

illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

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



# marketing:

customer focused strategies that work

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PLUS: The 2017 Legal Calendar & Best of the Best Awards Gala Winners

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# IN THIS ISSUE



- 4 From the Editor**  
Read inspiring stories on customer-focused marketing and enter our photo contest!
- 6 Get on Board**  
Research Shows The Impact of IAPD Membership
- 8 Eye on the Profession**  
IPRA's New Marketing Model and Exciting News
- 9 Statehouse Insider**  
Think Positive When it Comes to Advocacy and Marketing
- 12 2017 Legal Calendar**
- 16 Marketing - Customer Focused Strategies That Work**  
Lincoln Park District shares some insights on how marketing works well for them
- 20 Customers are Marketing People Too**  
Rockford Park District writes on how they are able to focus on their customers
- 22 WebXtra**  
Mastering Park Signage  
The Village of Hawthorn Woods shows us how they incorporate effective signs in their marketing
- 23 2016 IAPD Best of the Best Gala Awards**  
Congratulations to all of our winners!
- 24 Customer Focused Marketing**  
Champaign Park District tells us about how they put customers first in their marketing efforts
- 28 People and Places**  
Faces and places making news around the state

## FROM THE EDITOR

As the seasons change and the air gets colder – let's look at ways to get customers to “warm up” to your agency AND your message. This issue offers insights and ideas to help your agency shine.



An effective marketing plan is vital to the success of your profit centers and overall agency mission. Beginning with a focus on your customer will help ensure you get started in the right direction. I hope these articles will inspire you to find the best way to engage your customer as you show off the tremendous value your agency provides!

Warm regards,

— Rachel Laier, Editor



### “Give Us Your Best Shot” Photo Contest

ENTRIES DUE DECEMBER 2!

Do you have a great photo from one of your agency events you would like to share? Enter them in this year's photo contest! You may enter up to five photos in each of the following categories:

- Recreation / People at Play
- Sports
- Wildlife (live animals and insects, etc.)
- Nature / Landscapes (flowers, sunsets, lakes and other landscapes, etc.)

Contest rules and waiver form can be found online at [ILparks.org/PhotoContest](http://ILparks.org/PhotoContest). Please send us your “Best Shots” soon. The deadline for entry is December 2, 2016.



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Peter M. Murphy, J.D., CAE  
IAPD President and CEO

## New Research Shows the Impact of IAPD Membership

During the past several months, IAPD has been working closely with aQity Research & Insights to analyze the results of an IAPD-funded survey pertaining to the W-2 employment and revenue data of IAPD member agencies.

I am very excited to share the impressive Statewide results of the Agency W-2 and Revenue Data. The report contains the following key findings:

- Statewide, over 67,382 Illinois residents are employed by park districts, forest preserve districts, and special recreation associations.
- Jobs generated by park districts, forest preserve districts and SRAs in 2015 contributed nearly \$720 million to household incomes statewide.
- In addition to salaries and income to employees, these agencies generate almost \$110 million in compensation to subcontractors like those who teach recreation classes, etc.
- Nearly half of the employees statewide are under age 25, and one in ten are older adults (age 60+). These two segments represent a third of the agencies' overall payroll and almost 60% of its employees.
- Younger employees are most prevalent among park districts and special recreation associations, while forest preserve districts are most likely to hire older adults.
- Park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts are significant local job creators. Statewide, 62% of agency employees live within their employer's district. In park districts, 61% of agency employees live within their employer's district. In forest preserves and conservation districts, 75% of agency employees live within their employer's district.
- A significant statewide finding was that most agency revenues come from non-tax sources. In addition, earned revenue represents over a third of agency income.
- Park districts are less reliant on property taxes due to their self-generated income. While forest preserves and conservation districts rely largely on property tax revenues, a third of their income comes from non-tax sources.
- Young agency employees spend most of their wages within their employer's district, translating into nearly \$72 million statewide returned to these agencies' local economies.

- Young employees learn many critical skills as part of their agency employment which will serve them well in future careers including communication skills, people skills, leadership and responsibility, time management, outstanding customer service and much more.
- Overwhelmingly all of the young agency employees surveyed were happy with their work experience, and four out of five would definitely recommend it to others.
- Several young employees interviewed shared the following appreciation for their employment opportunities:
  - "My communication and leadership skills really strengthened through the park district. They challenged me in ways that I wasn't familiar with. They are way stronger than ever before." (age 25, downstate park district)
  - "I really enjoy coming to work. I work with a lot of different people – preschoolers, middle schoolers, senior citizens. It allows me to do something different every day; that's not an opportunity everybody gets." (age 25, downstate forest preserve district)
  - "I can't even begin to list the amazing things this park district has done for me over the last 3 decades. From providing me with a place to grow and develop since the age of 3, to being my first job as a staff instructor and eventually my first full-time job, the park district will always remain in my heart."
- The vast majority of young employees surveyed recognize that their agency work experience will have a great benefit on future career opportunities.

"Most IAPD member agency revenues come from non-tax sources."

– aQity Research & Insights Inc.



I encourage you to share this information with your local residents and stakeholders, informing them of your agency's role as a significant employer and contributor to the local economy as well as highlighting the agency's efforts to rely on self-sustaining revenue options as a way to limit dependency on local property taxes. Similarly, your agency should solicit and share feedback from younger employees to help demonstrate the value and importance that this early work experience represents.

### IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference

This year's IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference has some exciting changes including the launch of a comprehensive new mobile app that will provide up-to-date conference information wherever you go. This app will bring the entire conference program to your fingertips, provide you with session alerts, interactive maps, session evaluations and speaker information. It will also allow you to personalize your schedule.

In keeping with past conferences, there will be a wealth of sessions on boardmanship, leadership and management, governance, legal issues, finance, information technology, marketing and communication, to name but a few.

Registration and housing for the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference taking place January 19-21, 2017, at the Hilton Chicago is now open. The early deadline is Monday, December 5, 2016. For further information on registration, housing and educational offerings, please refer to the September/October issue of the Illinois Parks and Recreation magazine, call IAPD, or go to the conference website at [ILparksconference.com](http://ILparksconference.com).

### Illinois Gold Medal Award Winners

On behalf of the entire IAPD membership, I would like to congratulate the Frankfort Square Park District board and staff for winning the National Gold Medal Award at this year's National Recreation and Park Association Congress. This is the highest recognition a park and recreation agency can achieve and it takes years of work and dedication to even qualify as a finalist. The Arlington Heights Park District, the Decatur Park District, the Homewood-Flossmoor Park District and the Itasca Park District were recognized as finalists for their excellence in park and recreation management.

Founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Award program honors communities in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition, as well as unparalleled service to the community.

Since 1966, Illinois park districts have won the National Gold Medal Award twice as often as California who has the second highest number of Gold Medal Award winning agencies.

Please see the sidebar for the next dates of IAPD programs and events that are already scheduled for next year. Plans are also underway for regional commissioner Boot Camps which are offered in election years to new and seasoned commissioners.

## 2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 19-27, 2017  
**IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference**  
Hilton Chicago

April-May, 2017  
**Flying for Kids Month, Statewide Kite Fly**

Tuesday, May 2, 2017  
**Parks Day at the Capitol**  
Illinois State Capitol

Tuesday, May 2, 2017  
**Legislative Reception**  
Illini Country Club

Wednesday, May 3, 2017  
**Legislative Conference**  
Crowne Plaza, Springfield

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

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

September 26-28, 2017  
**NRPA Congress**  
New Orleans, LA

TBD  
**IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala**  
Wheeling Park District, Chevy Chase Country Club

TBD  
**IAPD Legal Symposium**  
McDonald's University/Hyatt Lodge Oak Brook

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

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### THE ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PARK DISTRICTS **Guide to Public Sector Employment Laws**

Developed for Park Districts, Forest Preserves, Conservation Districts, Recreation and Special Recreation Agencies

By Christopher A. Jahlke, Franciszek Radziej, P.C.



