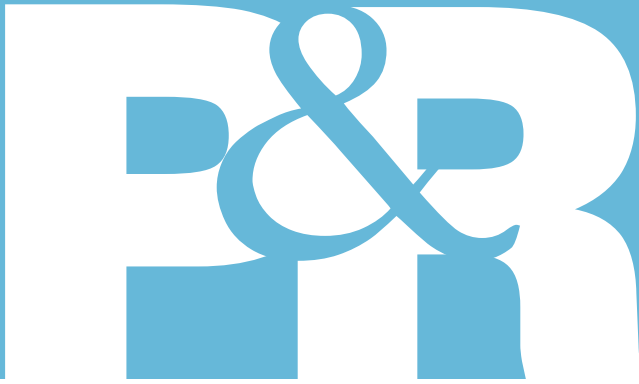


illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

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



aquatics & recreation

A Look at How Agencies Around the State are
Maximizing Their Aquatics and Recreation Programs

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Cover photo by Bojan Kojovic, *Park District of Franklin Park*

FROM THE EDITOR



In this issue of *IP&R* magazine, we are featuring aquatics and the impact it makes on the quality of life in Illinois. Some of my best memories growing up in the summer were around a park district pool. All the kids in the neighborhood would get together and we would walk down to the pool where we would spend the day swimming, diving for pennies and having the time of our lives. We were always envious of the lifeguards, as they were allowed to sit on the tall chair and get a suntan all day. To a child, it is not clear how much responsibility comes with that position. One of the articles you will read outlines just how important the duties of a lifeguard really are to everyone in and around the water.

Back when I was young, the park district just had a pool but these days park districts have so much more! Aquatic facilities have multiple pools, water slides, splash pads, spray parks and that is just the beginning. Today's version of going to a park district pool is like going to a water wonderland. Aquatic and recreation programs bring families together to learn to swim, spend quality time together and bond. Adults can picnic and socialize while the kids enjoy the waterslide and all the amenities the park may offer, or they can jump in the water with their children and experience the watery bliss for themselves. Aquatic programs allow people to choose how to spend their day. Once you hit that water, all the troubles of life and responsibilities of work seem to be washed away for a few hours and you can relax.

I hope you enjoy the articles you will read in this issue on building an aquatic facility, marketing your programs and safety. All are essential components for having a successful water park and/or aquatic programs. So as you dive into this issue, think about how you could incorporate some best practices into your agency's aquatic programs. You could even plan a special day with your friends or family at one of your agency's aquatic facilities and experience the joy of the water for yourself.

Best wishes to you all for a wonderful summer filled with warm memories!

Rachel Laier

— Rachel Laier, Editor



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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

IAPD Research Reveals Park Districts and Forest Preserves Leading the Way

One of the core services that the IAPD provides its membership is that of research. Much of IAPD's research is ongoing by direct contact with you, the members, as well as by developing analytics for the various grant programs offered by the State of Illinois.

A recent member survey on the utilization of the Polar Express Christmas train by park districts revealed an overwhelming number hosting such events during the holidays. These IAPD generated findings assisted the Vernon Hills Park District and their attorney in resolving copyright issues with Warner Brothers. We have also recently compiled data from the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) program dating back to 1986 and the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program dating back to 1966. This information gives IAPD, on a statewide basis, and you, on the local level, the ability to detail all the yearly amounts and project types for which your agency received OSLAD and LWCF funding.

Statewide Research

Your association also plays a key role in collecting statewide research that can provide you with a foundation for developing metrics that can be used locally. A recent example of this was the IAPD statewide survey of Illinois residents conducted by the research firm Market Probe. The findings are based on a statewide online survey of Illinois residents who live in communities served by a local park district and/or a countywide forest preserve or conservation district.

Survey respondents came from a third party online survey panel called ResearchNow and the survey was conducted "blind" (IAPD was not identified as the survey sponsor) to avoid self-selection bias and to ensure more objective feedback on park and forest preserve districts. For data analysis, the sample was weighted to reflect the actual distribution of Illinois population by gender, age, race and region. Comparisons from the survey were made to responses of the 2002 IAPD statewide survey of residents.

An Overview of Survey Findings Reveals:

Illinois Residents Hold Local Park Districts and Forest Preserve Districts in High Regard

- Compared to other local taxing bodies, both park districts and forest preserve districts receive the most favorable overall esteem ratings.
- The very favorable opinions of these agencies have held steady since 2002, while public opinion for other levels of government has measurably dropped over this time.

Park Districts Represent Good Value for One's Property Tax Dollars

- The vast majority of those surveyed believe that park districts are good stewards of their tax dollars.
 - Two-thirds believe their park district spends dollars wisely.
 - Slightly more, (seven in ten), believe that the portion of their property taxes going to their park district represent an excellent or good value given the level of service it provides.

- In addition, nearly nine in ten agree that parks and open space help improve local property values.

Local Park District Facilities, Programs and Events are Widely Used by Illinois Residents

- More than four out of five Illinois households report using a local park district park, program or facility in the last year.
 - In addition, nearly one in five took advantage of age-specific programs that park districts offered.
- Participation and usage of park district offerings tends to be higher among Chicago area residents, more affluent households, and those with children.
- Most (62%) feel at least somewhat informed about park district programs and services. This finding was consistent with responses from 2002.

In Addition to Wide Usage, Park District Facilities, Programs and Staff Earn High Scores

- A majority (at least 65%) of recent park district visitors and program participants are satisfied with the maintenance, safety, staff support, and the range of facilities and programs available to them.
 - No more than 15% express dissatisfaction with any area.
 - Satisfaction is highest among the most prevalent users (suburbanites, upper income households in general).
 - Even the less satisfied tend to be somewhat happy with these offerings.

Those Visiting Local Forest Preserve Districts Report Much Higher Satisfaction Over Time

- Over half of residents who live within a forest preserve district report visiting a district property in the past year.
 - This level of self-reported visits is identical to the 2002 survey.
 - Satisfaction with an individual's forest preserve district experience has improved significantly in all areas since 2002, especially with the number and variety of forest preserve district acres and properties.

Awareness of Local Forest Preserve Districts is Much Improved

- Nearly two-thirds of residents in counties with forest preserve districts feel at least somewhat informed about the district's property, programs and services.
 - This is significantly higher compared to the 24% who felt this way in 2002.
 - In that earlier survey, half (50%) felt not at all informed about their forest preserve district; today that percentage is just 15%.

Residents are Most Satisfied with Parks, Recreation and Environmental Qualities of Their Community, But Other Issues Are More Important

- From a list of local issues, residents statewide are most satisfied with the availability of parks, open spaces and recreational activities in their area along with the quality of drinking water.
 - These strong satisfaction scores have held steady since 2002.

- Other local issues over time have worsened and now represent higher priorities.
 - The biggest concern is the level of crime in the community followed closely by the quality of schools, jobs and economic growth, local government services and property taxes.

Connecting The Benefits of Park Districts and Forest Preserve Districts to These Concerns is Critical

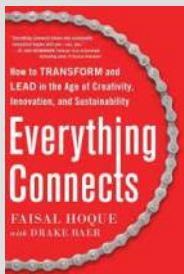
- Positioning the importance that the availability of park district programs and facilities represents and how they can help address some of these local issues is a key opportunity for all of us.

Examples:

- Park district before- and after-school programs, youth sports and non-youth programs provide a safe environment for young people and provide an alternative to gangs and/or drugs.
- Partnering/coordinating with other agencies (local governments and schools) to deliver recreational and family services provides great value for one's tax dollars.
- Offering seasonal and part-time employment opportunities to residents, including high school students and young adults, represents a source of jobs, income and involvement.

