation agencies throughout Illinois. Not only does it give you the opportunity to engage in new and exciting programs that have been tested by other entities, but it also gives you the opportunity to bring innovation to your board practices.

The Illinois Association of Park Districts is dedicated to providing board members and park professionals with opportunities to network, and this year's state conference is a prime example. More than 4,350 individuals and 1,297 vendors attended the conference. Over the three-day conference, we offered more than 160 educational sessions that covered a vast array of topics including finance, how to be a better board member, legal/legislative topics and Parliamentary Procedures/Robert's Rules, just to name a few. The evaluations have been tallied, and the educational offerings and presentations were highly rated and very well received by conference attendees. The many social opportunities at the conference gave board members a variety of opportunities to network with fellow elected officials from across the state of Illinois. Those relationships will prove to be invaluable as districts meet economic challenges and push for innovation in the delivery of services.

This year, the association also worked with the Joint Legislative Committee to put on more than 10 **legislative breakfasts**, which gave board members and professionals an opportunity to meet with state representatives and senators to discuss the current issues facing their districts. This was a highly effective format for members to assess the current legislative environment in Springfield, and to promote the high value that park and recreation services have on quality of life and health and wellness.

April and May will be **Flying 4 Kids Months** with a statewide kite fly taking place at agencies across Illinois. Now in its eighth year, Flying 4 Kids Months attracts thousands of families, kite enthusiasts and media at park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies throughout the state. These events are a wonderful opportunity to reinforce with citizens the importance of our **Youth License Plate**. This four-color plate -- in my estimation, one of

the best looking license plates in Illinois -- generates grant money to assist park districts and recreation agencies in conducting after-school programs for youth that emphasize the benefits of health, fitness and making the right life choices. The association has awarded grants of more than \$430,450 since this program's inception, and the current round of PowerPlay! grants will distribute more than \$35,000 to IAPD members this spring.

Mark your calendars — May 1st is **Parks Day at the State Capitol**. For those of you who have attended, you know that this is a wonderful opportunity to showcase your agency, and its many activities to members of the Illinois General Assembly as well as to members of

Informal conversation among those with kindred interests is probably the oldest mechanism by which programs and ideas are developed, expressed and spread.



the public visiting the capitol. This year, the capitol is under renovation, and space will be limited to only 35 agencies. If you have not taken the opportunity to register for Parks Day, please don't hesitate to do so.

In addition, May 2nd will be the **Legislative Conference**. This event will feature statewide elected officials and special roundtables on current legislative issues of interest to park districts, forest preserves, recreation and special recreation agencies. The conference will be preceded by a reception with members of the General Assembly at the Illini Country Club on May 1. If you have never attended this event, make plans to do so as it is a valuable use of your time.

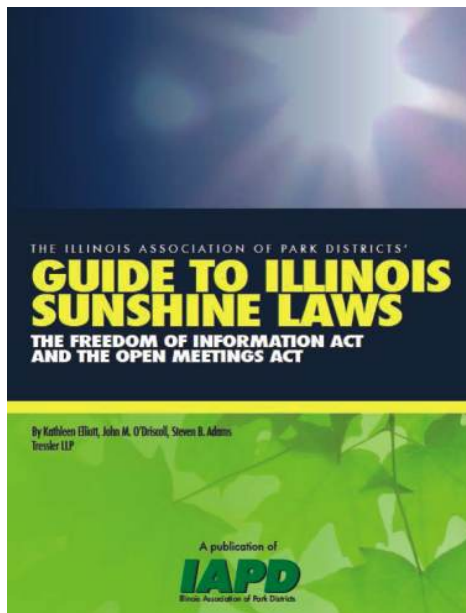
There will be additional opportunities for networking throughout the summer with the continuation of the **IAPD Summer Golf Tour**. Please check the IAPD website at www.ILparks.org to find the Summer Golf Tour dates and locations. These events are designed to bring park

commissioners and professionals together throughout the state of Illinois in a relaxed venue. The old adage, "You can learn a lot about a person on the golf course." is never truer than at an IAPD golf tour event. In addition, the **Legislative Golf Outing** will be held on July 19th at the beautiful White Pines Golf Course in Bensenville.

Don't miss the chance to network with local officials from cities, counties and community colleges through **Good Governance Workshops** presented by IAPD in partnership with the Illinois Municipal League and the Illinois Community College Trustees Association. Topics to be covered include Open Meetings, Freedom of Information, Ethics, How to Run a Meeting, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Boardmanship/Civility and Dealing with the Media. Dates and locations for the five events are: June 6, Schaumburg Golf Club; June 9, Joliet Junior College; June 13, Heartland Community College; June 20, Moraine Valley Community College; and June 23, Rend Lake College.

Park District Conservation Day will take place on August 18th. If your agency has not joined the hundreds of other park districts that have participated in this event, now is the time to do so. It provides a wonderful opportunity for young adults, as well as performing arts groups, to showcase their talents at the Illinois State Fair on one of the many stages throughout the fairgrounds. It is another not-to-be-missed opportunity, and if your agency has not been involved in this important activity, please consider it. I think you will find it very rewarding.

For those who see value in networking but are reluctant to do so, a recommended read is *Networking for People Who Hate Networking* by Devora Zack. A main takeaway from the book is that real networking is about building meaningful connections one person at a time. To collect three business cards at an event and follow up personally with all three people is a much stronger networking approach than to collect 30 cards and follow up with no one. When you're at a networking event, always have a pen with you. When you finish meeting someone, take their card and write down a couple facts about the person. These notes will help you remember something about the person so your follow up can be specific and genuine instead of just a general 'It was good to meet you.' For better or for worse, life is a networking event.



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EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



Jan R. Arnold
Executive Director, IPRA

Don't Let Change Pass You By

I would like to start by sharing a recent *IPRA Today* article by John Curran, IPRA Chairman and Executive Director of the Tinley Park Park District. His message is one that we need to all heed caution to and determine how we are going to be ready for the inevitable changes in our industry.

"Just like the Chicago weather, parks and recreation is changing. The big change is retirement. In the United States the Boomers are retiring at a rate of 10,000 per day and plenty of those Boomers are in the field of parks and recreation. At this writing, there are five (5) Executive Director positions open in the metropolitan Chicago area all due to retirements. That is a major loss of experience in our profession.

The big question, do we have the educational opportunities to properly train professionals to fill this void? The answer is a big Yes. The just completed 2012 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference provided a wide variety of educational sessions, workshops, and hands on learning opportunities to advance the profession.

The opportunities for continuing education are plentiful. The 2012 IPRA education calendar is available on the IPRA website and now is the time to begin to set the dates aside and register for the programs that will help advance your career.

On April 20th IPRA will offer an IPRA Education Institute at the Doubletree Chicago-Oakbrook. Craig Hickman, co-author of the "Oz Principle" will be the featured speaker. He will focus on getting results through individual and organizational accountability. The registration fee is only \$40 and includes lunch and .4 CEU's.

In October IPRA will launch a newly created Leadership Academy. The Academy is an intensive six-month program that can benefit you regardless of what stage you are in your career. This program will meet one full day per month for six months providing the skills for professionals to become top administrators in our field.

These are just two of the many educational offerings provided by IPRA in 2012. Professional development is a personal commitment to lifelong learning. Are you ready to make that commitment? If you want to be part of that change that is coming and prepare yourself for a successful future don't miss these educational opportunities. Don't let change pass you by. Become part of the leadership in parks and recreation."

I hope you agree with me when I say that John is right on target. We must all strive to improve ourselves and our agency. One way to improve ourselves is through educational opportunities, so I would like to expand on two of IPRA's educational events that John mentioned and highlight ways to recruit future leaders.