The second edition of the *Guide to Public Sector Employment Laws* contains the most current updates to numerous significant employer laws and regulations relating to:

- Equal Employment Opportunity
- Affordable Care Act
- Employee Privacy
- Worker Classification Issues
- Wage and Hour Requirements
- Benefits
- Leaves of Absence
- Employee Background Investigations
- Labor Relations
- Illinois Workers' Compensation Act



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE  
IPRA Executive Director

## IPRA's New Marketing Model and Exciting News

The theme of this issue is “Marketing: Customer Focused Strategies that Work”. Park and recreation agencies experience the same difficult balancing act in marketing as we do at IPRA; we all have to decide how much is too much marketing. It's like the story of the Three Bears- how much of something is too much, how much is not enough, and how much is just right. At IPRA, in 2015 we surveyed our members and asked how members wanted to receive our marketing materials. Members let us know that they were receiving too many emails. They felt they were receiving so much email that they were ignoring most of it and as a result, there was a disconnect as IPRA did more and more marketing, reaching less and less of our audience.

As a result of those survey responses, IPRA restructured our marketing efforts. We focus most of our marketing efforts in our bi-monthly electronic newsletter, focus segmented marketing through our online communities called, “IPRA Connect”, and for high priority items, and we send a hardcopy in the mail such as a letter to Executive Directors or a postcard to all our members. We utilize social media more, and save sending emails to our members for only the most important, “can't miss” news and announcements. Readership in our newsletter has increased and most of our events continue to be well attended.

Marketing, as we all know, has to be delivered in the way the customer- or in our case, the members- want to receive it and that needs to include the format, the frequency, and the length. We have also taken to reducing the length of our newsletter articles so our members can get the information they need more quickly. We have also moved to having several brochures which we can use to personally distribute certain information when we are in-person with our members. We have a new student member benefits brochure, a brochure about the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation, a brochure about IPRA member benefits and a brochure about ProConnect our award winning mentoring program, etc. These more focused, featured, brochures help us to give more in-depth information on certain key programs. Overall, this transition has gone well, but marketing is a constantly changing plan. It is important for us and for all park and recreation agencies that we all continue to follow changing trends in marketing, survey our members/customers for their needs, and continue to adapt to be successful as we all balance the communication saturation point.

Speaking of all that IPRA has to share with you. Allow me to share with you some of our most exciting news. Recently, we announced a new scholarship fund through the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation (IPRF). This is called the Wilson Family Public Servant Scholarship and it was set up through a generous \$10,000 donation by long time IPRA member, John Wilson. John has been a volunteer in several leadership positions, including the IAPD/IPRA Conference Committee and Exhibits Committee, a leadership role in the IPRA Administration and Finance Section Board, and serving as a board member of the IPRF. The scholarship is a collaboration between IPRF and South Suburban Park & Recreation Professional Association (SSPRPA).

It is important for us and for all park and recreation agencies that we all continue to follow changing trends in marketing, survey our members/customers for their needs, and continue to adapt to be successful as we all balance the communication saturation point.



The fund establishes a scholarship for young professionals (those that have worked full time in the park & recreation profession eight years or less), who are current members of the SSPRPA and IPRA. The Wilson Family Public Servant Fund will fund, on an annual basis, provided there are approved scholarships that meet and exceed the review process and intended criteria of the fund, the following educational opportunities: two (2) full delegate registrations to the IPRA Supervisor Symposium and one (1) full delegate registration to the annual IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference. All scholarship applications for the Wilson Family Public Servant Fund will follow the timelines, rules and regulations of the IPRF. The Wilson family has had multiple generations of public servants and we at IPRF are so grateful for the generosity of the Wilson family as they create this new Wilson Family Public Servant Fund. This new scholarship is for park and recreation professionals who are early in their careers pursuing ongoing professional education. This collaboration between IPRF, the



South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association and the Wilson family will help us to provide scholarships to professionals and honor the Wilson family for years into the future.

Secondly, IPRA is pleased to be joining with PlayCore, a leading designer, manufacturer, and marketer of a broad range of play and recreation products and its GameTime play brand to promote healthy play through a statewide training and grant initiative. This partnership is designed to provide statewide professional development services and matching action grant funding to assist parks throughout Illinois in creating playground spaces that encourage best practice designs for active behavior. By the time you read this, we will have already hosted our five statewide October professional development sessions, where members can earn Continuing Education Credits (CEUs) as they discover the latest best practice play research developed by PlayCore's Center for Professional Development and its network of scholars, experts, and Universities.

Additionally, there will be statewide matching grants offered by PlayCore and Game Time for playgrounds. To apply for the grant funding provided by GameTime, park and recreation agency representatives will submit creative essays demonstrating how their play project would contribute to the health and wellness of the community. To apply for the grants or for more information go to our website at <http://www.ilipra.org/playground-grants>. The park spaces chosen to receive grant funding will serve as National Demonstration Sites for data collection, and will contribute data toward the publication of a White Paper to highlight best practices and outcomes achieved. The initial findings will be presented at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference at the IPRA Annual Business Meeting in 2018. The winners will also be recognized in a variety of ways at the event.

In addition, through this relationship, Play Core and Game Time together have made a commitment to donate up to \$10,000 to the IPRF scholarship fund for students and professionals. IPRA is thrilled to announce this new opportunity for our members statewide. This relationship with PlayCore and GameTime is going to mean more grant opportunities for our members, more educational opportunities, and more scholarship opportunities for professionals, all of which will be available for members all across Illinois. In addition, there will be a research component which will elevate the field of parks and recreation in the future. We look forward to our ongoing collaboration with them.

There is so much going on at IPRA. I hope that you continue to take advantage of all the ways that we can serve you.

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Communicate the value of parks and recreation through education and storytelling.  
Photo by Arlington Heights Park District staff

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Jason Anselment  
Legal/Legislative Counsel

## Think Positive When it Comes to Advocacy and Marketing

Somedays it seems like our world is becoming more and more focused on negativity. Pick up a newspaper, turn on the TV or read a social media post or consumer review and too often you will find bad news, criticism, a complaint or some grievance. Even our elections often seem more focused on what is wrong rather than what is right.

As a parent, I often wonder about the message that so much negativity sends to our children. Certainly, we cannot ignore our problems, but is it possible that too much pessimism impedes our ability to solve those problems? That's a big question to which I do not have a definitive answer.

What I do know, is that with so much negativity around us, I am extremely grateful to work in a field that is filled with positive people, doing positive things to achieve positive results. The people of park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies bring joy, laughter and smiles to people of all ages 365 days a year. But the positive impact is not limited to making people happy. These agencies also keep people healthy and safe. Simply put, park programs and services make life better.

When others take a dim view of the world around us, it is even more important that we deliver positive messaging to remind our citizens of all the good things that are happening within our communities. Positivity can be a powerful tool. I have seen the results of positive messaging in our advocacy efforts at the Capitol, and I believe marketing positive messages is good for your citizen customers as well.

Exemplifying positivity does not mean ignoring challenges. Indeed, it would be easy to let obstacles such as unfunded mandates, burdensome regulations, budget woes and routine complaints impact our morale. While these challenges can be frustrating because they often take precious time and resources away from our positive work, we can never allow these distractions to detract from the critical programs and services that park, recreation and conservation agencies provide. Too many citizens count on them.

Instead, as you face challenges, take time to recognize the positive difference you make in the lives of individuals each day.

### IAPD Events Recognize Positive Impact

Many of IAPD's events throughout the year provide an opportunity to showcase and celebrate the positive contributions of citizens, volunteers, professionals and elected officials. For example, the Annual All-Conference Awards Luncheon offers many inspiring examples as does the recently completed IAPD Awards Gala.

For me, the power of positivity that characterizes the field of parks and recreation is never more apparent than the days leading up to and during Parks Day at the Capitol when legislators and others who work at the Capitol stop me to ask, "when is Parks Day?" What I have come to realize is that so many around the Capitol look forward to Parks Day because no matter what challenges the State is facing, park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies inject positivity. It is simply not our nature to let our challenges overtake our focus on delivering important services that improve communities, and to do so with positive energy.

While these and other annual events offer important opportunities to give special recognition to remarkable contributions and to showcase the positive impact of park districts and other conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies, it is extremely important for everyone in the field to reflect daily on the many ways their contributions have a positive impact on individual lives.

### Recognize Positive, Lifechanging Differences You Make Each Day

When we think about professions that change lives by providing vital care, critical services or safety, we often think of health professionals like doctors and nurses who treat, cure and save patients. We might include pharmacists who we rely upon to safely and precisely dispense medications. Certainly, first responders who assist in emergencies and times of crisis deserve recognition. Those of us with children surely know the tremendous difference their teachers make.