Connecting your mission to these top-of-the-mind priorities represents an excellent opportunity for your district to reinforce the value and importance of the services and benefits you provide to the citizens of your community.

For more information on the Statewide Survey of Illinois Residents, please do not hesitate to contact me or visit the IAPD website at www.ILparks.org.



Recommended Reading

This compelling book blends mindfulness, philosophy, business and history into one inspiring read for those who want to achieve greatness for themselves, their companies or the world at large.

If you are willing to take a journey that may truly change you and the people you lead, this book is for you. It is a deep read, but it is very practical and exciting in the face of today's economy of disruptive innovation.

The book is structured in three main sections:

1. Connecting with Who We Are. Learn how understanding leads to authenticity, mindfulness cultivates authenticity, and how devotion is mindfulness, mindfulness is devotion.

2. Inspiring and Leading Inside and Outside of our Organizations. How to give people freedom and structure as well as how to curate talent.

3. Generating Ideas, Grounded Decisions, and Long-Lasting Value. How to promote ideas through curiosity, improve decisions by mapping them, and creating value over the long term.

The more we understand the mental and emotional causes of innovation and creativity, the better we can lead ourselves and our team to make progress that matters.

2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday,
June 28, 2014
The Leadership Institute – Session 1, Situational Leadership® II
Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club
Chandler's

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

Wednesday,
July 23, 2014
The Leadership Institute – Session 2, The One Minute Manager®
Webinar

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

Tuesday,
August 19, 2014
Executive Director's Workshop The Leadership Point of View
Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club
Chandler's

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

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

Saturday,
September 27, 2014
Session 3, Building Trust
Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club
Chandler's

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

October 14-16, 2014
NRPA Congress
Charlotte, NC

Wednesday,
October 22, 2014
The Leadership Institute – Session 4, Whale Done! ®
Webinar

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

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

Saturday,
December 6, 2014
The Leadership Institute – Session 5, Leading People Through Change®
Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club
Chandler's

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

IAPD
Illinois Association of Park Districts

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



By Debbie Trueblood
IPRA Executive Director

Lifeguard Today, Director Tomorrow; Recruit Your Seasonal Staff to Join the Profession

The theme of this issue is aquatics. I thought I'd ask around and hear about different people's earliest memories of swimming. One person talked about being an infant in the pool with swimmies on her arms being led around in the water by her mom. Another friend described having to pull her long hair into a swim cap- her mother tugging and shoving and pulling her hair out, but she'd forget all about it when she smelled the water and got in the pool. Another described a swim class he took with his young toddler- the kids would have to go under the water and come back up to practice holding their breath. His son would be gasping and sputtering water for a second and he would remind himself as a parent that it was ok and all a part of learning to swim.

There were other stories about families and pools. One described that the family- all ten cousins- were always at her aunt's backyard pool. The water brought the family together. One described playing Marco Polo in the pool and competing with siblings and dad for who could swim the farthest under water. One said that even putting out a blow up pool in the yard- even that LITTLE pool makes all the kids in the neighborhood gravitate to the water and bring the community together.

As for me, my earliest memory of swimming was the day my sister learned to swim. My mom was carrying my older sister around in the deep end when I was a very young toddler and I jumped into the water at the other end of the pool alone. My mom dropped my sister in the deep end and rescued me. And that was the day my sister learned to swim!

The commonalities in these stories are plentiful. Pools bring families and communities together. They bring back memories of a summertime without homework or responsibilities when kids spent the day at the pool playing in the water. Pools are also a place that require respect for rules, safety, and the leader; the lifeguard. In many of the stories above, you see how vulnerable a child can be in the water, and how much they depend on their

leaders to guide them. So much of these experiences can easily be translated to the profession of parks and recreation. The work you do in your district or department brings together the community, it brings together families and gives them a place to be together to make those great memories that will last a lifetime. There is also a key role for leadership in each organization as your communities look to you to guide them through innovation, change, and new approaches to parks and recreation, and all in a safe, healthy and comfortable environment. The young professionals and seasonal staff also look to you to guide them- they need you to show them that they can choose parks and recreation as a career. They need you to mentor them, to encourage them, to remind them of the importance of safety and rules. And just like the parent in the story above with the sputtering child, you need to be patient as they learn the skills necessary to be successful.

"This summer, as you fill your ranks with seasonal and part time summer staff, take some time to talk to them about parks and recreation as a career choice."



This summer, as you fill your ranks with seasonal and part time summer staff, take some time to talk to them about parks and recreation as a career choice. Show them the videos IPRA made about parks and recreation as a career, and all the "day in the life of" videos of different aspects of the profession (e.g. marketing, finance, safety, etc.). They are all available on our website or on youtube, just google, "Illinois Park and Recreation Association Day in the Life" or go to www.youtube.com/user/IPRAassoc1815 and you'll find them all.

Last summer, I identified four summer college interns in parks and recreation and met with them to get to know them and hear their stories. It is so important to me to make these kinds of connections with our future professionals. By connecting with them, I can better access the kinds of needs they have from IPRA as a generation and I can develop services. Further, I do my best to connect them with IPRA members, sections, and get them engaged in the professional community. If you have a summer intern who you see as having great potential, please reach out and let me know (debbie@ilipra.org). I'd love to meet them and make a real connection with them early in their careers. I hope that you do the same with your summer interns- that you see in them, ways that you can learn from each other and ways that you can benefit each other through mentoring.

Speaking of mentoring, IPRA will soon be rolling out our new mentoring program through the IPRA Mentoring Task Force, led by Chair Matt Ellman at the Wood Dale Park District. This task force has worked so hard for months to develop IPRA's new three tiered mentoring program, designed specifically to provide mentoring at all levels of the profession. The program will have a start and end date, an application process and a graduation. We will limit the program to the number of qualified mentors we have in the program to ensure those in the program who receive mentoring have the best experience. My thanks to the Task Force for all their hard work. I can't wait to see this new program take off and benefit professionals at all levels.

IPRA is also working towards the third year of the Leadership Academy- designed for all levels of professionals to advance in their career. This is IPRA's premiere program, designed to teach leadership for the individual leader, leading a team, and leading an agency. We accept up to 30 people in each level. By the time you read this, the Board of Regents will be evaluating applications and selecting next year's class. Each year, the curriculum is adjusted based on evaluations from attendees and speaker evaluations. The Academy features only the best national speakers on each topic all of whom must achieve highest standards to be retained in the program. If you have experienced one of the levels before, I encourage you to attend another level in a future year. This program is always evolving.

As you enjoy the rest of your summer, I hope you make time for recreation in your personal life to spend time with your friends and families, and maybe even enjoy a local pool or water park, so that you too can have memories that last a lifetime.