First, the **Education Institute** that will be held on **Friday, April 20** from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the DoubleTree in Oak Brook. This is a member-only event and one that you cannot afford to miss. **Registration deadline is April 6.** The registration fee is only \$40 per

Through your involvement, we will build strong parks and recreation leaders for the future of our communities.



member and includes continental breakfast, lunch, four hours of education from a nationally-recognized speaker, 0.4 CEUs, and if that was not enough, the opportunity to network with your colleagues across the state. Craig Hickman, author of *The Oz Principle* will focus on "Getting Results Through Individual & Organizational Accountability." His message will cover the following four key principles:

- 1) How people and organizations can overcome victim attitudes and behavior and step "Above The Line" to attain superior performance;
- 2) How to focus on the fundamental cause of poor leadership, low productivity, unacceptable quality, customer dissatisfaction, inadequate innovation, wasted talent, dysfunctional teams or a general lack of accountability;
- 3) How to move beyond explaining why you didn't or can't do better to what you can do to make your future brighter; and
- 4) How to improve performance through accountability.

Make sure you are not being left behind and that you embrace a culture of accountability for yourself and your staff! ***A special thanks to our three co-sponsors: Musco Lighting, Cunningham Associates and Service Wear Apparel.***

IPRA's Leadership Academy is a six-month program where participants will meet one day per month to focus on a variety of leadership topics including: innovation, decision-making, staff development, performance planning, interpersonal skills, customer service, strategic planning and much more. IPRA will begin accepting applications on April 1, 2012. A full brochure with course descriptions as well as the application is available at www.ILipra.org on our education page. The deadline for submission is June 29, 2012. I encourage you to be a part of this exciting educational opportunity. This is a unique chance for you to be a part of a cohort of professionals which will allow you not only to learn from the academy instructors, but also from one another's experiences.

There are three levels to the Academy, and the curriculum at each level will focus on building great leaders to strengthen parks and recreation agencies.

Level One – Personal Leadership

(Oct. 4; Nov. 8; Dec. 6; Jan. 10; Feb. 7; and Mar. 7)

Level Two – Leading Your Team

(Oct. 3; Nov. 7; Dec. 5; Jan. 9; Feb. 6; and Mar. 6)

Level Three – Leading Your Agency

(Oct. 2; Nov. 6; Dec. 4; Jan. 8; Feb. 5; and Mar. 5)

After the completion of the six sessions, individuals will receive a Certificate of Completion from the University of Illinois.

Recruiting for our Future: How did you learn about the field of parks and recreation? Were you a lifeguard or a camp counselor as a high school student? Did you work part-time in the summer and have a great boss who told you about parks and recreation as a college major? Did you "fall into" this career?

In 2011, the IPRA College & University Relations Committee ("CURC") launched a campaign to recruit young people into the field of parks and recreation. Acknowledging that this is often a "discovery" career, many high school and college-aged students often do not realize that it is a planned course of study, the CURC partnered with Greg Bizarro of Jaffe Films to produce an informational iCD that can be shown to agency staff (lifeguards, day camp counselors, etc.) and on college campuses. The goals are 1) to promote careers that are park and recreation specific, as well as careers in parks and recreation that involve other disciplines and 2) to educate young adults about the viability of parks and recreation as a career path. This video provides accurate and compelling information about parks and recreation as a career option and will direct students to additional resources. Check it out on YouTube (search Illinois Park and Recreation Association).

Be sure to check out the "Day in the Life" videos!

If you would like to learn more about IPRA's efforts to promote parks and recreation as a career, please contact our CURC Co-Chairs: Laura Payne at lpayne@illinois.edu or Mike Selep at MikeS@fvrsra.org.

As John stated in his article, don't let change pass you by. I hope you will be a part of change and a part of our new educational offerings. Through your involvement, we will build strong parks and recreation leaders for the future of our communities. Thanks for being involved!

- Jan R. Arnold, Executive Director, IPRA

UPCOMING IPRA EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

March 20-21
Certified Pool Operator Course (CPO)

April 20
IPRA Education Institute (Members Only)
9AM - 3PM

March 21
WEBINAR: Learning About PRORAGIS
10 - 11:30AM

April 25
WEBINAR: Creating a Successful Business Plan
10 - 11AM

March 22
Parks & Natural Resources Management Section Meeting & Discussion
10AM - 1PM

April 27
WEBINAR: College & University Relations Committee Research Webinars

March 23
PNRMS Workshop: Tree Pruning Clinic
9AM - 12PM

May 3
ITRS PSD Meeting & Discussion
9 - 11AM

March 24
Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) Test Preparation Course
10AM - 4PM

May 9
Special Event Round Table: Planning for Fall
10AM - 12PM

April 4
WEBINAR: HR Compliance for Supervisors
10 - 11:30AM

May 9
WEBINAR: Industry Trends & the Culture to Support Their Implementation
10 - 11:30AM

April 5
Therapeutic Recreation Section Meeting & Discussion
9 - 11AM

May 10
Recreation Section Meeting & Discussion
11:30AM - 2PM

April 10
WEBINAR: World Class Customer Service
10 - 11:30AM

May 11
Facility Management Section Meeting & Discussion
10AM - 12PM

IPRA & SIPRA Workshop
9AM - 3PM

May 16
Aquatic Manager Leadership Training
9AM - 4PM

April 13
Communications & Marketing Section Meeting & Discussion
1 - 4PM

May 16
Communications & Marketing Section Meeting & Discussion
1 - 4PM

April 17-19
NRPA Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course (CPSI)

May 17
Ethnic Minority Section Meeting & Discussion
11AM - 1PM

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





Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

IAPD is Your Direct Connection to the State Capitol

Because of redistricting and the retirement of several legislators, there will be numerous open seats in the fall's General Election. Therefore, much attention will be paid to your local legislative districts this year. However, there will also be plenty of activity in Springfield with over 10,000 bills having been filed in the 97th General Assembly, including more than 3,500 new pieces of legislation since January 1, 2012.

Whether we are notifying you of important deadlines and committee hearings or keeping you up-to-date on the status of bills and amendments, IAPD is your direct connection to the State Capitol. We review every bill to determine its impact on our member agencies, and we were closely watching 350 bills as this article went to press.

Throughout the spring session, we will keep you apprised of the latest developments from the Capitol through legislative updates and alerts. You can also track the status of each bill we consider a priority by visiting the Public Policy section of IAPD's website (www.ILParks.org), which we update several times each week.

Below are some important legislative proposals that directly impact your agency, so you should follow them closely throughout the spring session.

PARK DISTRICT CODE

Several bills have been proposed to amend the Park District Code.

HB 4562 (Riley, A.) is an IAPD initiative that allows a park board to appoint an assistant secretary and an assistant treasurer, so that these assistants can perform those duties if the secretary or treasurer is unable to do so. Although many park districts already appoint assistant officers, this will clarify the authority of those assistants to perform important functions such as signing bond documents.

HB 4643 (Senger, D.) / SB 3809 (Mulroe, J.) would allow the president of a park district to have access to specified criminal records of an applicant for employment who has been adjudicated a delinquent minor for certain serious offenses. Park districts are already required to pay for and conduct criminal background checks for these serious offenses, but current law does not allow access to these particular records.

SB 3184 (Millner, J.) provides that bonds issued by the Carol Stream Park District, which were approved by referendum at the February 2, 2010, general primary election, are not subject to the percentage debt limitations imposed by the Park District Code and are not considered part of that agency's principal indebtedness.

SB 2490 (Lauzen, C.) would require a three-fourths vote of the park board (rather than a simple majority) in order to acquire any real estate that contains a "habitable building" listed on property tax records.

FOREST PRESERVES

There are also several proposed amendments to the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act.

HB 3892 (Osmond, J.) permits a forest preserve district to authorize the sale or public auction of a structure located on land owned by the district provided certain requirements are met. The bill also clarifies that forest preserves may sell surplus personal property without advertisement if three-fifths of the members of the forest preserve board find the sale to be in the district's best interest.

SB 2484 / SB 2893 (Noland, M.) both provide that no land owned or acquired by a forest preserve may be used for any sand, gravel or other mining operation and also prohibit a forest preserve district from transferring any land or interest in land to an entity that the district has reason to know intends to construct any mining operation. When transferring land, the district would be required to impose a covenant in the transfer that prohibits the development of any mining operation. Previous or current mining operations are exempted.