In fact, society often recognizes and lauds these professions for the impactful work they do. But, have you ever considered yourself part of a life-changing team? If not, why?

Perhaps it is related to society's tendency to fixate on the bad things that happen like diseases, epidemics, tragedies, accidents, crimes and natural disasters. In doing so, are we simply ignoring all the

positive things that happen around us every day? Put another way, do we ever stop to think about the bad things that do not happen?

While positive news stories are sometimes reported, they rarely lead and almost never dominate a news cycle the way that bad news or negative stories do. And it is not just the media. Oftentimes, our debates and conversations on social media and even our personal interactions can be just as negative.

The next time you encounter negative news or discussions about disease, crime, tragedy, suicide or natural disaster, let me suggest that you take time to reflect on the positive impact that you have made by helping to avoid these problems. In other words, consider:

- How many adults are productive citizens and are not in a correctional facility because as a youth they were enrolled in one of your agency's afterschool or summer programs during those critical hours when school was not in session; and, by extension, how many individuals were not the victims of the crimes that these individuals may have committed?
- How many children did not drown because they learned how to swim at your agency either through a park program, a public pool or both?
- How many heart attacks did not happen because your patrons have convenient and affordable access to facilities to exercise or to walk on one of your trails? And, how many children still have these fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers and have benefited from the difference those people have made in their lives?
- How many people have not inflicted harm upon themselves or others because of the positive influence your parks had on their mental health and well-being?

These are just a few of the ways that you and the rest of your park and recreation team positively changed a life in one way or another – probably today. And the positive difference you make is exponential when one considers the lives that are impacted because of the one individual you served.

Well beyond the life changing examples above are the tens of thousands of youth who got their first work experience at a park district and have gone on to provide substantial contributions as part of today's workforce because of the traits they learned in that first job. There are undoubtedly business leaders who first began to develop their leadership skills in a youth sport on a park district field. Consider also all of the opportunities for persons with special needs that very likely would have gone unmet were it not for special recreation agencies.

The positive impact of your agency's efforts on the environment is astounding. For instance, we can never discount the damage that has been avoided because public parks, golf courses or other open space helped to mitigate or prevent flooding during major weather events.

There are so many positive stories that go unreported because they are either not “newsworthy” or because they are simply unknown.

The fact that we may not hear about these stories does not diminish the positive impact on the affected individual; however, it does highlight our need to use these examples as we share stories in our advocacy and marketing so that lawmakers and citizens understand the positive return from investments in park, recreation and conservation agencies.

### Make Positivity Your Focus in 2017

It can be very easy to get caught up in all the negative noise around us. That's true in both our professional and personal lives. Regardless of whether you are a park and recreation professional, commissioner or volunteer in other ways, I want to encourage you to reflect on your life-changing role during the upcoming holidays. As you begin formulating resolutions for next year, I urge you to make your commitment to remaining positive one of your goals. While criticism can certainly be constructive, we cannot let pessimism become so pervasive that it changes our core values or impedes our problem-solving abilities. Finally, I urge you to continue to share that positivity with others in your daily job performance, as you advocate on behalf of your agency and when marketing your programs and services.

No matter how much negativity is around us, you are part of something very positive.

### Use Positive IAPD Research Studies in Advocacy and Marketing

One way to communicate the positive impact of park districts, forest preserves, and other conservation and recreation agencies is through IAPD research. In just the past few years, IAPD has completed many important studies with powerful results. Among these studies is the IAPD Citizen Satisfaction Survey and the recently released W-2 and Revenue Analysis.

These studies and supporting materials are available to IAPD members at any time through the IAPD website at [lparks.org](http://lparks.org) under the Public Policy – Advocacy Resources – IAPD Research webpage. Use these materials to market your agency's impact locally.



# Legal calendar 2017

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The following park district calendar includes key dates based on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30. For those park districts that have adopted another date for the commencement of the fiscal year (70 ILCS 1205/4-4), this calendar must be adjusted for those duties that must be performed at times related to the fiscal year. The calendar is also established around regular park board meetings held on the third Thursday of each month. Selected election dates are based on the Consolidated Primary Election to be held on February 28, 2017, and the Consolidated Election to take place on April 4, 2017. For additional election dates, consult IAPD's election calendar published in the September/October issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation* and the Practice Tools Section of the IAPD website, [ILparks.org](http://ILparks.org).

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

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

## ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- Post the date, time and place of park district regular meetings for the year. Mail copies to the news media. (5 ILCS 120/2.02)
- Review the requirement that all closed sessions are to be recorded verbatim by audio or video. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review requirement that open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later, and made available for public inspection within 10 days after approval. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review the requirements that all Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act officers must complete the Attorney General's annual training requirements. Newly appointed officers must complete the training within 30 days after designation or assuming the position. (5 ILCS 120/1.05; 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Review requirement that newly elected or appointed members of a public body must successfully complete a course on the Open Meetings Act offered by the Illinois Association of Park Districts or the electronic training curriculum on the Open Meetings Act developed by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor within 90 days of their oath of office or otherwise assuming their responsibilities if no oath is required. (ILCS 140/1.05)
- Review requirement that all local governments with Internet websites are required to post on that website an email address for their elected officials for the public's use in contacting those officials and to post a hyperlink on the local government's homepage to allow the public easy access to the contact information. (Public Act 98-0300)
- Review with the park district treasurer the requirement that all funds of the district not immediately needed for disbursement must be invested within two

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

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

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

## EVERY SIX MONTHS

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

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

## NOVEMBER 2016

### NOVEMBER 3

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

### NOVEMBER 7

Last day to file objections to petition to create a political subdivision in the office of the appropriate officer where the petitions were originally filed (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the Consolidated Primary Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4; 70 ILCS 1205/2-3)

### NOVEMBER 28

Last day for filing of petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Primary

Election. [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

## DECEMBER 2016

### DECEMBER 5

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

### DECEMBER 5

Last day to file petition (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) to create a political subdivision with the appropriate officer or board (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/28-2(b); 70 ILCS 1205/2-3)

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

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election (December 12-19, 2016). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

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

NOTE: See the specific statute governing the unit of local government to be established for filing procedures. (10 ILCS 5/28-4)

#### **DECEMBER 5**

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Primary Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same office in which the original petitions were filed. [EXCEPTION: proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

#### **DECEMBER 12**

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

#### **DECEMBER 12**

Last day for county, municipal, school, township and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for the Consolidated Primary Election. (55 ILCS 5/5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30; 105 ILCS 5/9-1.5)

#### **DECEMBER 12**

Last day to file objection to petition to create a political subdivision in the office of the appropriate officer where the petition was originally filed (for park districts, circuit court clerk) for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4; 70 ILCS 1205/2-3)

#### **DECEMBER 12**

First day for filing in office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates in park districts and forest preserves) for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

NOTE: Filing is between 113-106 days prior to the Consolidated Election. December 12, 2016 is the 113<sup>th</sup> day prior to that election and is the first day of filing in those offices which are open.

#### **DECEMBER 19**

Last day for filing in the office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates for township and municipal library boards, road district boards, library district boards, park district boards, school boards, community college boards, regional boards of school

trustees, fire protection district boards and forest preserve district boards for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

NOTE: The office in which petitions for nomination must be filed shall remain open for the receipt of such petitions until 5:00 P.M. on the last day of the filing period. (10 ILCS 5/1-4)

#### **DECEMBER 22**

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

#### **DECEMBER 27**

Last day for filing objections to nomination papers for nonpartisan candidates (whose nomination papers were filed during the period December 12–19, 2016) in the office of the election authority or the local election official with whom the nomination papers are on file for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8)

NOTE: The December 27<sup>th</sup> objection deadline is based upon the State Board of Elections' holiday schedule. The State Board of Elections offices are closed on Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>, which is the day after Christmas. If your unit of government has a different schedule this might affect your objection deadlines.

### **JANUARY 2017**

#### **JANUARY 3**

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Election.

[EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)]

NOTE: Petitions to initiate backdoor referenda must be filed under the deadline specified in the specific statute authorizing the referenda, but in no case later than 92 days prior to the ensuing election.