IPRA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|---|--|
| July 9-25, 2014
33rd Annual Six County Senior Olympics
Various locations throughout Chicagoland | July 23, 2014
Chicago White Sox vs. Kansas City Royals
US Cellular Field |
| July 9, 2014
Skills Development Webinar Series: Managing Millennials - Working With the "Y" Factor
online | July 23, 2014
IPRA Cultural Arts Committee Meeting
Wheaton Park District |
| Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) Exam Preparation - Series of Four Classes
Chicago Park District | July 24, 2014
Communications & Marketing Section Luncheon & Social
Naperville Park District - Centennial Beach Grill |
| July 10, 2014
Park & Natural Resource Management Section Meeting & Workshop
Geneva Park District | July 28, 2014
Kane County Cougars vs. West Michigan Whitecaps
Fifth Third Bank Ballpark |
| July 10, 2014
Therapeutic Recreation Section Meeting
NEDSRA | August 1, 2014
Finance Committee Meeting
Lombard Park District |
| July 10, 2014
Recreation Section Meeting
Riverside Township Auditorium | August 1, 2014
PNRMS Night at the Ball Park
(Kane County Cougars) |
| July 11, 2014
Membership Council Meeting
IPRA HQ/Park District of La Grange | August 13, 2014
Skills Development Webinar Series: Political Savvy
Online |
| July 11, 2014
Facility Management Section Meeting & Education
Prairie Stone Sports & Wellness Center/ Sears Centre | August 14, 2014
Putting Your Strengths to Work
NEDSRA |
| July 14, 2014
Kane County Cougars vs. Beloit Snappers
Fifth Third Bank Ballpark | August 15, 2014
IPRA Board of Directors Meeting
Erin's Pavilion |
| July 16, 2014
Joint Legislative Committee Meeting
White Pines Golf Club | August 19, 2014
Innovation Renovation Workshop: Customer Engagement in the Digital Age
Because What You Don't Know CAN Hurt You!
Oak Brook Park District |
| July 17, 2014
Skills Development Webinar Series: Managing Millennials - Working With the "Y" Factor
online | August 21, 2014
Skills Development Webinar Series: Political Savvy
online |
| July 18, 2014
IPRA Guard Games
Oak Lawn Park District - Centennial Aquatic Center | August 22, 2014
Section Treasurers 2015 Budget Kick Off Meeting
IPRA HQ/Park District of La Grange |
| July 23, 2014
3rd Annual Teen Camp Olympics
Lisle Park District | August 27, 2014
IPRA Open House - Networking After Hours & Association Update
IPRA Headquarters - Banquet Room, 2nd Floor |

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



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

IAPD Platform Approved, Grant Funding Substantially Increased, during Spring Session

IAPD and its member agencies continued our proud history of legislative success at the Capitol during the General Assembly's spring legislative session that concluded on May 31st.

As you will recall, the IAPD Legislative Platform is a two-year platform that tracks the calendar for each General Assembly. Because of the great support we received from legislators in the first year of the 98th General Assembly, we were able to pass six IAPD Platform bills in 2013. This spring, IAPD completed the two-year platform with the passage of two more bills while successfully advocating for additional grant funding opportunities for IAPD member agencies. Equally important, we were able to significantly improve numerous bills through the legislative process while helping to sideline others that would have been detrimental to IAPD member agencies.

Two More IAPD Platform Bills Pass both Chambers

The common theme among all eight IAPD Platform bills that passed the 98th General Assembly, including both of this spring's bills, is that they assist IAPD member agencies by helping them save much needed funds and improve the efficiency of their operations.

IAPD Platform bill **HB 4597 (Martwick, R. / Bertino-Tarrant, J.)** will expand the available options for park districts if they need to borrow funds on a short-term basis by allowing the use of a simple promissory note. This new option will save park districts the time and expense associated with more costly financing options such as bonds and tax anticipation warrants.

HB 4483 (Reboletti, D. / Cullerton, T.) will allow newly elected officials of park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts to satisfy their Open Meetings Act training requirements by attending a special course developed by IAPD.

Expanded Grant Opportunities

In addition to working to pass legislation benefiting our member agencies, another major goal of IAPD's legislative advocacy program is to expand the amount of grant funding that is available. The spring session got off to a great start when the Governor announced **\$25 million** for the next round of Park and Recreational Facility Construction (PARC) grants at the IAPD/IPRA Awards luncheon in January and with the announcement of an additional **\$20 million** for the public museum capital grant program. Both of these opportunities were the result of IAPD's advocacy efforts when the last statewide capital program was implemented back in 2009.

Throughout the Spring Session, IAPD also worked with the Governor's Office and the IDNR to substantially increase the amount of funding available for the next round of OSLAD grants.

IAPD closely tracks the amount of available revenue for OSLAD that is generated by a portion of the real estate transfer tax, and based upon the historical numbers and revenue trends we urged the Governor and the General Assembly to increase the OSLAD appropriation in next year's budget.

Based upon IAPD's recommendation, the FY15 OSLAD Grant appropriation was increased by an **additional \$10 million** to a total appropriation of **\$24 million!** This **70% increase** was a major legislative victory because of the tremendous demand for capital construction projects and land acquisitions at local park and recreation facilities.

Finally, IAPD also worked with the Governor's Office and the IDNR for additional funding for the Illinois Youth Recreation Corps summer grant program. As a result of these efforts, 83 agencies received more than **\$4.5 million** to put 1,500 teens to work this summer.

IAPD-Supported FOIA Bill Passes Both Chambers

Another bill supported by IAPD because it contains two beneficial FOIA changes for member agencies was introduced and passed both chambers during the final week of the Spring Session.

HB 3796 (Currie, B. / Hastings, M.) will allow a public body to satisfy a FOIA request for information that is already published on the public body's website by directing the requester to the website where the document can be reasonably accessed. In the rare event that a requester is unable to reasonably access the record online, he or she could resubmit the FOIA request to the public body and the request would be treated as currently required under FOIA. Because park and recreation agencies already make a wealth of information available on their websites, this change will be a significant benefit if signed by the Governor.

HB 3796 also provides public bodies relief from requesters who make a "voluminous request," i.e., a request made by a person other than the media or non-profit, scientific or academic organization that (i) includes more than 5 individual requests for more than 5 different categories of records; or (ii) includes a combination of individual requests that total requests for more than 5 different categories of records in a period of 20 business days; or (iii) requires the compilation of more than 500 letter or legal-sized pages of public records unless a single requested record, such as one report or book, exceeds 500 pages.

If the voluminous requester fails to narrow his or her request after receiving notice from the public body, the public body would be permitted to charge certain fees for electronic data in response to these voluminous requests and have additional time to respond.

IAPD Efforts Improve Other Legislation

In addition to advocating for the passage of IAPD-supported measures, IAPD spends a significant amount of time at the Capitol each session working to improve legislation through the amendment process before it becomes law.

For example, the introduced version of **HB 4811 (Sosnowski, J. / Syverson, D.)** would have required governmental units receiving annual revenues of less than \$850,000 to conduct an audit of their accounts every 4 years **in addition to** filing an annual financial report (AFR) with the Comptroller. Currently, these smaller units of government are not required to conduct an audit as long as they submit an AFR.

As a result of concerns raised by IAPD regarding the potential costs of these audits in proportion to a smaller unit of government's total budget, **HB 4811** was amended before it passed both chambers to allow smaller units of government with revenues of less than \$850,000 to have a choice between conducting an audit every 4 years and submitting an AFR annually (the original bill) or having their governing board approve the AFR that they currently submit to the Comptroller on an annual basis by a 3/5ths vote, in which case no audit would be required (the amendment).

The original version of **HB 5785 (Franks, J. / Biss, D.)** would have amended the Conservation District Act and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act along with 13 other statutes to allow the governing boards of those entities to vote to dissolve them through local government consolidation. At IAPD's request, the House sponsor amended the bill and removed forest preserves and conservation districts from the legislation. Without IAPD's amendment, conservation districts and forest preserves would have been included in the final version that is on the Governor's desk.

When it was introduced on behalf of concerned citizens of the Plainfield Park District, **HB 5593 (Cross, T. / Bertino-Tarrant, J.)** would have expanded that agency's board of commissioners from 5 to 9 members and allowed the mayors of the cities within the Plainfield Park District to appoint these four additional commissioners initially and in the future. Although the legislation only affects the Plainfield Park District, IAPD is always mindful of the potential for unintended consequences and the danger in setting a precedent.