HB 5899 (Fortner, M.) Authorizes a county to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with a forest preserve district that exempts the district from compliance with County Zoning Ordinances.

REGULATIONS ON PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES

HB 4030 (May, K.), as introduced, would amend the Lawn Care Products Application and Notice Act to require park districts (i) to maintain a registry of persons who have registered to receive written notification before a fertilizer, pesticide or plant protectant is applied to park district property other than a golf course and (ii) to provide advance written notification to persons on that registry before applying a fertilizer, pesticide or plant protectant on that property.

HB 3884 (Franks, J.) would make it illegal to plant restricted vegetation within 20 feet of an electric utility pole or overhead electrical conductor located within the State and subject such restricted vegetation to removal according to procedures established by the ICC. The bill also requires restricted vegetation to be labeled as such by sellers.

SB 3727 (Harmon, D.) as introduced, would add provisions to the Swimming Facility Act concerning licenses to operate, permits for construction or major alteration, license renewal and payment of fees, plan certification and plan resubmittal. The bill also establishes various fee structures for licensure and inspection and makes changes in provisions concerning rules, violations at facilities, records and fees for copies of records held by the Department of Public Health (IDPH). It also provides that violations shall be punishable by up to \$1,000 fine

per day and up to 6 months imprisonment and permits IDPH to impose administrative civil penalties. The bill also sets forth provisions concerning the suspension and modification of pre-qualifications and licenses and requires any person seeking to perform construction, installation, modification or repair of a swimming facility to be licensed by IDPH.

IAPD has been in negotiations with IDPH and other groups for many months to reduce or eliminate the applicability of these fees on IAPD member agencies and to ensure that local government remains exempt from criminal and civil penalties.

HB 4606 (May, K.) would require licensed day care centers to have the facility tested for radon at least once every three years and to post the results at the facility next to the day care license.

OPEN MEETINGS, LOCAL RECORDS, AND TRANSPARENCY

HB 4687 (Pihos, S.) amends the Open Meetings Act to require agenda items to be “sufficiently descriptive” to give the public reasonable notice of the items that will be considered or will be the subject of final action at the meeting and to require the public body conducting a public meeting to ensure that at least one copy of any requested notice and agenda for the meeting is continuously available for public review during the entire 48-hour period preceding the meeting.

HB 5044 (Franks, J.) / SB 3508 (Althoff, P.) would amend the Governmental Account Audit Act to require local governments to submit their annual audit and financial reports to the Comptroller electronically, and for the Comptroller to post those reports on the internet, no later than 45 days after receipt. The requirement may be waived if sufficient evidence is provided to the Comptroller that the report cannot be filed electronically. The bill also establishes certain posting requirements and penalties for delinquent reports.

SB 3645 (Lanek, S.) amends the Local Records Act to require the Local Records Commission to approve for disposal or destruction certain lists or schedules of public records that have no administrative, legal, research or historical value without requiring further approval prior thereto.

SB 3392 (Duffy, D.) would require units of local government with an Internet website maintained by a full-time staff person to post on its website for the current calendar or fiscal year and the previous four years: (i) contact information for elected and appointed officials, (ii) notice of and materials prepared for regular and emergency meetings, (iii) procedures for requesting information, (iv) annual budget, (v) ordinances, (vi) building permit and zoning variance application procedures, (vii) financial reports and audits, (viii) employee compensation information, (ix) contracts with lobbying firms, (x) taxes and fees imposed by the unit of local government, (xi) rules governing the award of contracts, (xii) bids and contracts worth \$25,000 or more, and (xiii) campaign contributions made by a vendor. The bill also requires the unit of local government to create a searchable expenditure and revenue database on its website that meets certain requirements.

PREVAILING WAGE

The following bills would amend the Prevailing Wage Act.

HB 5372 (Phelps, B.) / SB 3639 (Forby, G.) requires that prevailing wages be paid by a public body to workers engaged in snow plowing.

HB 4537 (Sacia, J.) allows the waiver of prevailing wage from public works projects with a total cost of \$20,000 or less if the public body notifies the Department of Labor within 60 days of commencing the project. The legislation is similar to **HB 3094 (Tryon, M.)** except for the notification requirement.

HB 5038 (Senger, D.) exempts the removal of trees and limbs along roadways and parkways from prevailing wage requirements when not part of other construction.

PTELL / PROPERTY TAX CODE

A plethora of bills propose to change tax caps by amending the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).

House Amendment No. 6 to **SB 2073 (Franks, J.)** and **SB 2862 (Sandoval, M.)** provide that if the total EAV in a taxing district for the current levy year (excluding new property, recovered tax increment value and property that is annexed to or disconnected from the taxing district in the current levy year) is less than the total EAV for the previous levy year, then the extension limitation is (a) 0% or (b) the rate of increase approved by voters (instead of the lesser of 5% or the percentage CPI increase). **HB 4608 (Franks, J.)** is identical except that it only applies to all taxing districts located in whole or in part within a county with a population between 300,000 and 400,000, i.e., McHenry County.

SB 3314 (Harmon, D.) provides that when imposing a new rate, increasing the limiting rate or the extension limitation, the approximate amount of the tax extendable shall be calculated (i) without regard to any property tax exemptions and (ii) using an equalized assessed value calculated by multiplying the percentage level of assessment prescribed for such property by statute or by ordinance of the county board by the most recent final equalization factor certified to the county clerk by the Department of Revenue at the time the taxing district initiates the submission of the proposition to the electors.

HB 3908 (Kay, D.) permits 10% of the registered voters in a county not subject to tax caps to initiate a referendum to make all non-home rule taxing districts that have all or a portion of their equalized assessed valuation situated in the county subject to PTELL.

HB 4021 (Nekritz, E.) allows taxing districts to adopt a levy to recapture revenue lost due to refunds issued pursuant to a decision of the Property Tax Appeal Board, an assessment or exemption decision of the Department of Revenue, a court order or an administrative decision of a local assessment official. The legislation further provides that any taxpayer who has received a refund that has been included in a recapture levy has the right to abate an amount equal to a portion of that refund amount, subject to certain limitations.

HB 5102 (Saviano, A.) exempts special purpose extensions made by any taxing district for pension payments from the district's “aggregate extension”.

HB 5103 (Saviano, A.) provides that special purpose extensions made by any taxing district for the payment of costs associated with an unfunded mandate required by the State for which the taxing district is not directly reimbursed are not included in the definition of aggregate extension.

OTHER

HB 4648 (Hatcher, K.) would allow for the recall of locally elected officials.

SB 3185 (Sandack, R.) would require a governmental unit to make a finding before incurring debt that the particular instrument of indebtedness selected is the most cost-effective means or is otherwise the most appropriate method for the particular purpose for which the funds are to be used.



IAPD and IPRA recognized legislators and leaders in the field of parks and recreation at the all-conference awards luncheon on January 27 at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago.

2012 Soaring to New Heights



IAPD Legislator of the Year
Representative Daniel Biss

Representative Biss has been a great advocate for parks and recreation this year. He was the chief sponsor of one of IAPD's major legislative platform initiatives, House Bill 3343, which restores the exemption to the Freedom of Information Act to protect the private information of children who participate in the programs of our member agencies. His efforts to advance park and recreational opportunities for Illinois citizens in his first term have truly been exceptional.



IAPD Legislator of the Year
Representative Mike Fortner

Representative Fortner has been a faithful supporter of parks and recreation both in his district and statewide. This year, he took the initiative to draft legislation giving park districts the authority to enter into design-build construction contracts. Our many legislative successes this past year would also not have been possible without his leadership. His commitment to advancing park districts and recreational opportunities for Illinois citizens over the years has been outstanding.