#### **JANUARY 10**

Last day to file objections to petitions for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Election. Objections to petitions for local referenda are filed with the same office in which the original petitions were filed. [EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda initiated under the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code. (10 ILCS 5/10-8, 28-4)]

#### **JANUARY 17**

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

#### **JANUARY 17**

Last day for county, municipal, township, school and park boards to place advisory referenda on the ballot by resolution for the Consolidated Election. (55 ILCS 5/2-3002, 5-1005.5; 60 ILCS 1/30-205, 80-80; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-40-60; 70 ILCS 1205/8-30; 105 ILCS 5/9-1.5)

#### **JANUARY 19**

Regular January board meeting.

#### **JANUARY 19-21**

Attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference, Hilton Chicago.

#### **JANUARY 26**

Last day for local election official to certify offices and the names of candidates to appear on the Consolidated Election ballot to the election authority. (10 ILCS 5/10-15)

#### **JANUARY 26**

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

#### **JANUARY 31**

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

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

### **FEBRUARY 2017**

#### **FEBRUARY 1**

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

#### **FEBRUARY 16**

Regular February board meeting.

#### **FEBRUARY 21**

Last day for the election authority to publish notice of a question of public policy appearing on the ballot at the Consolidated Primary Election. Such notice shall be published once in a local community newspaper having general circulation in the political or governmental subdivision. The notice shall also be given at least ten (10) days before the date of the election by posting a copy of the notice at the principal office of the election authority. The local election official shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the political or governmental subdivision, or if there is no principal office at the building in which the governing body of the political or governmental subdivision held its first meeting of the calendar year in which the referendum is being held. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

#### **FEBRUARY 28**

Consolidated Primary Election

### **MARCH 2017**

#### **MARCH 16**

Regular March board meeting.

#### **MARCH 27**

Last day for election authority to publish notice of the Consolidated Election. The notice must include the polling hours, and the offices for which candidates will be elected. Such notice must also include a list of precinct polling addresses unless published separately at least ten (10) days prior to the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/12-4)

#### **MARCH 27**

Last day for the election authority to publish a notice of any question of public policy to be voted upon within its jurisdiction at the Consolidated Election. Such notice shall be published once in a local community newspaper having general circulation in the political or governmental subdivision. The notice shall also be given at least ten (10) days before the date of the election by posting a copy of the notice at the principal office of the election authority. The local election official shall also post a copy of the notice at the principal office of the political or governmental subdivision, or if there is no principal office at the building in which the governing body of the political or governmental subdivision held its first meeting of the calendar year in which the referendum is being held. (10 ILCS 5/12-5)

### **APRIL 2017**

#### **APRIL 1**

Last day by which the county clerk of each county shall notify all persons whose names have been certified to him, other than candidates for office who have filed their statements with their nominating petitions, of the requirements for filing statements of economic interests. The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A-101, requires the following persons to file verified written statements of economic interests: (g) Persons who are

elected to office in a unit of local government, and candidates for nomination or election to that office; (h) Persons appointed to the governing board of a unit of local government and persons appointed to a board or commission of a unit of local government who have the authority to authorize the expenditure of public funds but not members of boards or commissions who function in an advisory capacity; (i) Persons who are employed by a unit of local government and are compensated for services as employees and not as independent contractors and who:

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

#### **APRIL 3**

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

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

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

#### **APRIL 4**

*Consolidated Election*

#### **APRIL 5**

Register newly elected commissioners for IAPD Boot Camps that will be held in May and June at regional locations. Commissioners will receive valuable information on the legal requirements of their new positions and will also successfully complete a course on the Open Meetings Act that is required within 90 days after they take their oath of office.

#### **APRIL 20**

Regular April board meeting.

### **MAY 2017**

#### **MAY 1**

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

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

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

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

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

#### **MAY 1**

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

#### **MAY 1**

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

#### **MAY 1**

The date to start the annual audit. Every governmental unit is required to make an annual audit to cover the immediately preceding fiscal year. The audit must be completed and the audit report filed with the Comptroller within six months after the close of the fiscal year. All governmental units are also required to file a copy of the completed report with the county clerk. (50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3)

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

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

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

#### **MAY 1**

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

#### **MAY 1**

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

#### **MAY 2-3**

Attend the IAPD Legislative Conference in Springfield. The Legislative Reception is held the evening of May 2 with the conference starting the next morning on May 3. May 2 is Parks Day at the Capitol with park district, forest preserve, conservation district and special recreation displays lining the Capitol Rotunda.

#### **MAY 5**

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

#### **MAY 18**

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

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

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

#### **MAY 31**

General Assembly scheduled to adjourn.

### **JUNE 2017**

#### **JUNE 15**

Regular June board meeting.

#### **JUNE 16**

The last day for filing a copy of the district's budget and appropriation ordinance with the county clerk, as well as a certified estimate of revenue by source anticipated to be received in the following fiscal year (assuming a passage adoption date of May 18).

#### **JUNE 30**

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

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

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

## JULY 2017

### JULY 15

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

### JULY 20

Regular July board meeting.

## AUGUST 2017

### AUGUST 14

The last date to publish determination of prevailing rate of wages and mail copies of rates to requesting parties if filed with Department of Labor on the last possible date (July 15). (Publication must be within 30 days of date of filing with Department of Labor.) (820 ILCS 130/9)

### AUGUST 17

Regular August board meeting.

## SEPTEMBER 2017

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

### SEPTEMBER 21

Regular September board meeting.

### SEPTEMBER 26-28

Attend the NRPA Congress in New Orleans, Louisiana

## OCTOBER 2017

### OCTOBER 1

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

### OCTOBER 19

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

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

### OCTOBER 19

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

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

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

### OCTOBER 31

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

### OCTOBER 31

The last day to file annual audit report (or financial report if district received revenue of less than \$850,000) with the Comptroller of the State of Illinois and county clerk (within six months of close of fiscal year) and make a copy open to public inspection. Pursuant to Public Act 98-1019, beginning with fiscal year 2016 those governmental units receiving revenue less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year must also provide copies of this annual financial report to each member of that governmental unit's governing board of elected officials and present it either in person or by a live phone or web connection during a public meeting and have the financial report approved by a 3/5 majority vote. Otherwise, that unit must cause an audit of the account to be made once every four years in addition to filing the annual financial report with the Comptroller. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/2; 310/3; 310/6)

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

### OCTOBER 31

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

## NOVEMBER 2017

### NOVEMBER 6

The suggested date to publish notice of hearing (Truth in Taxation Law) if the district's proposed levy is greater than 105 percent of last year's extension or estimated extension. Must publish not more than 14 days, nor less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Publication date assumes a hearing date of November 13-17, 2017. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (35 ILCS 200/18-70; 200/18-75)

NOTE: The form of the notice is set forth in the Truth in Taxation Law. Be sure to check special publication requirements found in statute. Further, any notice that includes information in excess of that specified and required by the Act shall be considered an invalid notice. (35 ILCS 200/18-80)

### NOVEMBER 16

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

### NOVEMBER 16

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

## DECEMBER 2017

### DECEMBER 1

The suggested date to verify that, for real estate acquired in 2017, appropriate applications have been filed to exempt the real estate from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-5)

### DECEMBER 1

(If levy ordinance was enacted on November 16, 2017) the last day to publish Truth in Taxation notice if levy amounts as enacted exceed prior published figures, or if levy exceeds 105 percent of last year's extension and there was not prior publication. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (Notice must be given within 15 days of the date the levy ordinance was enacted.) (35 ILCS 200/18-85)

### DECEMBER 5

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

### DECEMBER 21

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

### DECEMBER 26

The suggested date to prepare and file with the Supervisor of Assessments the annual affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been a change in the ownership or use of the district's exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (Last day for filing is January 31, 2017.) (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

### DECEMBER 26

The suggested day by which bond ordinances should be filed with county clerk in order to receive extensions of taxes for the payment of principal and interest on general obligation bonds or limited bonds for 2017 taxes collected in 2018. The filing must actually take place prior to March 1, 2018. (30 ILCS 350/16)

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

### DECEMBER 26

In most counties the last day to: (a) file certified copy of tax levy ordinance with county clerk (70 ILCS 1205/5-1; 35 ILCS 200/18-15), and (b) file board president's certificate of compliance with county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

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

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

By Abigail Neece, Lincoln Park District

# Marketing

## CUSTOMER FOCUSED STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram—are these the social media sites that you think of when you hear the word marketing? For myself, this is instantly where my mind goes. Social media takes a huge part in marketing today but is not the sole contribution. Being in the recreational field, one must know their customers. There are multiple ways to acknowledge the common customer. The Lincoln Park District conducts surveys, gets involved with the community, talks with regular customers - and connects with other marketing outlets in order to build a strong work force. As the program coordinator for the Lincoln Park District I have learned that customer focused marketing strategies are what keep the customer coming back to spend their leisure time with our agency.