As a result of IAPD's concerns, **HB 5593** was amended to expand the size of the Plainfield Park Board from 5 to 7 commissioners (rather than 9), which is in line with existing authority under the Park District Code. The amendment also removed the authority for other units of government to appoint members to the park board and instead gives the current state representative and senator the authority to temporarily appoint 1 member each. Unlike the original bill which would have resulted in a park board with 5 elected and 4 appointed members, the two members appointed under the amended legislation would only temporarily hold office until next year's Consolidated Election, at which time 2 new members would be elected as they would have if the board chose to voluntarily expand by resolution.

The final version of the bill also contains a very important "sunset clause" which will repeal the legislation after the April 2017 Consolidated Election.

Lastly, **HB 5623 (Sandack, R. / Harmon, D.)** will require local governments and school districts with websites to post an email address for elected officials for the public's use in contacting them. Because of IAPD's advocacy efforts, the final version of the legislation that was approved by the General Assembly will give local governments the option to satisfy this new mandate by posting one email address that can be used to contact all board members. Originally, the legislation would have required a local government to post an email address for

each of its elected officials. IAPD's amendment still allows local governments that prefer to use individual email addresses for each board member to have that option to satisfy the new mandate, but it is no longer the required method.

Minimum Wage Issue Deferred until after Election

The minimum wage was a topic of discussion throughout the Spring Session. Although it was not called for a vote on the Senate floor, **SB 68 (Lightford, K.)** advanced out of the Senate Executive Committee during the spring session. As the hundreds of you who attended one of our 12 legislative breakfasts or the IAPD Legislative Conference know, IAPD led efforts to raise awareness among lawmakers about the specific impact the proposed increase would have on park districts and other recreation agencies because of the number of teens they employ. As a result of these efforts as well as the work of many IAPD member agencies, the specific impact on park districts was a significant part of the minimum wage discussion during the Spring Session, including at committee hearings where legislators from both sides expressed their specific concern about the impact on park districts.

Ultimately, the issue was deferred until after the General Election this November because lawmakers approved **HB 3814 (Madigan, M. / Lightford, K.)**, which requires a statewide, non-binding advisory referendum asking voters whether the minimum wage should be increased to \$10.00 per hour for adult workers over the age of 18.

Another issue that did not move forward during the Spring Session was **HB 924 (Hoffman, J. / Harmon, D.)**. This legislation would require bidders on local government public works projects to meet the "responsible bidder" standards under the Illinois Procurement Code.

It is possible that both of these issues will be discussed when the General Assembly returns for the Fall Veto Session after the General Election this November.

Attacks on Local Control and Efforts to Consolidate Local Governments Stall

Finally, IAPD's advocacy this spring helped to sideline several bills that would have been very detrimental to member agencies.

HB 5989 (Conroy, D.) would have required all park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts to change to a July 1-June 30 fiscal year. IAPD met with the bill's sponsor at the beginning of the spring session to express our opposition and serious concerns with taking away this local decision, and she decided not to move forward with the legislation.

HB 5786 (Franks, J.) proposed to extend the local government consolidation pilot program approved last year for DuPage County to all 101 other Illinois counties meaning that all county boards would have had the ability to dissolve units of government with appointed board members. IAPD's committee testimony regarding our concerns granting county boards these extraordinary powers helped keep the bill from moving forward.

Another local government consolidation bill, **HB 3251 (Franks, J. / Link, T.)**, would have made it very easy to consolidate or eliminate units of local government by allowing a small number of voters, and even county boards by resolution, to place dissolution referenda on the ballot. The amended version that passed the House (but not the Senate) was amended to prohibit the General Assembly from enacting a law creating any new unit of local government.

Finally, **HB 3898 (Conroy, D.)** proposed to terminate the supplemental benefit payment, i.e., 13th check, for all present and future IMRF retirees but was tabled as a result of the many concerns that were expressed.

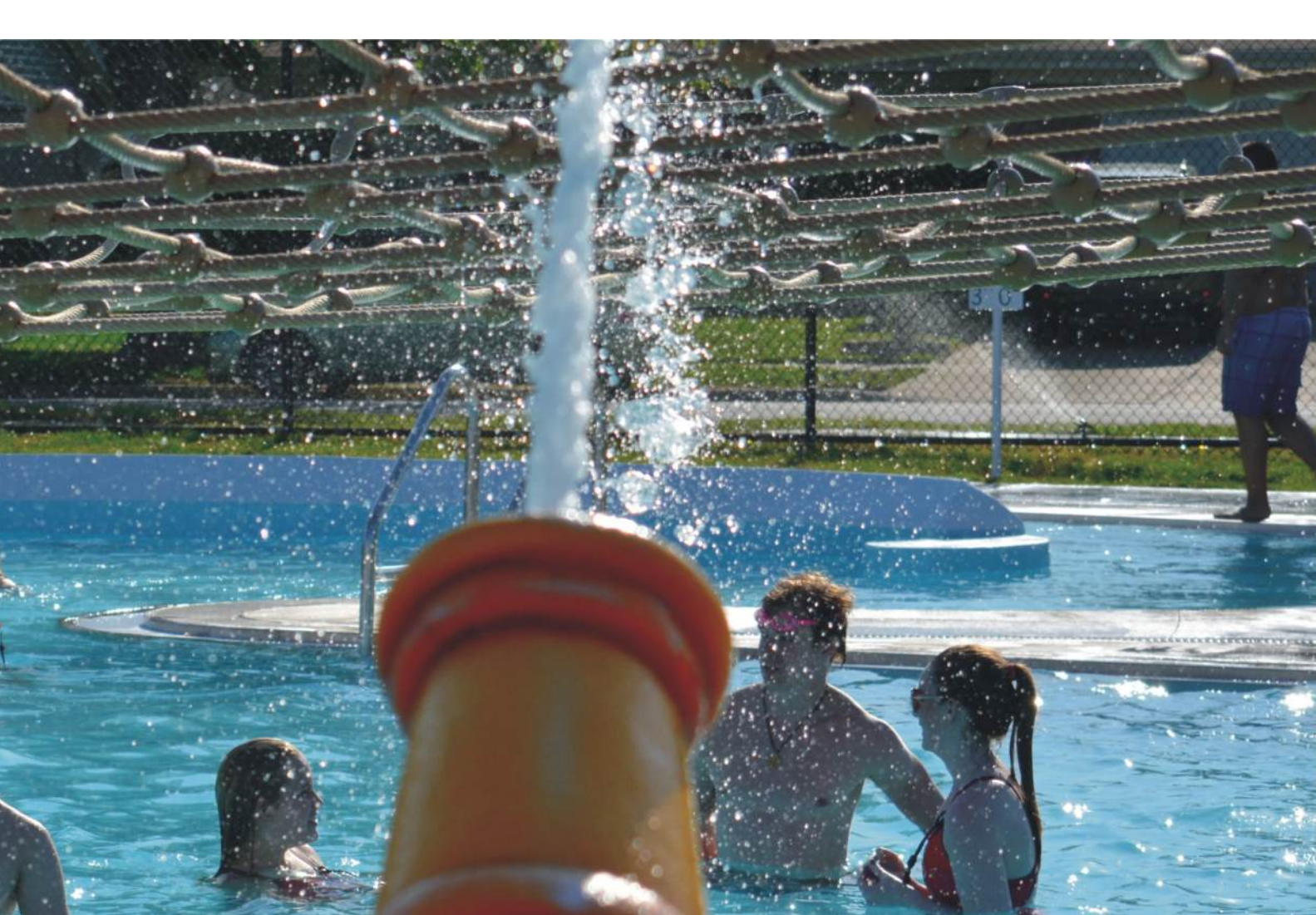


The
FUN
is Just Beginning
AGAIN

AT THE ORIOLE PARK AQUATIC CENTER

By Tracey Anderson & Beth Finch
Morton Grove Park District

The Morton Grove Park District first opened the Oriole Park Pool in 1969. This May, forty-five years later, the Morton Grove Park District Board of Commissioners enthusiastically unveiled the brand new, state-of-the-art Oriole Park Aquatic Center; celebrating with an official grand opening in June.