IPRA Excellence in Environmental Leadership

Lee Hansen, Skokie Park District

The IPRA Excellence in Environmental Leadership Award was presented to Lee Hansen. As the Skokie Park District's manager of the Emily Oaks Nature Center, Lee has coordinated student and volunteer efforts to preserve the nature center's ecological systems. Under her management, the center has doubled the native plant species at the 13-acre preserve. Lee has also organized activities for school children including a three-day Earth Keepers program that benefitted nearly 4,000 Skokie students and their families. Her efforts have also resulted in recycling programs throughout the district's facilities and programs.



IAPD Honored Professional

Ron Gunter, Westmont Park District

This year's IAPD Honored Professional Award went to Ron Gunter of the Westmont Park District. For more than three decades, Ron has been a leader in the field mentoring more than 50 park and recreation professionals. Under his direction, the Westmont Park District has developed 12 new neighborhood park sites, a nature park, a soccer and skate park complex, a nine-hole golf course, a senior center and a fitness and racquetball club. Ron has also secured millions of dollars in grant funding and donations. Throughout his career, he has been actively involved in IAPD, as well as countless other community organizations.

IAPD Rising Star

Tim Pasternak, Round Lake Area Park District

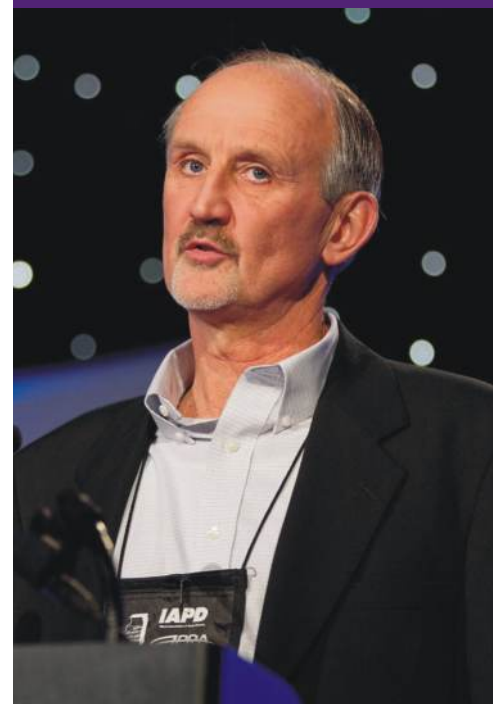
This year's winner of the IAPD Rising Star Award is Tim Pasternak from the Round Lake Area Park District. Tim was involved in the park district even before he was elected to the board as the lead citizen in establishing a natural area preserve in the community. As a commissioner, Tim serves as the district's representative to the John Huebner Trust and Fishery allowing the district to receive funds for the education of the public on lake issues and for the continued presence of the park district on Round Lake. Under his direction, the district was also the first-ever accredited agency by the Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Review Board.



IPRA Young Professional of the Year

Mike Gianatasio, Lisle Park District

The IPRA Young Professional Award was given to Mike Gianatasio, a certified parks and recreation professional and recreation program manager at the Lisle Park District. In just three years, Mike created a teen camp that has already doubled in size and tripled its net profit. Mike serves on numerous IPRA committees, has presented an IPRA webinar and has spoken at various conferences. Mike also volunteers his time to a number of community activities that benefit Lisle's youth.





IPRA Professional Recognition

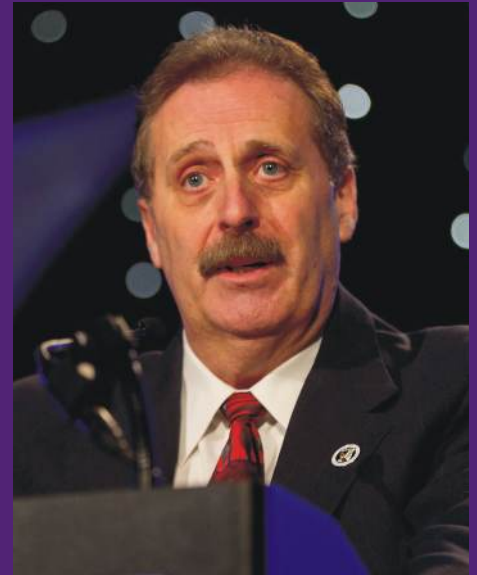
Chuck Szoke, Channahon Park District

Chuck Szoke received the IPRA Professional Recognition Award for his tireless giving throughout his career, both to his park district and his community. The Channahon Park District's first and only executive director with 33 years of experience, Chuck has worked effectively with other community leaders to transform the park district. His strong leadership, vision and commitment helped a very small park district earn the National Gold Medal Award. Local leaders agree that Channahon is a better place because of Chuck's leadership and call him "a champion of the community." Chuck has chaired several IPRA committees, authored magazine articles and presented at state and national conferences.

IAPD Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service

Wayne Motley, Waukegan Park District

This year, the Mike Cassidy Commissioner Community Service Award was presented to Wayne Motley, a commissioner on the Waukegan Park District Board since 1995. Wayne has logged tens of thousands of volunteer hours for a variety of local community organizations. A former soccer player himself, Wayne's goal was to establish a facility to support youth athletics. After 10 years of persistence, that goal was realized last summer when the Waukegan Sports Park opened with 14 soccer fields and four softball/baseball diamonds. Wayne has established himself as an enthusiastic advocate for the park district and the community.



IPRA Fellow

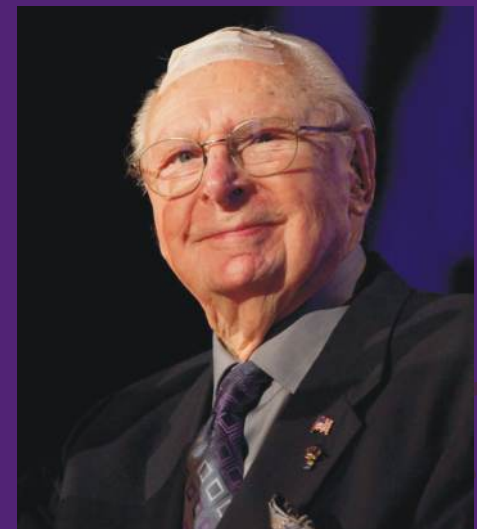
Chuck Balling, Glenview Park District

The IPRA Fellow Award was presented to Chuck Balling from the Glenview Park District for his 35-year commitment to parks and recreation, his agency and the community. Chuck works tirelessly with villages, school districts, libraries, special recreation agencies and community organizations to promote recreation and improve the quality of life for residents. Under his direction, the Glenview Park District has grown its nationally recognized soccer program, secured a \$2 million donation to launch a community center and completed a \$4.2 million expansion of a multipurpose fitness center. Chuck's extensive experience with strategic planning guided the IPRA's effort to outline changes to better serve the needs of recreation professionals.

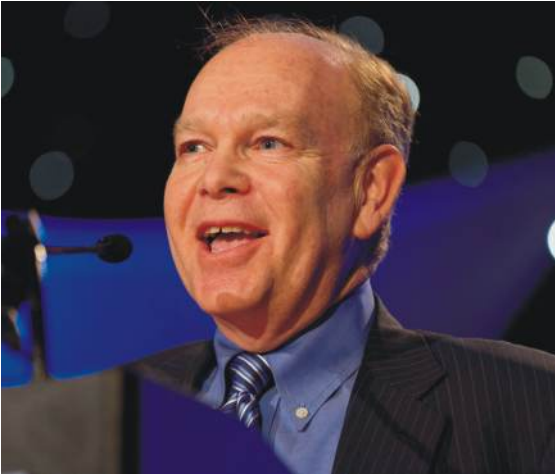
IAPD Commissioner of the Year

Edward Karasek, Berwyn Park District

The Commissioner of the Year Award was presented to Edward Karasek, Berwyn Park District, whose impressive 45 years of service is inspired by a lifelong passion for helping people and parks. Ed has served as a commissioner since 1966 and has been a member of IAPD the entire time. He has worked diligently in support of preserving open space in the community, and under his leadership, the Berwyn Park District has added nine new parks to the one it started with. When Berwyn was selected for a Kaboom grant to build a playground in a single day, Ed, who is 90 years young, worked the entire day. He is also an active member of the garden club and tends the garden in Proksa Park on a daily basis.