The Lincoln Park District's motto is, "To enhance the quality and availability of leisure opportunities to meet the diverse needs of the community by providing recreational programs, facilities and park areas for the benefit of current and future generations." Our customers and our community are our main priority. As a park district, we are put in place for the community and to serve the community. We never ask what is in it for us. We always ask what more can we do for the community and our customers. This is why we use customer focused strategies when implementing marketing for our facility. Customer focused

marketing is the process of determining customer needs and wants in order to drive the working force behind the company's products or services. We obtain our driving work force from producing programs, fitness training, leisure activities and many other services.

- 1. Building a strong work force:** Inside our own agency's work force we try to treat each other like customers and how one would want to be treated as a customer. Agencies want their participants to have a consistent and pleasant experience from the time they sign up to the time they are done using the facility. This is where the majority of our customer focused marketing comes from. When our agency respects our employees, in return, they will show the same respect toward the customers. The way our employees interact with individuals can influence who walks into our facility the next day. The Lincoln Park District is a part of a small community and our employees understand what is expected out of them. This helps our park district build strong customer focused strategies when implementing marketing. Having our work force on the same page is another essential strategy that works. This helps our agency become more than a work force—we become a team.





**If your agency is unsure of what your customers want, implement a new survey, start getting involved with the community, connect with regular customers, use different marketing outlets and begin building a stronger work force.**

Once your agency can put all of these pieces together you will find the customer focused marketing strategies that work for your own facility, just how the Lincoln Park District has found ours.

- 2. Surveying:** This is a great way to understand our target audience and to help re-evaluate our facility and marketing plans. The Lincoln Park District puts together a general needs assessment for our programs to grasp what the customers want from our park district. Not only do we receive feedback from our community, we also get to promote the Lincoln Park District and our brand. This also lets the customer know our agency is there for them and that their input matters. From surveys - we get to know our customer and then we understand our audience, and from there makes us more customer friendly.
- 3. Get Involved:** Having our work force become active members in the community is very beneficial. Our agency wants our employees to become a part of a local club or an organization. While participating in local activities, and by giving back to the community it reflects on our facility. At the Lincoln Park District - we are active in our community and we use this as a marketing strategy. The way others recognize our agency within the community markets what type of facility we run.
- 4. Stay Connected:** Targeting regular customers is a huge part of our marketing strategy because individuals are more likely to trust their friend's opinion rather than that of a website administrator. As our facility starts to gain or maintain regular customers their needs become first priority. At the Lincoln Park District, we offer thirty-two different fitness classes. Our "Fit for Senior" class is one of our top group fitness classes offered here at our park district. Why did we create these classes? Because we got to know our regular customers. By listening to our customers and building classes, programs and activities around them we are not just gaining their participation, we are also making them feel special. These individuals are the ones that spend a majority of their week with our employees and around our facility. When they come to us with suggestions or concerns we have our staff look into them right away. By listening to the customers and providing for them they will in return talk about your agency within the community and to others.

- 5. Methods that Work:** Marketing is broken down into multiple fields. In recreation you have social media, magazines, newspapers, websites, fliers, emails and several other outlets. In order to reach our diverse audience, our park district utilizes three main marketing outlets: social media, our website - and fliers. Although we have many other marketing tools we focus primarily on these three because our audience has expressed to us they prefer these methods. Again, listening and responding to our customers should always be a main priority. When our park district promotes a program we market it on our website and social media accounts. We also take fliers to all of our surrounding schools in the area. With these three marketing strategies our customers have responded very well to our park district.

When thinking about customer focused strategies that work, the key word is customer. You need to know your customer. It is important to know your customer because they are what keeps your facility running. If your agency is unsure of what your customers want, implement a new survey, get to know your community, connect with regular customers, use different marketing outlets and begin building a stronger work force. By implementing a new survey for your community, your agency can gain influential information about the common customer. By targeting different marketing outlets your agency could potentially gain new customers at your facility.

With new customers in your facility, be sure your employees are treating each customer with the welcoming respect they deserve. Make sure your agency is continuing to make individuals around your facility feel special. When people feel important and respected they will speak highly about your agency. If your facility is then being promoted in the community, your agency can start marketing your facility efficiently. Once your agency can put all of these pieces together you will find the customer focused marketing strategies that work for your own facility, just how the Lincoln Park District has found ours.

## Marketing Quotes from Seth Godin

Seth Godin is one of the most innovative and influential minds in marketing and business today. Having made a career of inspiring others to be more innovative and think outside the box, Mr. Godin has a litany of memorable quotes about marketing and life. Here are 14 of our favorite Seth Godin quotes to inspire you to do more everyday:

1. "The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing."
2. "The largest enemy of change and leadership isn't a 'no,' it's a 'not yet.' 'Not yet' is the safest, easiest way to forestall change."
3. "Hope without a strategy doesn't generate leadership. Leadership comes when your hope and your optimism are matched with a concrete vision of the future and a way to get there."
4. "What could you measure? What would that cost? How fast could you get the results? If you can afford it, try it. If you measure it, it will improve."
5. "Remarkable visions and genuine insights are always met with resistance."
6. "Organizations that destroy the status quo win. Whatever the status quo is, changing it gives you the opportunity to be remarkable."
7. "If you don't have time to do it right, what makes you think you'll have time to do it over?"
8. "You can't fool all the people, not even most of the time. People, once unfooled, talk about the experience."
9. "Our job is to make change. Our job is to interact with them in a way that leaves them better than we found them, more able to get where they'd like to go."
10. "All the creativity books in the world aren't going to help you if you're unwilling to have lousy, lame and even dangerously bad ideas."
11. "You can spend your time on stage pleasing the heckler in the back, or you can devote it to the audience that came to hear you perform."
12. "The problem when working with a coach isn't that we don't know what to do. The real problem is that we don't want to change our mind."
13. "Go for the edges. Challenge yourself and your team to describe what those edges are, and then test which edge is most likely to deliver the marketing results you seek."
14. "The easiest thing is to react. The second easiest is to respond. But the hardest thing is to initiate."

Source: <https://www.insightsquared.com/>



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# Customers are Marketing

Written by **Laura Gibbs-Green**,  
Rockford Park District Public Relations Manager

**People Too**

The old saying, “the customer is always right” can also be referenced when implementing a customer-focused marketing strategy. At the Rockford Park District, customers are at the center of our organization's vision statement which states, “to be the best urban parks and recreation system in North America, as measured by national standards and the citizens we serve.” Every department is charged with having an advisory group to provide input, recommendations, support, and advocacy for district programs, services, and operations. For a number of years, the marketing department has utilized an advisory group of volunteers who provide input on publications, website design, and various other topics. This group has only met in person a few times, but the beauty of this team is that valuable feedback is provided via a private Facebook page. The Marketing Advisory Group is the district's “eyes and ears” throughout the year providing marketing feedback on what they are seeing from a customer's perspective.



...the district surveyed guests regarding the park's overall operation and included questions about attraction and amenity preferences. Customer comments were then used to determine operational changes for 2016.

### Canines & Clubs Welcomes Four-Legged Friends

Recently, the Rockford Park District launched a new initiative called Canines & Clubs and it was all thanks to customer feedback. Over the years, the district had received numerous requests for dogs to be allowed to join in on the golf course action. Very recently, a few avid golfers approached a Rockford Park District commissioner and expressed their desire to bring a four-legged friend to the course. "Dog-friendly golf courses are becoming more and more popular, so to better meet the changing needs of our community, we wanted to give this a try. We will test it out and survey golfers to determine if more pet friendly opportunities should be offered year-round at our golf courses," said Duncan Geddes, Director of Golf Operations.