The pride and history of the park district and its pools is evidenced by long-time commissioner, Eileen Coursey. Commissioner Coursey was there when the doors to the Oriole Pool first opened in 1969. To this day Coursey remembers standing in line with her seven children in tow to be one of the first people in the new pool. Seated on the park district board for over 30 years now, Coursey voted favorably when a rebuild of the aging Oriole Pool was proposed.

As Morton Grove's second public pool, Oriole Pool's initial opening was truly a community affair, one which could only be eclipsed by its present-day rebuild.

"It was wonderful and drew a tremendous crowd from the area," says Coursey of opening day, 1969. "I brought all my children to that pool, the youngest was just two years old, and they loved it because it was new. For the grand opening they threw in coins for the kids to dive in and retrieve."

Having undergone a complete overhaul, the former site of the Oriole Pool has once again opened to the public. No longer just a pool, but now as the modern-day Oriole Park Aquatic Center. Opening on Memorial Day, construction for the brand new facility was not without its fair share of hurdles.

Beginning with an official groundbreaking in September 2013, few were prepared for the frigid months that followed. As one of the harshest winters in recent history, freezing temperatures posed challenges for the building crew. Yet, through the use of tarps and tents, construction continued with minimal setbacks and the center opened in May, as planned.

The grand opening followed shortly thereafter on Saturday, June 7 as an official culmination to eight months of arduous work. Park District Commissioner Coursey wouldn't have missed it for the world, nor would those of her children who still reside nearby. In fact, three generations of the Coursey family were in attendance.

"The ones around here will be there with bells on," Coursey joked before the grand opening. "My one son is bringing his daughters. It was worth as long as it took to replace [Oriole Pool]; it's just gorgeous," she says of the brand new facility.

Celebrating with a DJ, water games, giveaways and a photo booth, long-time Morton Grove resident and staff member at the park district, Sue Braubach, described the event as "a party the community won't soon forget!" The grand opening also included an official ribbon cutting ceremony and statue dedication by the park district board.



“This comes as such a positive change for the community and improvement for the park district. It suits the community more.”



The real showstopper at the grand opening, however, was the facility itself. Designed with the community in mind, the \$6.5 million project has many new, exciting features to accommodate a variety of activities. The park district's Tiger Shark swim club, which competes as part of the Northern Illinois Swim Conference, will call the new facility home. With swimmers ages six and up, the swim club will hold practices in the 8-lane lap pool complete with starting blocks and timing pads. The aquatic center will also play host to an assortment of exercise programs, from “Aquacize” to “Aqua-Arthritis,” along with group and private swim lessons. Boasting a water slide, basketball hoop, spray guns and lily pad water walkway, as well as a separate current channel and zero-depth kiddie pool, there is truly something for everyone.

The new aquatic center is a far cry from the old, L-shaped pool Commissioner Coursey and other residents once knew. While unarguably overdue, both the patrons it served and those it employed were saddened when the old Oriole Pool closed. Oriole Pool had been a source of countless summer memories for residents of Morton Grove including Jen D'Amico, who began lifeguarding there in 2008. D'Amico was therefore elated when it was announced that, through the sale of \$8 million in bonds, a rebuild of Oriole Pool would be possible.



Niche Marketing for Aquatic Centers:

**Park District Discovers
BIG Return on Small Events
at Barefoot Bay**



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By Mary Priller & Scott Anthony
Mundelein Park & Recreation District

Everyone, all ages, has the opportunity to participate in Barefoot Bay's customized events.



American history comes to life—complete with swimwear and sun block—with “Betsy Ross” and “Abe Lincoln” atop of the water slides at Patriotic Day, grass skirts and tiki torches take you to the South Pacific, Olympic-sized fun comes with pool noodles, a “soaker” water fight gets in gear, and *Rubber Duck Ville* is the “destination,” as Mundelein Park & Recreation District's Barefoot Bay Family Aquatic Center targets high-impact and BIG returns on investment for guests. Kids, families and the facility all win without breaking the budget. For guests not as interested in a rush of adrenaline from big slides or competitive events, that's covered, too. Poolside activities from the “Where's Leroy the Lobster?” find-the-mascot hunts, or a peaceful excursion on the Lazy River, all create utopia. The big “splash” (pun intended) of success can be found in customized, just-for-you events, that not only translate into greater revenue and engagement, but more happy faces. Your park district, water thrill facility, or outdoor venue, can do it, too.

At Mundelein Park & Recreation District, year-round programs and award-winning facilities like the six-acre, New England-themed Barefoot Bay, with what started as a way to bring added-value to waterpark guests while managing staff and resources, has spurred into a unique and cost-effective way to better connect with our market. In this case, it's the reverse of “bigger is better.” With its niche approach to marketing, smaller yet higher frequency custom events, are proving the successful, in-demand mix. Like a backyard

birthday party pulled together with balloons blown with hefty breaths, a cake from a mix and old-school carnival games, the “wow” is connecting with your guests. It's not always the grand statements or over-the-top things that demonstrate you care. Yes, these micro-events are smaller scale, perhaps with less participation, but that doesn't mean they're lacking. You score points for the “interaction” factor, creating a more intimate circle where guests don't have to wait in long lines or feel that the fun was over before it started. Everyone, all ages, has the opportunity to participate in Barefoot Bay's customized events. Smaller translates into more involvement amongst guests with positive results. Adults can network and share conversations and kids make new friends. Can you hear that positive word-of-mouth about your facility already starting? Now, does the average 40-year-old guest dress up for Patriotic Day for the special discount rate? No, not too often. But, you can bet their kids are eager and that mom and dad will enjoy seeing those happy faces (not to mention the built-in discount from your event and a few seconds of potential alone time in a lounge chair).

You can score even more points with event theming. Remember, fun and creativity can be exponential and get you more of the “big” catch. Get staff involved with creating themes, and use internal contests for brainstorming and idea generation. Giving guests the opportunity to unplug in a low-key way just might earn more participation at the grass skirt dance lesson at Tiki Night than you anticipated. Remember, cost, very low; impact and top of mind awareness factor: ultra high! “Mini events have helped not only business, but also lent a hand in



Time and money are things we all think about and enjoying summertime on a budget from a guest's perspective, and for us, providing the best and most cost-effective experience, is a challenge and takes creativity.

motivating employees. Many of the creative ideas come from our seasonal staff," said Scott Anthony, aquatics supervisor for Mundelein Park & Recreation District. "They really enjoy getting involved and delivering these fun products. There's value, too. In-kind donations for such things as Ice Cream Float Day and Bounce House Parties reduce costs and let us offer more."

Get your 'toolkit' together: big impact, small cost

Let's be honest, many don't have the resources to simply book a flight to a warm-weather destination. As much as we'd all like to be in a tropical port, it might not fit the budget or the schedule. That's why so many look to nearby, community destinations, as an option to full-fledged travel. So, here's your chance, with your site (their destination) a reasonable car ride (or bike ride), coupled with waterpark thrills, seasonable weather, and now, the addition of specialized events, that can have you literally "driving" guests back, again and again. Pull that toolkit together and remember that less expensive or more affordable doesn't mean a down-sized experience or skimping on perks.