PASSING THE GAVEL



IPRA Robert Artz Distinguished Service Award Greg Petry, Waukegan Park District

The IPRA Robert Artz Distinguished Service Award was given to Greg Petry from the Waukegan Park District. With more than 30 years of experience, Greg has a unique talent for legislative advocacy and has been instrumental in the success of the joint legislative breakfasts, as well as promoting legislative action for the benefit of parks, recreation and conservation. Under his leadership, his park district has flourished, winning state and national awards. Greg also recently earned distinction as a certified park and recreation executive by the National Certification Board in conjunction with the NRPA.

All professional photos taken at the conference are also available to view and purchase online at ILparks.org. Follow the link to conference photos and use the password: ilparks2012.



2012 Chairman of the IAPD Board of Trustees Linda Johnson

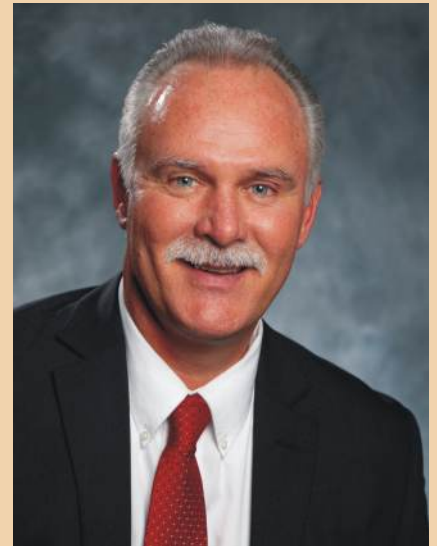
Linda Johnson, commissioner of the Crete Park District, is the 2012 chairman of the Illinois Association of Park Districts' (IAPD) Board of Trustees.

Linda was elected to the IAPD board in January 2006. She has served on several IAPD committees including the nominating, board development, executive, honors and resolutions and program committees. She has also served on the IAPD/IPRA coordinating council, joint conference committee and the exhibit committee (co-chair). Linda succeeds Wally Frasier from the Mundelein Park and Recreation District.

2012 Chairman of the IPRA Board of Directors John Curran

John Curran, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Tinley Park Park District, is the 2012 chairman of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association's Board of Directors.

John has served on 12 different IPRA Committees and Task Forces since 1979 and previously served on the IPRA Board of Directors from 1989-1992. John has also served on several committees for the South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association as well as President in 1981-82. He succeeds LoriKay Paden from the University of Illinois.



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The 2011 IP&R Magazine Writing and Photo Contest Awards

Behind the scenes of *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine, we are proud of this publication and grateful to those whose contributions make it enjoyable and informative to read. This issue is particularly special as it gives us the opportunity to recognize those contributors who volunteer their time and talent without expecting anything in return.



Best Environmental Article

Conservation of Connectivity

Dr. Deanna Glosser, Environmental Planning Solutions & Dr. Brian Anderson, University of Illinois

Together, the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association are pleased to announce the 2011 *Illinois Parks and Recreation Magazine Writing Awards*:

Best Legal/Legislative Article

Effects of Crime and Physical Activity

Juan Carlos Acevedo, University of Illinois & Monika Stodolska, PhD, University of Illinois

Best Marketing Article

What Gets Their Attention

Sherry Manschot, Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

Best Programming Article

Don't Come Home Until Dinner

Michelle Mohney, Chicago Wilderness

Similarly, the magazine's annual photo contest generates many of the images we use in *IP&R* and in other IAPD and IPRA publications throughout the year. The associations are pleased to honor the winners of the 2011 Give Us Your Best Shot photo contest:

1st Place – Sports
Justin Miller,
Northbrook Park District
“Soccer Camp”

2nd Place – Sports
Melissa Swanner,
Geneva Park District
“Kids With Attitude”



SPORTS





WILDLIFE



1st Place – Wildlife

John Clayton, Sugar Grove Park District
"Whitetail Deer, *Odocoileus Virginianus*"

2nd Place – Wildlife

Bryan Werner, Metro East Park
and Recreation District
"Spicebush Swallowtail Butterfly"

RECREATION

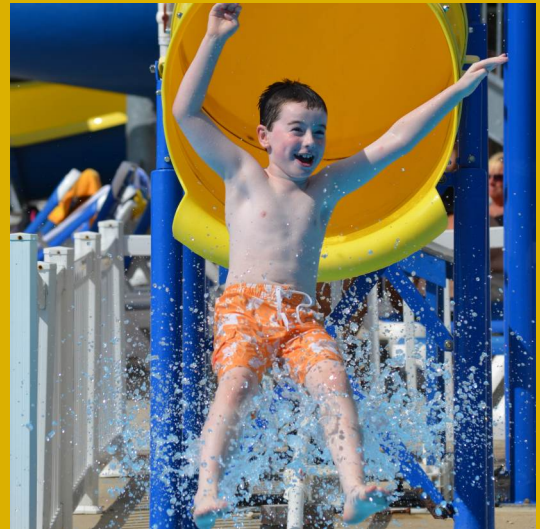
1st Place – Recreation

Colleen Canavan
Palos Heights Parks
& Recreation Department
"Ear to Ear Smile on the Drop Slide"



2nd Place – Recreation

Julie Baran-Reilly,
Glenview Park District
"Double Trouble"



NATURE/LANDSCAPE



1st Place – Nature/Landscape

Elizabeth White, Elmhurst Park District
"Fall Leaf"

2nd Place – Nature/Landscapes

Sarah Parisi, Wheaton Park District
"The Duck Pond"

A warm thanks to everyone who submitted a photo or contributed an article in 2011.

And, as always, we thank the judges who made the tough decisions. They evaluated every article published in 2011 and sorted through more than 220 photos.

Writing Judges

Nick DiGrino, Western Illinois University
Robin Hall, University of Illinois
Amy Hurd, Illinois State University