On October 9, 2016 Elliot Golf Course welcomed a handful of dogs. The Canines & Clubs program was offered on two Sundays in October for tee times after 2 p.m. Multiple departments came together to make this initiative happen by developing standard operating procedures for dogs on the golf course. Regular golf course rates applied, plus a \$5 dog fee or free if the dog had a Canine Corners Dog Park tag.

### Elliot Golf Club's Canine & Clubs Guidelines:

- Dogs must be on a leash at all times during the round of golf
- Dog is sole responsibility of owner
- Players with dog must be 18 or older
- Dogs less than 6 months of age are prohibited
- One dog per golfer
- Leash length recommended - 6' to 8' feet
- Must show proof of current rabies vaccination
- If a dog is off leash or disrupting any other golfer with barking or other bad behavior, golf course staff may ask the owner and dog to leave
- Owners are responsible for picking up and disposing of their dog's waste
- No spiked, pinch, or choke-type collars
- Dogs may not ride in a golf cart
- Dogs are not allowed on practice areas or greens

Once all the processes were in place, the Rockford Park District's marketing department developed and implemented a marketing and promotional plan. The marketing mix included a news release,

newspaper ad, poster, website updates, social media promotion including a paid Facebook post boost, radio interview and an e-newsletter. During the winter months, golf staff will survey golf course users to determine if Canines & Clubs will be offered during the 2017 season.

The Rockford Park District operates five golf courses for devoted golfers in the area: Elliot, Ingersoll, Sandy Hollow, Aldeen and Sinnissippi. Golf has played a major role throughout the history of the Rockford Park District, dating back to 1912, when the district's first nine-hole golf course opened inside Sinnissippi Park. To ensure that people in the community continue to enjoy the game of golf for decades to come, the district has focused on rejuvenating the game through operational changes, along with new programs and partnerships. Canines & Clubs is just one more way to transform golf trying new and creative methods to grow the game as well as bringing new customers and revenue streams to golf operations.

### Customer Feedback Drives Waterpark Marketing Initiatives

In addition to Elliot Golf Course, Magic Waters Waterpark is another Rockford Park District facility that has utilized customer feedback to drive the marketing plan. Immediately after the Magic Waters 2015 season - the district surveyed guests regarding the park's overall operation and included questions about attraction and amenity preferences. Customer comments were then used to determine operational changes for 2016. Feedback, especially from season pass holders, overwhelmingly supported extending evening hours.

As a result, one of the main marketing messages for the 2016 season was the fact that the waterpark extended evening hours. In July through mid-August on "Wet Wednesdays," guests had the chance to enjoy the waterpark from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., and admission was only \$10. The marketing mix for Wet Wednesdays included: newspaper ads, radio and TV commercials, paid Facebook ads, a web slider, in-park messages and inclusion in the park brochure. The message was communicated to season pass holders and the general public on the district's website and in a news release.

## News Release Copy and Website Graphic

### Wet Wednesdays

You asked, and we listened! It is important to us that we are providing times for everyone to be able to come and enjoy the waterpark. New this year, we will be open until 8 pm on Wednesday nights from July 6 through August 10. Wet Wednesdays will provide guests the chance to enjoy the waterpark from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., and admission is just \$10



### Survey Says: AquaLoop for 2017

Currently, Magic Waters Waterpark is about to undergo a major renovation. Three years ago, the Double Dare Drop speed slides opened, dropping thrill seekers 75 feet in a matter of seconds. Magic

Waters Waterpark is committed to continuing to expand and improve the waterpark, and often evaluates and updates a multi-year master plan. This past April, the Rockford Park District began working with an aquatic design firm on potential renovation ideas for the area surrounding the Little Lagoon. Staff participated in concept design discussions, researched industry trends, and gathered feedback from advisory committee members, citizens, and through online surveys. In all, the district received 1,374 online surveys in just a few days.

“Citizen ideas and user feedback is very important, and helped determine what should be included in our master plan. Through our research, users ranked the AquaLoop as the number one waterslide they would like to see at Magic Waters Waterpark, so we are moving forward with bringing this next wave of fun for our guests to enjoy in 2017,” said Rockford Park District Executive Director Tim Dimke.

In addition to adding the AquaLoop, the district also plans to upgrade the Little Lagoon by completing various surface improvements and adding soft play water toys. “Obtaining customer feedback is critical to the success of our organization. We are continually seeking input from citizens, which often helps drive our marketing initiatives,” said Marketing and Communications Manager, Denise Delanty. As Magic Waters Waterpark gears up for the next wave of fun in 2017, the marketing department will once again turn to the public when the district holds a naming contest for the new attraction.

# WebXtra



## Mastering Strategic Park Signage: 10 Tips for Success

By Ashley Eccles, Management Analyst, Village of Hawthorn Woods;  
Amy Scholz, CPRP, CPSI, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation,  
Village of Hawthorn Woods

The Parks and Recreation Department at the Village of Hawthorn Woods implemented new signage at all of the community's 15 existing parks. Additionally, three new developments featuring playgrounds (part of developer land cash donations) are required to design and install signage based on the new uniformed standard. Pamela Newton, COO, and Brian Sullivan, Director of Parks and Recreation, facilitated the rebranding of outdated park signage that lacked identifiable graphics for the non-reader and were also inconsistent in letter font, color and design. There was no consistency for park signs found throughout the Hawthorn Woods community. “The signs in our parks lacked a sense of identification and did not generate immediate recognition that you had arrived at one of our parks. They were mismatched in shape, size, color, font, and graphics

and were lacking aesthetic appeal. In simple terms, they had no “Pop”. Our goal was to rebrand the non-operational signs and work towards transforming them into immediate marketing images that non-reading children and the general population could immediately recognize as municipal park properties. “We desperately needed to create park signs that would reflect the Hawthorn Woods brand,” said Newton.

### Read the Full Story Online

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



# Congratulations

## Illinois Association of Park Districts' 2016 Best of the Best Awards Gala Winners

IAPD's tenth annual Best of the Best Awards Gala was a night to remember, with more than 250 guests enjoying an evening of celebration and inspiration!

More than 50 awards were presented to board members, agencies, citizen volunteers, businesses and members of the media in recognition of their remarkable contributions to Illinois parks, recreation and conservation. Congratulations to all of the Best of the Best Awards Gala winners!

### Helen Doria Arts in the Park

**Hoffman Estates Park District – 1<sup>st</sup> Place**  
**Palatine Park District – 2<sup>nd</sup> Place**  
**Champaign Park District – 3<sup>rd</sup> Place**

### Top Journalist

**Champaign Park District** for  
Chambanamoms.com  
**McHenry County Conservation District** for  
Steve Sarley – Radio Host and Columnist

### Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Small Business

**Butterfield Park District** for Mark Gil, Owner –  
BP Wash-N-Go  
**Riverdale Park District** for Kiddie World  
Characters

### Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Mid-Sized Business

**Champaign Park District** for amdocs  
**Rockford Park District** for Rockford IceHogs

### Intergovernmental Cooperation

**Buffalo Grove Park District** with Kildeer-  
Countryside Elementary District 96  
**Park District of Oak Park** with Oak Park School  
District 97  
**St. Charles Park District** with Community Unit  
School District 303  
**Wheaton Park District** with the Winfield  
Park District  
**Wilmette Park District** with the Village of  
Wilmette

### Partnership

**Glennview Park District** with the Grove Heritage  
Association  
**McHenry County Conservation District** with the  
Equestrian Coalition of McHenry County  
**Plainfield Park District** with Starwood Retail  
Partners – Louis Joliet Mall  
**Rockford Park District** with Friends of Beyer

### Best Green Practices

**Byron Forest Preserve District**  
**Forest Preserves of Cook County**  
**Friends of Beyer Stadium**  
**Hoffman Estates Park District**  
**Oak Brook Park District**  
**Park District of Oak Park**

### Good Sportsmanship

**Waukegan Park District** for Hamaas Ibrahim

### Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year

**Forest Preserve District of Will County** for  
John Nerren  
**Lake Bluff Park District** for Jack and Kathy  
Sheppard  
**Lisle Park District** for Dan and Karen Burris  
**McHenry County Conservation District** for  
Brad Semel