At Barefoot Bay, cost savings start early; early as in the "early bird" discount offer. Get the word out about your facility early on, on all discounts and events, in all channels. Maximize free resources like Facebook and Twitter. Not on Facebook or Twitter yet? Well, it's time to consider such options. Direct mail and third-party deal/coupon sites such as Groupon and LivingSocial, as well as localized options in your area, add to your integrated marketing. These approaches have been successful at Barefoot Bay and we are always open to new ideas and putting guests first. It's all about giving guests the best experience and exceeding their expectations. And, again, the "bigger" here is the "wow," not the expense. Trust your instincts and break out of the mold—being fun is fun, and you'd be surprised what you can really come up with and on a shoestring budget.

Time and money are things we all think about and enjoying summertime on a budget from a guest's perspective, and for us, providing the best and most cost-effective experience, is a challenge and takes creativity. Our smaller, customized niche events have given both us and our guests that successful mix. It's fun and a great experience for everyone.

Big/Small Marketing Tactics

The one exception to the “big” vs. “small” theory at Barefoot Bay, however, is the high-quality guest experience. To us, there's nothing small about how we interact with guests, and the big impact our involvement has on them. We are BIG about adding value, wherever we can. Whether it's helping to carry snacks from the walkup café to tableside, providing a varied schedule of FREE events and nighttime activities, to connecting with our audience with blast emails and social media, to contests, discounts, or providing top-rated staff and award-winning amenities, bringing the best is a Mundelein Park & Recreation District and Barefoot Bay priority.

Big/Small Tactic #1:

Know your 'value-added' benefits before you start—and run it up the flagpole.

It's OK to be your own biggest champion. Frankly, if you're not, who will? So, get the word out and let all the positivity spread like wildfire. Mix in “free” options whenever possible. Don't break the bank, but try to offer something on a scheduled basis. Perhaps a, “Kids are FREE after 3 p.m. with adult paid admission” offer. You'll still be earning and the “free” aspect has an enormous impact, with your audience, as well as the media which often tends to give free publicity to events that are unique, low cost or (better yet), free. Try a free small fountain beverage giveaway, and see if your vendor will supply additional in-kind product to offset the difference.

Big/Small Tactic #2:

Target your events around the 'who,' instead of the 'how many'.

A handful of smiling faces and satisfied guests can have just as much impact as a larger crowd if it's a high-quality experience. Traditional word-of-mouth endorsements still have an enormous influence in today's world, along with social media's connectivity and engagement. Know your audience and what they like. Are pool noodle games popular at your site? Then drive an activity around those. Remember, less is more, in terms of your staff's time, too. And, never, never, underestimate the power of a good experience (and the converse of a bad one).

Big/Small Tactic #3:

Tie-in giveaways to the themes, and do it on the 'low' (as in cost).

Buy inexpensive, fun take-homes. Choose eye-catching colors that grab attention and don't worry if there's no time or money to get your logo on it. You can always add your logo with an in-house flier or create your own “tag ties” and tie your “brand” on the item. Check for closeouts in the off-season with promo companies and other online merchants. Retail stores that feature things for a dollar or less are good places to take a look.

Big/Small Tactic #4:

Location, location, location.

You no doubt have the “corner on the market” when it comes to poolside fun. But, make sure to “maximize” the event or activity spot within your site. After all, there can be acres to your facility, and if guests can't see you because of lines for other activities or they're distracted by the great smells from the concession area, you're already competing against yourself for their attention and time. Make your location prominent and post clear, highly-readable and visible signage about what's happening.

Big/Small Tactic #5:

Team up.

Would you like to host an event (or more of them), but don't have the budget? Try approaching complementary or like-minded businesses, partners in your community (chambers of commerce, school districts) or even the suppliers that fill your soft drink machines. Manufacturers and corporations often have what is known as “co-op advertising,” a cost-sharing arrangement in which they provide financial assistance for customer's (aka your site) advertising. It can make a big difference in what you can offer. Support can be in the form of a cash rebate, a credit to your account, or an in-kind donation or product. Teaming up with someone also gives them the opportunity to showcase their service or product, too, with sampling or branding. They get noticed and you get the support—win, win for all.

Barefoot Bay Family Aquatic Center

Opened in 2006 and designed by Bonestroo, Inc., Barefoot Bay is an affordable, six-acre, New England-themed, nautical water retreat for all ages. It's conveniently located in north-central Lake County, in Mundelein, Illinois, close to all major roadways including Interstate 94.

Barefoot Bay Family Aquatic Center Amenities

- Four Bodies of Water
- 7,500-square-foot combined leisure and lap swimming pool
- 1,100-square-foot diving well
- 2,290-square-foot enclosed wading pool for toddlers
- 12,900-square-foot slide, plunge pool and Lazy River
- AquaClimb Water Wall -- It's a real workout! Climb the wall, reach the top, then drop in the cool water
- Tube Slide (Grab a friend—takes one or two riders)
- Body Flumes (Two flumes, one completely enclosed (“in the dark”))
- Lazy River (A 740-foot long, relaxing water journey)
- Diving Well (Holds nearly 23,000 gallons of water)
- Zero-Depth Pool (Walk right in, no ladder needed)
- Main Pool with Water Walk (Navigate with climb-on, floating shapes and animals)
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Day in the Park – “Celebrating All Abilities”

By Mike Selep, Fox Valley Special Recreation Association

Every summer since 1999 Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (FVSRA) has partnered with the St. Charles Noon Kiwanis to host the FVSRA Day in the Park for children with and without disabilities. On July 16, 2014, St. Charles Park District's Pottawatomie Park will serve as the backdrop for the 16th Annual Day in the Park event where over 700 campers, 200 counselors and 100 volunteers will come together to enjoy a day of sunshine, playing together and learning about the likeness of one another rather than their differences.

FVSRA is an extension of the Batavia, Fox Valley, Geneva, Oswegoland, St. Charles and Sugar Grove Park Districts and the South Elgin Parks and Recreation Department providing therapeutic recreation services for children and adults with disabilities. FVSRA invites all the day camps from their seven member agencies as well as all of the FVSRA camps to join the inclusive event. The day is full of games, entertainment, food, crafts, music, dancing and a great deal of fun. The Kane County Chronicle titled an article about the event in 2005 “Celebrating All Abilities,” which truly captures the essence of Day in the Park.