Photo Judges

Barry Locher, Illinois Press Association
Chris Young, State Journal-Register



GREEN

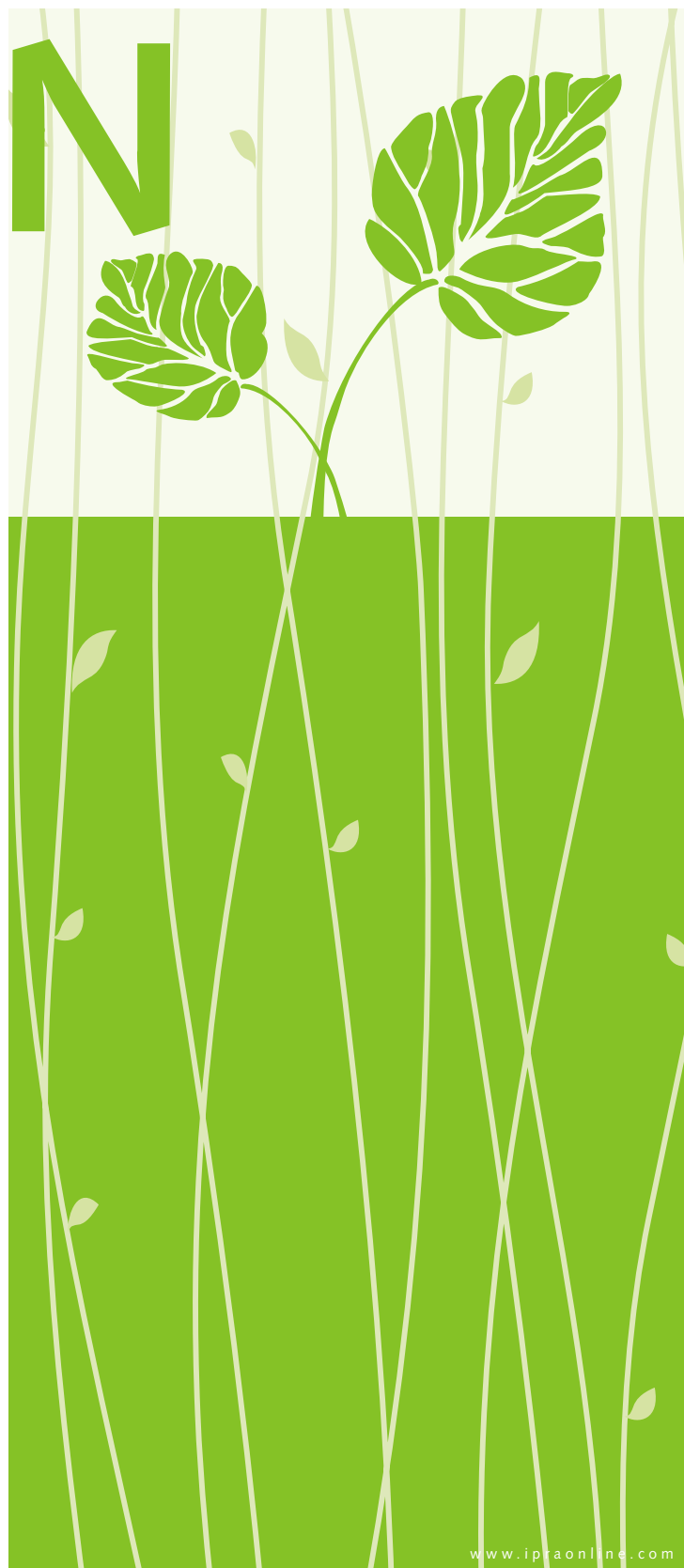
INFRASTRUCTURE

BRINGS NEW PARTNERS AND POSSIBILITIES TO PARKS

By: Jon Grosshans, Judy Beck and
Bob Newport – United States Environmental Protection Agency

Expanding (or even maintaining) parks in the face of rising costs is a top concern for most park districts in Illinois. Every spending decision must maximize the value of the dollars invested on projects – whether maintaining existing parks or developing new recreation options. As park districts examine their options for future maintenance and development, green stormwater infrastructure can be a project design decision that contributes multiple benefits and brings in a variety of new partners.

The good news is that green stormwater infrastructure projects can complement park facilities and operations because they can be designed in many shapes and sizes. A green stormwater project is an alternative infrastructure strategy that relies upon onsite rainwater capture, storage and infiltration. A green infrastructure project reduces stormwater runoff through natural systems that mimic pre-development hydrology. Projects may include rain gardens, rain barrels, cisterns, constructed wetlands, bioswales, stormwater parks and green roofs. In more urban environments, space constraints may dictate that projects take the form of green roofs, permeable pavements and rain gardens. Larger parks may incorporate reforestation strategies or large-scale constructed wetlands.



“More and more, residents expect park districts to provide natural areas by preserving existing lands or completing habitat restoration.”

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE COMPLEMENTS NEW PARK DEMANDS.

As park districts conduct surveys of residents about desired facilities, a growing demand is emerging for new park facilities beyond traditional active recreation opportunities. In fact, the top response of most resident surveys will include “trails” or “improved park access and connectivity”. The intergenerational appeal of walking and biking trails creates an evolving role for park districts to retrofit existing parks for additional trails and multiuse path connections between parks and other community destinations. The linear design of trails easily lends itself to complementary green infrastructure installations that can enhance the trail. Resident preference surveys also indicate that more environmental education facilities and programming are desired. Again, these facilities may be retrofitted on existing sites or may involve the development of new park facilities. Since park expansion planning is always challenging, there needs to be some examination of other strategies that can assist in meeting these new public interests and needs.

More and more, residents expect park districts to provide natural areas by preserving existing lands or completing habitat restoration. For example, the Deerfield Park District completed its first open space park, Briarwood Nature Area (2008), as a response to resident desires to avoid the longer distances to existing Forest Preserve lands. Both the Nature Area and subsequent Woodland Park (2010) feature sustainable design features, including permeable parking lots, native plantings and rain gardens.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CAN REDUCE MAINTENANCE COSTS

OVER TIME. There are a number of reasons for considering green infrastructure and native landscaping at park district sites, and one of them is potential operation and maintenance cost savings. In most situations, there are start-up costs for establishing a healthy green infrastructure or native landscaping area. Initial costs include soil preparation, seeding and/or plugging plants, nurturing plants while they get established and weeding to keep out invasive plants. Over time, maintenance costs are greatly reduced, as the healthy native landscape needs little watering or mowing. A number of analyses have shown that over a 10- or 20-year time period, the costs for establishing and maintaining native landscapes are significantly less than planting, mowing and maintaining turf grass.

Many parks with recreational facilities such as soccer fields and baseball fields have peripheral land that may not be in active use. These underutilized spaces may be good locations for green infrastructure. One example of this is Veterans Memorial Park in South Holland, Illinois. Veterans Park is a beautiful 21-acre park located along the south bank of the Little Calumet River. It is the oldest and most active park in the community. Key features of the park are ball fields and space for community events. Beginning in 2006, the community added a wetland basin with native plants to the park. The wetland basin serves as a storage and filtration system for stormwater runoff from the park and nearby areas. In addition to providing stormwater benefits, the wetland area is a new park feature. Park-goers can view the wetland plants and wildlife such as birds, butterflies and frogs. The natural area is an attractive complement to other more manicured areas of the park.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CAN BRING NEW PARTNERS. An evolution in federal stormwater permitting and enforcement may yield new partners for park districts. In the past two years, green stormwater infrastructure solutions have received added emphasis in US EPA settlements and permits with communities. As green infrastructure becomes more commonplace in stormwater permits and enforcement, there will be an increase in opportunities for project collaboration with other government agencies, including park districts. In Northeastern Illinois, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District, as part of its program to reduce the combined sewer overflow events, will be investing \$25 to \$50 million for green infrastructure projects. As park districts consider partnerships with sewer districts and public works departments to implement green infrastructure, there may be interest in identifying sites for large-scale rain gardens or other spaces for detention and/or infiltration of stormwater. Given the scarcity of resources available for both park and stormwater facility development, it makes sense to collaborate on projects that involve decentralized green infrastructure. Streamlining and collaborating on government functions to reduce duplication and costs of services are goals well-received by the public.

The public, especially residents who can view park areas from their windows, are key partners in the project as well. Outreach with residents is needed, both early and often. Changes in mowing schedules or plantings can be flash points for controversy if not properly advertised. Communication is critical to emphasize to residents that shifting from grass to native plantings helps park budgets, stormwater management and the environment. In Glenview, new partners also include local volunteers who have been actively involved in replanting detention basins with native plants.



Rain Garden, South Park, Inverness, IL

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE “SEED MONEY” IS AVAILABLE – PLAN AHEAD.