### Board Member Service Anniversaries

#### 10 Years

**Philip Lewis**, Forest Preserve District of  
Kane County  
**John Karesh**, Westmont Park District  
**Brian Lichtenberger**, Wheeling Park District

#### 15 Years

**Maryfran H. Leno**, Arlington Heights Park District  
**Scott Jacobson**, Buffalo Grove Park District  
**Brenda Gramann**, Carol Stream Park District  
**Brian Sokolowski**, Carol Stream Park District  
**Chris Riley**, Decatur Park District  
**Gail Towers**, Dolton Park District  
**Ken Ryan**, Grayslake Community Park District  
**Jon Duesing**, Hanover Park Park District  
**Dave Hansen**, Itasca Park District  
**Todd Solbrig**, Lindenhurst Park District  
**James Stout**, Lindenhurst Park District  
**Lisa Behnke**, Lindenhurst Park District  
**Max Woods**, Lockport Township Park District  
**Timothy Doherty**, Mount Prospect Park District  
**P. Michael Jones**, Murphysboro Park District  
**Connie McChristian**, Riverdale Park District  
**Thomas E. Keating**, Streamwood Park District  
**Leonard P. Gassmann**, Veterans Park District  
**Mike Kurgan**, Wheeling Park District

#### 20 Years

**Steve Eckelberry**, Bartlett Park District  
**John Hoscheit**, Forest Preserve District of  
Kane County  
**Dr. Donna E. King**, Foss Park District  
**Kurt Gronau**, Lake Bluff Park District  
**Lance D. Murphy**, Medinah Park District

#### 25 Years

**Patricia Malloy**, Burr Ridge Park District  
**Sandra Morgan**, Hickory Hills Park District  
**Patrick Kosnick**, Hickory Hills Park District  
**Dean Parkman**, Lindenhurst Park District  
**James Louch Jr.**, Lockport Township Park  
District  
**Jay Cozza**, Palatine Park District  
**James L. Murphy**, River Trails Park District

#### 30 Years

**Alan Salisbury**, Kewanee Park District

#### 35 Years

**Craig Rakow**, Dundee Township Park District

#### 45 Years

**Donald L. Brewer**, Murphysboro Park District

#### 50 Years

**Edward A. Karasek**, Berwyn Park District

### Agency Anniversaries

#### 100 Years

**Waukegan Park District**

#### 50 Years

**Golf Maine Park District**  
**Lemont Park District**  
**Plainfield Park District**  
**Prospect Heights Park District**  
**Streamwood Park District**





CUSTOMER FOCUSED

# MARKETING

by **Chelsea Norton**, Director of Marketing and Communications, Champaign Park District

I subscribe to a lot of email newsletters. Mostly, I am looking for sales and discounts, but sometimes I do want to know what is going on with X company. Often, they will include my name in the subject line. "Chelsea, you NEED these jeans!" Or, "This perfume screams CHELSEA. Now 50% Off!" I assume they consider these creative subject lines to be customer-focused marketing. I mean, they *did* put my name in the email, after all. We must be friends! Real customer-focused marketing is more than a subject line and much more than an afterthought, something that you will discover in this article featuring four thoughtful steps on how to do customer-focused marketing in your organization.



## 1) Know Your Customer

It may sound a bit obvious, but when striving for customer-focused marketing, the first step is to really know your customer. Your marketing team has to clear away any preconceived notions of the typical "parks & recreation participant" and get to know who your current and desired customers are. Your demographics are going to be dependent on the product you are selling and you must cater your message and marketing channels to the user. You cannot run a Facebook ad to your entire listening audience for a Zombie Run. That type of event will have a specific demographic and not tuning in to them will waste your impressions and marketing dollars.

Getting to know your customer can take many forms. If the program or event has happened before, utilize previous surveys and staff experience to define the existing customer base. You can also assess your competition and examine who they are targeting through their graphics and messaging. Dig into your program and define its purpose, then ask yourself who benefits from this service.

Surveys may sound like old-hat, but they will give you priceless information. Evaluate your audience on a reoccurring basis (think: annually) to be sure you truly know who is listening on each channel. For example, Twitter followers may be a completely different demographic than Facebook or Instagram followers. The people showing up to your events may prefer getting information on the radio or through email newsletters. You'll never know until you ask, and you need to know your customer to gain any traction in a world inundated with media messages.

## 2) Go Where They Go – with a Targeted Message

Knowing your audience gives you the ability to direct your message more efficiently. You are no longer marketing based on assumptions about your consumers and will end up receiving a better return on investment because of it. You must now cater your message for this audience and choose your channels based on them as well.

Phrasing is everything. Are you using a language your audience understands? Are you talking *at* them or *about* them? Avoid trendy copy when outside of the "Millennial" or "Gen X" demographics, as it may not resonate. Conversely, don't over-formalize copy directed at a younger audience. More than anything, consider who you are reaching. It may sound fun to advertise your program as an opportunity to "get messy with paints," but is that the message parents want relayed to them? The toddlers who will be participating won't be reading your flyers, so be intentional in your copy.

Keep those intentional practices going when you decide where to direct your message. Just as you should avoid sending a Facebook campaign to everyone from here to Timbuktu, you should target channels specific to your audience. This affects what radio stations, television networks, social media platforms, and print ads you do. It also affects whether you need to visit a few community expos or create a "viral" video.

If you find that your audience responds in a big way to a certain marketing channel, do it again and again until the message is received loud and clear. Then, use that information to guide future campaigns that are targeted to the same group. Once again, it all comes back to knowing who your audience is and where they receive marketing messages. You can also use this information to guide who you approach for partnerships and sponsor asks.

## 3) Create Meaningful Partnerships

Practicing customer-focused marketing can lead your organization down some really interesting and exciting paths if you let it. You may find unique partnership opportunities after you get to know your audience.

The instinct for many, when they find that a certain channel is working, is to ask that organization or business to become a sponsor. This instinct exists for a reason and can be successful, but there are often opportunities left on the table when thinking in such defined terms. Forming a partnership, though serving similar purposes of a sponsorship, allows customer-focused marketing to really shine.

Partnerships are more than discounted advertising or monetary support. They are a true collaboration with an outside organization to bring added value to your program, event, and marketing efforts. Partnerships can help you market to your community in totally different ways, often with more passion and credibility.

An example would be the Champaign Park District's partnership with local "Mom Blog" Chambanamoms.com. The website shares information and resources to families living in the Champaign-Urbana area. It grew from a simple blog to a trusted and highly-trafficked media source. The community relies on the site's recommendations, that range from lists of area day camps and afterschool programs to parks, events, and much more.

Although the Champaign Park District had advertised with Chambanamoms.com for years, both parties knew that more could be done together. A partnership was formed that was mutually beneficial, one of the biggest factors to consider when working with an outside organization! Chambanamoms.com hosted special Park Play Dates for their readers throughout the summer, highlighting multiple Champaign parks, and CPD welcomed their traffic by giving out information on programming.

Champaign Park District and Chambanamoms.com also partner through site content. CPD information is included in posts regardless of advertising dollars spent, showing the dedication they have to sharing all information and being a truly representative resource to the community. Because of their support of the Champaign Park District, nearly 3,000 additional clicks have gone to the CPD website, making them a top referrer. The CPD, in turn, shares many of their articles related to district information on social media.

Organizations that believe in your mission can be truly invaluable. Work together to find new ways to support both sides and your customers will be the true beneficiaries.

## 4) Re-evaluate

This step is easy to overlook. Once you have found your customer, it feels comfortable to "keep on keepin' on." Just like any relationship, one should never make assumptions. People and trends change, and your organization doesn't want to be lagging behind assuming that people are still checking your MySpace page.

Continue to poll your audience to see what drives their purchasing decisions. Sending an annual survey to gauge the public's perception of your organization and communication tactics is not spam, but a method of reaching out that all can appreciate. People want to feel heard and get involved in their own unique ways. Forming these relationships, whether as removed as a survey or as connected as a focus group, will teach you more than you'd expect about your community and organization.

# Partnerships Matter

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-Oakbrook Terrace  
Park District

## PEOPLE & PLACES



### Kankakee Valley Park District Welcomes Dayna Heitz as the New Executive Director

After working with the executive search team from the Illinois Association of Park Districts, **Dayna Heitz** of Plainfield, IL, has been hired as the new executive director for the Kankakee Valley Park District. She began her career at the Butterfield Park District in Lombard, Illinois. She has a strong background in parks and recreation

and has much experience in financial management.