Read the Full Story Online

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



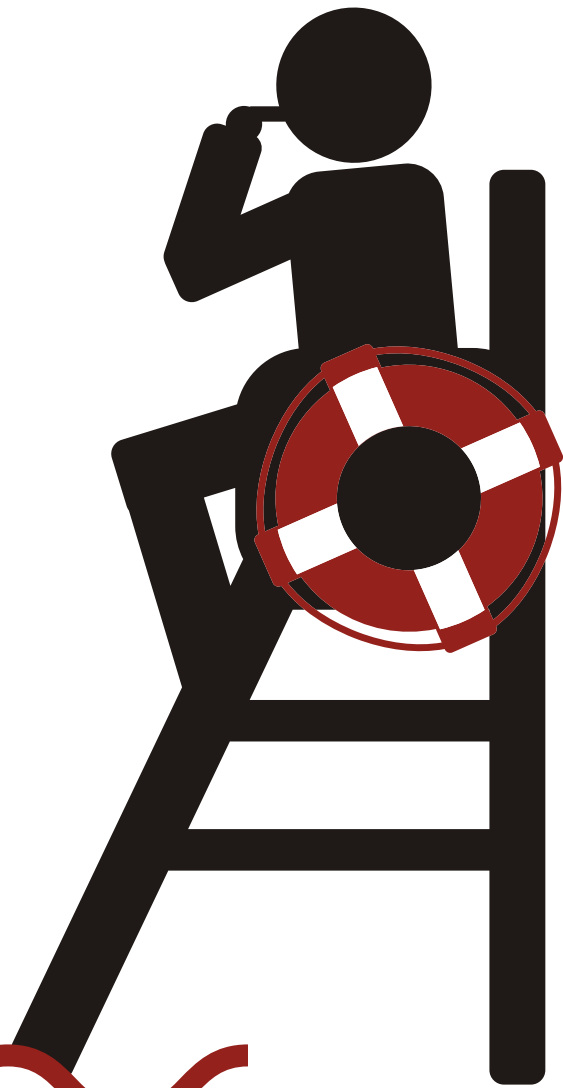
SAFETYFIRST

AT WEST CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

Aquatics and Recreation Internal Audit: Scan Watch

By Gina Radun, West Chicago Park District

At the West Chicago Park District, we have implemented a “Scan Watch” program at the aquatic center, Turtle Splash Water Park. The Scan Watch program is an internal audit that allows lifeguards on break to observe their fellow lifeguards who are on the chair. The West Chicago Park District developed the Scan Watch program in order to stress to lifeguards the importance of constant surveillance of their zones. Being alert and attentive to the water while on the chair is vital in order to be a 5-star lifeguard and facility.



While taking into consideration important risk management practices that Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) and Starfish Aquatics Institute (Starguard) have set in place, we also incorporate the following into our Scan Watch program:

- scanning your zone in about ten seconds
- reaching the furthest part in your zone in no longer than twenty seconds
- 3 points of contact when climbing your chair
- constant head movement
- scanning as you approach and leave your zone
- changing your position from standing to sitting every five minutes
- a proactive rotation
- adequate protection from the sun while up on the chair

The Scan Watch program has proven to be an effective program at Turtle Splash Water Park for many reasons. First, we will explain Turtle Splash Water Park's audit process and then go in to detail regarding the Scan Watch program and how it continues to benefit the Turtle Splash Water Park aquatic facility.

Turtle Splash Water Park is audited three times per summer by Starguard. Every audit completed by Starguard is broken into three separate categories; Lifeguard Observations, Lifeguard Scenarios, and Facility Operations/ Management. In each of these three categories the facility receives a grade; fail, meets standards, 3-star, 4-star or 5-star. Of these three categories of the audit process, Lifeguard Observations is weighted the heaviest. Once each section is graded, all of the sections are combined in order to establish an overall audit grade for the facility.

On average, around five lifeguards are observed on the chair per audit, each for about ten minutes at a time. Those lifeguards who are observed are given an individual score. From there, the individual scores are combined to earn the overall Lifeguard Observation score. If a facility earns a failing score for their overall lifeguard observations, the facility then fails the audit completely, regardless of their scores for the other two sections. In addition, a 5-star award is not possible for a facility to earn if the Lifeguard Observation overall score is not granted 5-stars.

Although the Lifeguard Observation portion of the audit may be viewed as the easiest section of the audit to pass, it could also be considered the easiest section to fail. Auditors film lifeguards either from outside or inside the facility. Many times the presence of auditors is unknown and lifeguards are caught unaware. Even though at times a lifeguard's zone may not have many activities taking place, lifeguards must still demonstrate vigilance, professionalism and surveillance of their zone while on the chair.

Once the auditor conducts the Lifeguard Observations, Starguard makes their presence known in order to conduct the Lifeguard Scenario and Facility Operation/Management sections. There are typically three or four lifeguard scenarios that take place. These scenarios are group scenarios, which cover first aid, unconscious and spinal rescues. The lifeguard scenarios allow lifeguards to work together and communicate as a team. For the Facility Operations/Management section, the auditor looks for aspects such as organization of inspections, documentation of in-service trainings and zone charts.

The Scan Watch program is a simple way to keep lifeguards on their toes while on the chair. On their break, lifeguards will take their Scan Watch form onto the pool deck to observe a fellow co-worker. They will write down the name of the lifeguard being observed and also mark down aspects they are doing well and could improve. In order to not take the entire break, these observations last about 5 minutes. Allowing lifeguards to Scan Watch gives them the opportunity to take a step back and really see what the auditors observe and look for in lifeguards while conducting the lifeguard observation section of the audit. With the Scan Watch program in place, lifeguards who are positioned on the chair are well aware they may be getting observed at any moment.

To allow lifeguards to be one hundred percent honest while watching their co-workers, after completing a Scan Watch form, employees then place it in their personnel employee folder located in the manager's office. This allows managers to keep track of who is completing the Scan Watch forms, while still keeping the forms anonymous. Not only do pool managers keep track of which lifeguards are watching, but they also keep track of who is being observed on the chair. If at any time they notice a lifeguard not being watched as frequently as others, pool managers will then assign an employee a lifeguard to Scan Watch. Pool managers also monitor who is watching whom. If a lifeguard is consistently watching a particular lifeguard, the pool managers will then assign him/her someone different to Scan Watch. The manager's goal is to have a lifeguard watch someone different each time they Scan Watch.

Our pool management team is also required to Scan Watch lifeguards as well. Having more time to observe lifeguards on the chair, the management team will Scan Watch for the entire length the lifeguard is on chair, including the rotation. If there is ever a case of a safety issue regarding a lifeguard on chair, the pool managers will immediately send the lifeguard home with a final warning after talking with them about their personal audit.



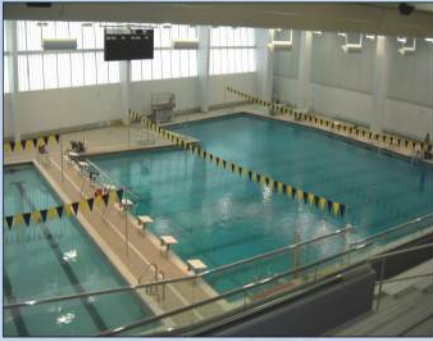
We have seen a tremendous improvement in our lifeguard staff, as evident in the audits.

The Scan Watch forms are extremely useful in conducting employee evaluations. Turtle Splash Water Park lifeguards are evaluated twice a year; at the end of June and at the end of July. While evaluating lifeguards, the West Chicago Park District's aquatic supervisor takes every Scan Watch form into consideration. With a lifeguard staff of about seventy-five employees, it is safe to say all of the Scan Watch forms on a particular individual are coming from a large audience and not just one sole auditor. All Scan Watch forms are eventually given to employees along with their evaluation.

Turtle Splash Water Park lifeguards benefit tremendously from the Scan Watch program. As mentioned above, the lifeguards are able to take a step out of their own shoes and see what the auditors observe. More importantly, our lifeguards are constantly reminded how one should appear on the chair. Although we would love to have every single lifeguard always perform at their best while on the chair, sometimes it's best to learn from mistakes. If a lifeguard is watching their co-worker and the lifeguard on chair makes a mistake, both lifeguards will learn from that experience. For example, the observing lifeguard may think to themselves, "that was only a five second scan, they should really slow their head movement down." The lifeguard on chair will be able to review each Scan Watch form when they receive their evaluation.

Overall, the Scan Watch program at the West Chicago Park District continues to benefit the aquatic program. We have seen a tremendous improvement in our lifeguard staff, as evident in the audits.