Creating a green infrastructure plan for the park district or municipality is a great starting point in the search for funding sources. A clearly identified list of potential projects and partners aids in matching proposals to the appropriate grant opportunity. Given the competitive nature of grants, the addition of a green stormwater infrastructure component may be the edge needed to separate a project from the many other competing proposals. Municipal case studies about green infrastructure are available on the US EPA website: http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=298

Grant opportunities exist at all levels of government, and technical assistance may be available from local watershed organizations. Key search terms in a grant announcement may include, “stormwater runoff reduction” or “best management practices”. Creativity is useful in identifying local opportunities that may not be traditional park funding sources. For example, areas covered by a “stormwater utility” may pay a stormwater utility fee – and the revenue generated is used to implement stormwater runoff control projects. Many Illinois state agencies have programs that fund green stormwater infrastructure projects:

- **Illinois Environmental Protection Agency**
 - The Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Program funds green infrastructure stormwater management practices, including green roofs, permeable pavers, bioswales and wetland restoration. Applicants must show the nonpoint source pollution control benefits.
 - <http://www.epa.state.il.us/water/watershed/nonpoint-source.html>
 - Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant Program: The FY12 program awards have yet to be announced. Program funding levels for FY13 have not been determined.
- **Soil & Water Conservation Districts and the Illinois Department of Agriculture**
 - Conservation cost share programs may fund green infrastructure in the more urbanized counties.
 - The SWCD can provide free technical assistance to the park district for conservation planning for the property. Contact your local SWCD office to find out more.
 - <http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/LandWater/swcddirectory.pdf>
 - The SWCD can also connect park districts to the local watershed planning efforts.
- **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity**
 - Disaster mitigation funds are useful since a single project might simultaneously address flooding and water quality issues. DCEO continues to fund stormwater management projects through the Hurricane Ike Disaster Recovery Program.
 - http://www.ildceo.net/dceo/Bureaus/Community_Development/CDBG+Disaster+Recovery+Programs/ike.htm
- **Illinois Department of Transportation**
 - Transportation enhancement (TE) funds may include stormwater management strategies that feature green stormwater infrastructure. Biking and walking improvements, especially multiuse paths, are common projects that could include a green stormwater infrastructure component.
 - <http://www.dot.il.gov/opp/itep.html>



Wetland Basin, Veterans Park, South Holland, IL

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: The Village of Park Forest successfully illustrates how a series of small park infrastructure decisions in the Central Park Wetlands have led to positive changes for the entire community.

Central Park Wetlands. When developed as a planned community in the Chicago south suburbs, the open space areas designated as “parks” were also the “bottoms” - the lowest lying grounds that provided drainage for the entire community. Many parks dedicated by builders face this same issue, which means that stormwater management is critical as the community develops over time. Not to be dissuaded from developing a modern park system, Park Forest used drain tiles in the 1960's as an engineering solution to combat the wetland soils that retained water on the Central Park site. As explained by John Joyce, Director of Recreation & Parks:

Central Park was mowed for years and years, and it was always difficult. In the past, we were unable to mow for several days after a rain in many locations. In time, the maintenance costs for mowing the 45-acre wetland portion of the site were simply too high.

Given the soil conditions, there was an interest in letting part of the site become a natural area. Eventually the Village decided to mow the field fewer times and start planting woody plants. Many project partners contributed to the evolution of this project. A small grant from the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association allowed for the study to evaluate the options for restoration.

In the mid-1980s, it was decided to let the site go back to native plantings and wetlands. After disconnecting the drain tile, the large park site began to function as a wetland. After restoring the natural hydrology, the vegetated swales are performing well since the water can flow through the site. A boardwalk and viewing station allow residents the opportunity to experience the site in its restored condition. Funded partially by two separate IDNR C-2000 grants, this project has become a jewel of the south suburbs for wetlands restoration, management and public education (www.backtowetlands.com).

Native Restoration as a Gateway to Sustainability. The Central Park Wetlands project was one of the first projects that led to a broader sustainability movement within the Village. Rob Gunther, Parks and Recreation Superintendent, describes the larger impact on the community:

Since it was originally a wetland, the project was largely a restoration project. It generated a lot of understanding of how the park district could complete future projects. The neighbors were supportive, and it led to all sorts of different expansion projects. The first project was so big and so visible that it attracted much attention.



Rain garden installation, Aqua Center, Park Forest, IL

An adjacent bathhouse and environmental education center received an Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. This rehabbed facility now complements the Central Park Wetland area by offering additional park programs. The indoor environmental center space is now the site for Enrichment Camps that allow elementary-age children to interact with the restored wetlands. Indoor space also allows for a longer season of activities, which includes building bat houses and learning about the life cycle of the dragonfly. During the last re-roofing of the 11,000 square foot bathhouse, designs included access to a demonstration green roof that also includes solar panels.




Bioswales in Parking Area, North Park, Lincolnshire, IL

Increasing environmental awareness in Park Forest has inspired a broader sustainability movement. Most recently, the Village is working on a Sustainability Plan that embraces all aspects of the community, especially park and open space. Since the Parks and Recreation Department is integrated into the municipal government, many Sustainability Plan elements connect to ongoing park and recreation activities. Collaboration with other departments and local organizations is now commonplace and allows for enhanced project outcomes, such as green infrastructure. This Sustainability Plan is facilitated by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) as a local technical assistance program funded by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). By starting with small steps to better manage park lands, the Parks and Recreation Department has brought in new funding sources and established collaborative partnerships. The Village of Park Forest now finds itself creating positive environmental change for the entire community – from the green rooftops to the park "bottoms".

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Going Green

IN ST. CHARLES...

By Pam Otto, St. Charles Park District

It's Only Natural

HICKORY KNOLLS
Discovery
CENTER

Take a tour of St. Charles Park District sites and you'll quickly see just how much emphasis the district places on the preservation of its local environment. More than a third of the district's 1,500+ acres of open space are maintained as natural areas and two sites, Norris Woods and Ferson Creek Fen, have been designated Illinois State Nature Preserves for their unique and rare plant communities.

So when it came time for the district to add a new facility in the form of a 10,500-square-foot environmental education center, it was only natural that the building be designed in a manner that was both ecologically sensitive and environmentally sustainable.

Starting with input from a 20-person ad-hoc advisory committee, architects from Williams Architects Ltd. set about designing a building that would encompass a broad set of ideals: office and classroom space for the district's Naturalist Department; exhibit space for natural history displays; and rental space for parties and special events, all within a structure that meets Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) criteria.

Constructed using \$4 million in funds from the district's 2008 referendum, the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center now stands as an example to the community of how "green" principles can be put to use on a daily basis.

Visitors to the center can receive a personalized green features tour, conducted by building staff, or self-educate by reading the Green Features plaques displayed throughout the building. These plaques, each bearing a likeness of the center's hickory leaf logo, call attention to features that visitors may wish to incorporate in their own homes. Some, like the low-flow toilets and motion-activated faucets, represent the latest in resource-conserving fixture design. Others, like operable windows, exemplify how old-fashioned practicality can be used to reduce energy usage and save on cooling costs.

Yet the most cutting-edge element of Hickory Knolls' award-winning design cannot be seen at all: the building's geothermal heating and cooling system. Consisting of wells sunk deep into the ground, plus a liquid heat exchanger medium, heat pumps and a series of blowers, the system uses the earth's constant ambient temperature to heat

and cool the building's entire main floor. Because it uses up to 50% less energy than conventional climate control units, Hickory Knolls' geothermal system has meant lower utility bills — a nice benefit for the district — as well as reduced greenhouse gas emissions — a great benefit for the planet.

While Hickory Knolls was designed as an education center, its ultimate mission is not to keep visitors inside viewing displays, but rather to get them outside to experience nature in all its glory. And it is there that people can view a number of green features that actually are, well, green. The grounds surrounding Hickory Knolls have been planted with a variety of plants native to St. Charles and Kane County. Because they are adapted to the northern Illinois climate, they require no fertilizers to keep growing. As an added bonus, the native plants — each labeled with common and scientific names — serve as a sort of "field guide" to the flora growing in the adjoining natural area.



Another plant native to Illinois but not Kane County serves as the Hickory Knolls lawn. Buffalo grass, *Buchloë dactyloides*, puts down roots three to four times as deep as conventional turf grass species, so it can draw moisture from the soil

instead of being watered. Also, as a warm-season grass, it thrives in the heat of summer — a time when most lawns start to turn brown or require lots of watering to stay green.

Other exterior green features include permeable pavers on the Hickory Knolls patio; a flat roof planted with sedum and other water-absorbing plants above the front entry; two large rain gardens; and a unique rainwater harvest system. Designed by Aquascape Inc., a local water-garden design firm, the system captures rainwater from the building's roof and transfers it to an underground storage chamber. The water is then piped to an above-ground recirculating water feature. The small pond's constant babble provides relaxing sound while also serving as a year-round water source for birds and other wildlife.