Dayna has spent the last 4 years at the Godley Park District as their executive director. She is looking forward to relocating to Kankakee to work with the Kankakee Valley Park District Board of Commissioners, staff, and community to provide outstanding recreational opportunities. Dayna is also planning on continuing to deliver a high quality park system throughout the community.



### Geneseo Park District Selects Andy Thurman as New Executive Director

After working extensively with the Illinois Association of Park Districts, the board of commissioners of the Geneseo Park District has hired **Andy Thurman** as its new executive director.

“The board is very excited to have Andy assume the responsibility of leading our district. He has the energy, vision and understanding of the tremendous

accomplishments that have been achieved and the level of excellence that the board expects,” stated Kathleen Repass, board president of the Geneseo Park District.

Andy has 10 years of park and recreation experience—serving the past two and a half years as the superintendent of recreation for the Geneseo Park District. He has strong skills in project management, recreation programming and budget preparation. He assisted with all aspects of the design and construction of the John and Carla Edwards Aquatic Center that opened in 2016. He looks forward to working with community leaders and providing innovative recreational opportunities to everyone.



### Arlington Heights Park District Announces the Retirement of Two Employees

**Cathy Puchalski, CPRP**, began her 38-year career at the Glenview Park District and Northern Suburban Special Recreation Association and has risen through the ranks of the Arlington Heights Park District since 1987. Today,

Cathy leaves the district as its superintendent of special facilities – and most recently oversaw the completion of two major capital improvement renovation projects: Arlington Lakes Golf Club and Heritage Tennis Club. Her leadership, organizational skills, and industry expertise contributed heavily to the district winning its second and third National Gold Medal Awards in 1992 and 2001. She is the recipient of numerous professional awards including: 2008-IPRA Professional of the Year Award; 2004 IPRA Chairman's Award; 2003 Western Illinois University Recreation Department Distinguished Alumni Award; 1998 IPRA, Meritorious Service Award; and she was the 1986 recipient of Western Illinois University's Distinguished Alumni Award. On the occasion of her retirement, the board of commissioners and employees, give public recognition to Cathy's outstanding contributions in the field and to the Arlington Heights Park District.



**Mary McGuire** has been a long-standing resident and familiar face in Arlington Heights since having begun her municipal career 33 years ago working for the Village of Arlington Heights. Mary joined the Arlington Heights Park District in 1998, and ascended from accounting supervisor to her current role as accounting manager for the department of finance and personnel. She's been instrumental in promoting staff

development and cross training as well as contributing expertise to all business and accounting operations at the district. Most recently, Mary spearheaded the district's implementation of its new financial software, new registration software and purchase card program. Her leadership, loyalty, dedication, knowledge and years of service has made her an extremely well-respected member of the park district team. Mary's love of books led her to create “Mary's Bookclub” bringing employees together over a good read. Her engaging personality, professionalism and strong work ethic has been recognized multiple times and so on the occasion of her retirement, the board of commissioners and employees, give public recognition to Mary's outstanding contributions to the Arlington Heights Park District.



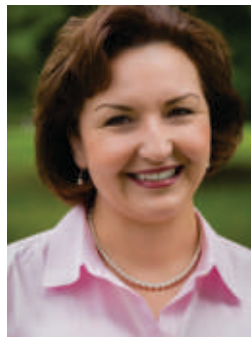
## Town of Normal Appoints Douglas Damery as New Parks and Recreation Director

**Douglas Damery**, who was the director of Washington Park District in Washington, Illinois, is the new director of the Town of Normal Parks and Recreation Department. Normal City Manager Mark Peterson announced the appointment of Douglas, culminating a rigorous ten-week national

search to fill a vacancy created when the previous director, Christopher Cotten, left Normal to take a similar position in Salina, Kansas.

Doug has been the Washington Park District director since May 2003. Prior to that, he served the Itasca Park District in Itasca, Illinois as its superintendent of recreation and operations. He previously served as a recreation coordinator for the City of Carmel, Indiana.

He has overseen many changes and improvements at the Washington Park District during a 13-year tenure there, including the rebuilding of many Park District facilities following the devastating tornado in Washington in November 2013. He is an active member of the Illinois Association of park districts, Illinois Parks and Recreation Association, and is past president and current board member of the Heart of Illinois Special Recreation Association.



## The Schaumburg Park District Welcomes Laila Bashia to Head its New Department of Human Resources

**Laila Bashia** joins Schaumburg after 12 years with the Glenview Park District where she served as HR generalist and was named HR manager in 2007. She holds a bachelor of arts from Marquette University in Milwaukee and a Masters of Human Resource Management from the Keller

Graduate School of Management.

"I'm very excited to be joining such a well-respected and dynamic organization," Laila said, adding she is looking forward to working on strategic HR objectives and making a positive contribution to Schaumburg's organizational culture.

An IPRA member since 2004, Laila was a presenter at the 2015 Soaring to New Heights conference, is a third level graduate of the Leadership Academy and regularly participates in HR roundtables of the Administration and Finance Committee. She also is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management and is a certified authorized agent with the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Laila, a Milwaukee native, resides in Elk Grove Village with her husband, Kyle and their two children.



## Washington Park District Names Brian Tibbs as Executive Director

The Washington Park District Board of Commissioners has announced that **Brian Tibbs** will be leading the agency as its next executive director. Brian is replacing Doug Damery, who recently accepted a position as the director for the Normal Parks and

Recreation Department.

Lorelei Cox, Washington Park District board president stated, "The board was saddened by Damery's departure but feels fortunate to have a qualified person on staff who will have a positive impact on the community as well as the park district and will continue the vision, work and projects started by Damery."

Brian had served as recreation manager for more than five years and is a graduate of Western Illinois University. He previously worked for the Fondulac and Macomb Park Districts.

Brian lives in Washington, with his wife, Erika, and daughter, Avery.



## Congratulations to the 2016 Illinois National Gold Medal Winner and Finalists!

The Illinois Association of Park Districts congratulates the Illinois winner of the National Recreation and Park Association's prestigious National Gold Medal Award:

**Class V (population less than 30,000)**  
**Frankfort Square Park District**

Congratulations also to the award finalists:

**Class III (population 75,001–150,000)**  
**Arlington Heights Park District**

**Class IV (population 30,000–75,000)**  
**Decatur Park District**

**Class V (population less than 30,000)**  
**Homewood-Flossmoor Park District**  
**Itasca Park District**

We also recognize **Stephen Eckelberry**, Bartlett Park District Commissioner, who is serving as Chair of the 2016-2017 NRPA Board of Directors!

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# IPARKS

## 25 Years of Member Service

1991-2016

In 1991, IPARKS was founded for the purpose of providing coverage tailored to the specific needs of Illinois park districts, forest preserves, conservation districts and special recreation agencies.

Endorsed by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), IPARKS' mission is to enhance our members' abilities to deliver outstanding park, recreation and conservation services by providing them with proactive and cost effective coverage for their risk management needs.

Today, with nearly 175 members and an impressive 98% retention of membership, IPARKS is one of the premier property & liability programs for park districts in the State of Illinois.

**It is with sincere appreciation and gratitude to our Members that in this, our 25th anniversary year, we extend to you a heartfelt *Thank You* for your ongoing commitment, loyalty and belief in IPARKS.**



### **Special Acknowledgement to IPARKS' 25-year "Founding" Members:**

- Carbondale Park District
- Clyde Park District
- Harrisburg Township Park District
- Hawthorne Park District
- Glen Ellyn Countryside Park District
- Memorial Park District
- Ridgeville Park District
- Roxana Community Park District
- Tri-State Park District
- Urbana Park District



# IPARKS

Illinois Parks Association Risk Services

[www.iparks.org](http://www.iparks.org)



## ***The Preferred Builder for Parks and Recreation***

*People are drawn to Leopardo by our distinctiveness — both who we are and what we do.*

*Industry partners prefer to work with us because we truly value collaboration and team work.*

*Clients seek us out as their trusted partner, saying we deliver more accurate and comprehensive preconstruction services, enabling better decision making and adding tremendous value.*

*Leopardo. Passionately pursuing construction excellence.*