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PEOPLE & PLACES



The DeKalb Park District Names Jason Mangum as New Executive Director

The DeKalb Park District is pleased to announce the appointment of **Jason S. Mangum**, as the district's new executive director. Jason is the former parks, recreation and cultural services director for the city of Novi, Michigan. During his employment in Novi, a city which serves a residential base of 56,000, he was instrumental in developing or renovating several park properties, leading the department in strategic planning, and was recognized by the Michigan Recreation and Park Association as a leader in innovative recreation programming and marketing. He has presented on several topics, including "The Fun Factor: Connecting People through Play," "Unique Partnerships Creating Outdoor Teen Programming Utilizing Zero Agency Dollars," and "Postcards from the Parks," both regionally and nationally.

Prior to his tenure with the City of Novi, he was the parks and recreation director for the city of Show Low, Arizona. Jason is a graduate of Arizona State University with an MS in recreation & tourism studies and a BA in communications. He is a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) from the National Recreation and Parks Association. Jason has served as a faculty associate at Arizona State University, where he taught several parks and recreation courses. He has also been published in the Arizona Parks and Recreation Magazine.



The Des Plaines Park District Announces the Hiring of Katie Skibbe as the Superintendent of Business

Katie comes to Des Plaines with six years of experience as the assistant finance director for the Village of Buffalo Grove and three years of experience as the accounting manager of the Des Plaines Park District. She received her BS in accounting and her MBA from DePaul University, with a concentration in Real

Estate Finance. Katie is also a Certified Public Accountant.

Katie's responsibilities include managing the park district's current comprehensive financial position and systems, investment strategy, and budget. She will serve as a member of the administrative leadership team in coordination with the executive director to assist in district-wide visioning; planning; policy and procedure development, including customer service initiatives; safety and risk management; human resources and marketing. She will also review the annual audit and capital improvement plan, and work on the Master Plan, Strategic Plan, and the Community Needs Assessment. Additionally, Katie will supervise a full-time staff of eight.



Volunteers Needed for Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair

The Illinois Association of Park Districts and Illinois Park and Recreation Association are looking for a few good volunteers! Join us for the 21st annual Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair in Springfield on Saturday, August 16th.

Park District Conservation Day features park, recreation and conservation agency entertainment and garners public support and appreciation of the many wonderful things that park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies bring to the citizens of Illinois. Last year, more than 132,000 people attended Park District Conservation Day.

Volunteers are needed to distribute giveaways, work a shift at the Park District Conservation Day booth, coordinate entertainment at stages or assist children with hands-on crafts and activities. **Volunteers receive a Park District Conservation Day t-shirt, free parking and free admission to the Illinois State Fair.** Call (217) 523-4554 to sign up or visit ILparks.org or ILpra.org to download a Volunteer Form. Questions may be directed to bjhill@ILparks.org.

Discounted hotel rooms are available at the Springfield Hilton. Call 800-455-8667 or 217-789-1530 by August 1st and ask for the group rate of IAPD Conservation Day to receive the special rate of \$105.

Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (FVSRA) Announces Staff Promotion and New Hires



Alex (Redenius) Engelhardt, CTRS, MBA has been promoted to position of superintendent of recreation. Alex started with FVSRA as a therapeutic recreation intern in 2006. She has advanced through the organization from therapeutic recreation specialist, support staff coordinator and support staff manager positions. Alex received her BA in leisure, youth and human services with an emphasis in therapeutic recreation from the University of Northern Iowa and completed her MBA with a focus on human resource management from Aurora University.

Ryan Tychsen has been hired as the marketing and design coordinator. Ryan is a graduate from the Illinois Institute of Art - Schaumburg receiving a BA while majoring in interactive media design. He has worked for the past seven years at Feld Entertainment as their senior manager of digital media working on properties such as Monster Jam, Monster Energy Supercross, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus and Disney on Ice. Ryan joins FVSRA with a wide range of experiences including website content management and design, social media management, newsletter management and design, live event marketing and live streaming production.



Jackie Hart has been hired as a CTRS support staff manager where she will oversee the full time athletics coordinator, part time program leaders and assistants as well as agency volunteers. Prior to arriving at FVSRA, Jackie served for five years at Western DuPage Special Recreation Association (WDSRA) in two different roles, athletics coordinator and support services supervisor. Jackie entered the recreation profession in 2009 after graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation from Southern Illinois University and was selected as SIU's Rising Star Young Professional in 2013.

Lockport Township Park District Announces Two New Staff Members



Jared Miller is the new aquatics and fitness supervisor. Jared comes to Lockport Township Park District with over 8 years of recreation experience through tenures at the YMCA. Jared has been in aquatics for over 13 years and has worked his way through various organizations improving operations and increasing revenue at facilities throughout Illinois. Jared received his Bachelor's degree from Millikin University

and his Master's degree from the University of Illinois, Springfield.

Stevie Michell is the new recreation supervisor. Stevie is a graduate of the University of St. Francis where she earned a Bachelor of arts and sciences degree in recreation sport and tourism management with a specialization in public administration. She has worked in various facets of recreation for the past 11 years and joins Lockport Township Park District from Riverside Parks and Recreation where she specialized in developing early childhood programming and youth development opportunities such as assisting in the development of a successful kindergarten enrichment program. Her role with Lockport Township Park District will include supervising the before/after-school program, teen programming and overseeing various special events.



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IPARKS Members Receive Recognition for their Commitment to the Program

Granite City Park District, serving nearly 50,000 annual visitors, is located in southern Illinois, six miles northeast of St. Louis, Missouri.

The park district operates with 16 full-time and 200 seasonal employees, providing people with access to a wide variety of activities and programming. Facilities include an 18-hole golf course with pro shop, outdoor swimming complex including a water slide and wading pool, indoor ice rink, six tennis courts, ten playgrounds, five basketball courts, twelve baseball fields, a variety of formal gardens and fountains, and a preschool.

Granite City Park District, a 15-year IPARKS Member, was recently presented with a plaque by IPARKS Account Manager, John Sanford, in recognition of the park district's commitment to the program. When asked about Granite City Park District's long-term membership with the IPARKS Program, Mr. David C. Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation replied, "We're pleased with IPARKS and receive competitive rates, excellent coverage and service."



L-R: David C. Williams, Granite City Park District; John Sanford, IPARKS



L-R: Jill Hills, Havana Park District; Eddie Wood, IPARKS

Havana Park District, nestled on the scenic Illinois River in central Illinois, serves a population of 3,400 residents. The park district operates with three full-time, three part-time, and 15 seasonal employees.

Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy 99 acres of natural beauty including a riverfront campground and the Havana Nature Center, with boat docks, an outdoor deck with picnic tables, a handicap-accessible fishing dock with a walk bridge, and seasonal classes. Havana Park District also offers a new fitness center, swimming pool, community gardens, playgrounds, soccer fields, and volleyball, basketball and tennis courts.

In acknowledgement of Havana Park District's loyalty to the IPARKS Program, IPARKS Account Manager, Eddie Wood, presented Executive Director, Ms. Jill Hills, with a 15-year membership plaque. Ms. Hills stated, "We have been very pleased with the service we receive from

IPARKS. Eddie Wood is always helpful and makes himself available to answer my questions and concerns."

IPARKS Members are as diversified as the coverages provided by the IPARKS Program. If your park district, forest preserve, conservation or recreation district or special recreation agency is not yet an IPARKS Member, we encourage you to learn more about IPARKS at www.iparks.org or by calling **800.748.0554** to speak with an IPARKS representative



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