“...the naturalist staff is hopeful that the building's demonstrated efficiencies will inspire visitors to adopt more green practices in their daily lives.”

Just down from the water feature, at the building's southeast corner, awnings appear to jut from the façade. But closer examination shows that these projections actually are photovoltaic solar panels. Added shortly after the facility opened, and paid for in part by an Illinois Clean Energy grant, the array produces between 150kWh (winter) and 300kWh (summer) of electricity per month and puts a dent in the facility's operating costs. The tab for electricity, water and sewer charges runs about \$900 per month; natural gas usage is negligible (a clothes dryer is the only gas appliance at this time) and thanks to some credits accrued during construction, the district has yet to receive a gas bill.

For its innovative and energy-efficient design, Hickory Knolls last summer received the 2012 Sustainable Development Award from The Conservation Foundation, a Naperville land and watershed protection organization. Most recently, the Illinois Park and Recreation Association honored Hickory Knolls with an Outstanding Parks and Facility Award in its multi-use category for serving as a model for sustainable building design and as an example of conservation and preservation of natural resources. Last fall, the facility and its adjoining natural area were awarded StarPark status by the One Star at a Time program, a worldwide effort initiated by Astronomers Without Borders to create accessible public spaces for night sky viewing.

Even better, local residents are discovering this hidden jewel in the St. Charles Park District's crown. Although the facility is tucked away in a corner of the James O. Breen Community Park, and its night sky-friendly lighting does little to attract attention, more than 7,000 drop-in visitors have walked through the doors since Hickory Knolls' grand opening in April 2011. Another 1,000+ people have come for meetings, parties and other special events while hundreds of area children have celebrated at Nature Birthday Parties hosted by the naturalist staff. An additional 5,700 local students have attended nature-based school programs held at Hickory Knolls as well as natural areas throughout the district.

As Hickory Knolls' fame continues to spread, throughout the district and beyond, the naturalist staff is hopeful that the building's demonstrated efficiencies will inspire visitors to adopt more green practices in their daily lives. Wanting to make a difference in the world is, after all, a human trait that's ... only natural.



For a complete list of the green features incorporated in the Hickory Knolls Discovery Center, visit the Webxtra Online.

Green Challenges

A learning curve is integral in any new venture, and the green features at Hickory Knolls are no exception. Here are a few points to consider if you're thinking of going green in a new or existing facility:

- Hand dryers cut down on the use of paper towels—but they don't eliminate the need for them. Countless parents have come to the front desk asking for a paper towel to wipe up spills, which inevitably happen when children and water mix. We have cloth towels and mops on hand, but sometimes a paper towel is best.
- Automatic flush valves on toilets need calibration, and sometimes recalibration, to work properly and truly save water.
- Water-conserving faucet aerators create a fine spray that often travels beyond the sink and onto countertops and mirrors.
- During snow season, permeable pavers needs to be plowed differently than concrete or asphalt.
- Operable windows are great for letting in the fresh air, but also create an obligation to make sure they're shut at night. Not a big deal, but one more thing to put on the list of closing tasks.

Web Xtra



Creating a Community Earth Day Festival

By Julie Vogl, Carol Stream Park District

With no budget, and at the busiest time of year, Carol Stream Park District managed to increase its annual Earth Day event attendance from about 75 to over 500 people. How? By collaborating with local groups and businesses already interested in green issues. Some had their own Earth Day activities planned already. Others were local groups or businesses looking to increase awareness. By working together to make one big community event, the individual entities got much more exposure than going it alone. And visitors got to participate in a fun, free, multi-faceted event.

The free festival gave visitors a chance to get hands-on with interactive displays and workshops, including a worm farm, solar energy displays and recycled kids crafts. Nearly 400 reusable tote bags and more than 200 free eco-friendly CFL light bulbs were given away. Visitors could also help clean up the park or build their own rain barrel using recycled pickle barrels.

For the first time, the festival also featured a local farmers' market. Products sold included Illinois cheese, free-range eggs, Illinois farm meats, wooden toys, organic tomato salsas and sauces, and local honey, beeswax candles and skin care products.

Event Scorecard:

Revenue: Sponsorships & vendor booths = \$750

Expenses:
Supplies & signage = \$432

Duration:
2 hours set up; 4 hour event;
1 hour tear down

Staff hours on event day:
36 (salaried staff)

Attendance: 500

Attendee Rating: 4.4 out of 5

Read the Full Story Online

From the IAPD Web Site (www.ILparks.org) ...
From the left column, select Publications/IP&R Magazine/WebXtras.

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PEOPLE & PLACES



Palatine Park District Executive Director Retiring

Ron Gbur, who retired March 1, began his full-time Palatine Park District Career in 1981 as the Sports/Aquatic Coordinator. Since then he has held the position of Facility/Aquatic Coordinator, Golf Course Manager, Superintendent of Revenue Facilities, Superintendent of Recreation, and Deputy Director. He has been the Executive Director since 2002.

During Ron's tenure as Executive Director, he launched the Palatine Park District's newest facility, Falcon Park Recreation Center, a 49,000-square-foot facility that won the 2010 Outstanding Facility of the Year Award at the IAPD/IPRA annual conference. Some other accomplishments include the renovation of the Community Center Fitness Center, the remodeling of Birchwood Pool, the installation of a skate park in Community Park and the Disc Golf Course at Margreth Riemer Reservoir.

Employee Boasts Longest Career in Illinois' Parks and Recreation History

When Carol Swanson Glemza retired last year after 69 years of service with the St. Charles Park District, she not only had the longest tenure of any employee in the St. Charles Park District, but also in the entire state of Illinois' parks and recreation history.



Glemza began working for the St. Charles Park District in August of 1942. Over the years, Glemza served the park district in many capacities. Initially, she began by working summers as a cashier and manager at the pool. She then went on to accounting. In the mid-60s, after the first director was hired, she became full-time and worked as the business manager for many years. Next, she became administrative assistant to the director and to the board.



Flagg-Rochelle Park District Announces New Executive Director

Eric Christensen, CPRP, was named Executive Director of the Flagg-Rochelle Park District following a director search conducted by IAPD. He began his new position with the park district on March 12. Eric previously served as the Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Hastings, Nebraska for nearly seven years. He has an extensive background with the Illinois park and recreation system as Director of Parks and Recreation for the Village of Lake Zurich; Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Palos Hills; Assistant Superintendent of Recreation for the Lombard Park District; Recreation Coordinator for the Wheeling Park District; and Recreation Supervisor for the Rolling Meadows Park District.

In Memoriam:



Daniel Gratzl

Daniel (Dan) Gratzl, former Commissioner for the Wood Dale Park District, recently passed away after battling cancer. Dan served as Commissioner for 18 years and played an instrumental role in helping the Wood Dale Park District construct a new recreation complex, expand the Salt Creek Golf Course Clubhouse, negotiate a public-private agreement between the park district and TopGolf USA, create

intergovernmental agreements and assist with numerous capital projects during his tenure as a Board Member.

Steve Paczolt

Longtime La Grange Park District volunteer Steve Paczolt passed away Feb. 18 at the age of 59. Steve served the Park District for the past 20 years, 12 years as Commissioner and the past eight years as Treasurer. During this time, Steve served on numerous committees and as board president and was active with IAPD. Steve was deeply and generously committed to his community. In addition to serving the park district, he was also a member of the La Grange Business Association and the West Suburban Chamber of Commerce.



NEDSRA Announces Balling's Retirement

After 34 years of service to the Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association and people with disabilities, Susan Balling is retiring. Susan began her career in therapeutic recreation as a Recreation Specialist with NEDSRA in 1977. She has since served in a variety of positions including Program Supervisor, Superintendent of Recreation, Director of Marketing and Development, and most recently, Assistant to the Director.



Susan has provided leadership within her profession in various capacities including Chairman and Board Member of PDRMA, IPRA Board Member, ITRS Section Director, ITRS Board Member, SRANI Secretary. She also chaired numerous other committees.

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