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## FROM THE **EDITOR**

#### Summer has arrived!

Where has 2022 gone? It feels like it is flying by! Luckily, we are headed into summer and I'm so excited to get outside and have fun at pools, splashpads and waterparks.



As the father of two, summer marks the start of watery fun and one of my favorite things is to go to a local pool and swim for hours on end. I love how park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies provide so many different opportunities for families to fully enjoy the warmer parts of the year.

I've found so much joy in giving my family different experiences through the summer. Whether it's going boating, swimming, playing at parks, walking along trails, it's your agencies that provide the endless supply of memory making moments we all enjoy.

What I love seeing is the innovations your agencies bring to aquatics. New equipment and facilities can transform an entire community and provide a vital benefit to residents. Not only are the health benefits great, but these locations offer so many job opportunities for young people. I can't tell you the number of times I've heard about some of our longstanding executive directors or commissioners starting their experience with a park district as a lifeguard. Every year, we are guiding more and more new faces into the world of parks and recreation.

This issue is focused on aquatics, with stories from two of our park districts. On page 12, Waukegan Park District explores how the decision to replace an outdoor pool led to an incredible transformation in "Creating a World Class Aquatics Facility." In "Meeting the Aquatic Needs of An Entire Community" on page 20, Bensenville Park District examines how providing accessibility can drastically improve the quality of life in the world of aquatics. Finally, we have an article from Ian Hill, "The Leadership in Unprecedented Times" on page 28 that looks at what a leader must possess to guide their team to success.

Don't let this summer pass by quickly without making sure you get outside and have a great time!

- Wayne Utterback, Editor

Cover image: Cassidy Reinhard, Vernon Hills Park District



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## GET ON BOARD



# Dive Into the Great Things that are Taking Place at the IAPD

Peter M. Murphy, Esq., CAE, IOM IAPD President and CEO

American anthropologist Loren Eiseley said, "If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water." As I read through this aquatics issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine, I believe that statement is true.

We all know that water is magic to the health and well-being of the human body. We can survive several weeks without food, but we can only survive days without water. Water also provides a platform for one of those magical non-impact forms of exercise, which can be critical for physical therapy and cardiac fitness. Finally, the tranquil quality of water has been proven to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

We are so very fortunate to be leaders in an industry that provides a diverse array of opportunities for people to enjoy the magic of water-related recreation.

The Illinois Association of Park Districts' member agencies operate more than 2,000 water-related recreational areas including indoor and outdoor swimming pools, water parks, boating and fishing areas, beaches, and splash pads. Thousands of Illinois residents will be keeping cool this summer thanks to your hard work and dedication to keep things running behind the scenes.

As always, IAPD has been working diligently to provide you with the tools that you need to keep things at your agencies afloat, not just in terms of aquatics, but in everything that you do.

We continue to share messages about the importance of park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies with members of the Illinois General Assembly.

Last month, we created an exciting new twist on our *Parks Day at the Capitol* by creating a virtual *Parks Day at the Capitol Spring Showcase*, featuring videos from member agencies highlighting their parks, programs, and facilities. IAPD invited legislators to dive into this *Parks Day* site and

take a virtual walk through some of the best local parks, forest preserves, and conservation areas in the country.

Thank you to all of our member agencies that participated in this outstanding project. Your incredible videos exceeded our expectations and provided legislators with an excellent view of the positive impact that we have on communities and citizens statewide.

Our *Leadership Institute* has been making a big splash among commissioners and professionals who want to enhance their personal growth and professional development. Presenter Ian Hill is sharing his wealth of knowledge acquired from running a multi-million-dollar business operation and spearheading life-changing community projects.

"Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."

Ryunosuke Satoro



The first three sessions of this power-packed program are available to IAPD members on-demand, and the final session will be a virtual presentation on July 14, so visit our website to benefit from this incredible educational series.

IAPD's *Summer Golf Tour* promises to submerge attendees in knowledge about golf operations and provide abundant opportunities to connect with colleagues, friends, and businesses that provide goods and services for your agency. It is true that some of the best meetings take place on the golf course, so please consider attending at least one of these great outings.

Saturday, August 20 is our 28<sup>th</sup> annual *Park District Conservation Day* at the Illinois State Fair. This is one of the largest public awareness events in the state for promoting park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies. It is a wonderful opportunity for program participants from member agencies to show off their dance, gymnastics, tumbling, theater, and music skills to thousands of fairgoers.

We also encourage commissioners, professionals, and staff to participate in this exciting day by serving as volunteers. Performers and volunteers receive complimentary parking and admission to the Illinois State Fair along with a commemorative *Park District Conservation Day* t-shirt. Discounted hotel rooms are available, so be sure to add Springfield to your list of summer destinations!

IAPD's *Best of the Best Awards Gala*, our most inspiring event of the year, is coming to Wheeling Park District's beautiful Chevy Chase Country Club the evening of Friday, October 14.

Board member and agency anniversaries are recognized during this motivational evening along with outstanding partnerships, intergovernmental agreements, relationships with businesses, citizen volunteers, and other endeavors that create costsaving benefits for park, recreation, and conservation agencies and the citizens of Illinois.

Please give some thought to submitting nominations for one or more of these great awards. Award-winning agencies receive valuable recognition from their local media, which instills an enormous sense of community pride.

As you can see, IAPD has waves of great programs and events coming your way, each of which is designed to provide you with opportunities to stay connected with colleagues in the field, learn timely leadership techniques, hone your professional skills, and celebrate the collective pride we have in staying among the nation's best provider of parks, recreation, and conservation.

Thank you for your commitment to stay connected with IAPD. Your involvement creates an amazing ripple effect of success and demonstrates that magic is not only found in water, but in the hearts of each of you who exude the spirit of parks and recreation.

## **2022 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## **EVENTS & EDUCATION**

Aug. 20



Park District Conservation Day State Fairgrounds Springfield, IL

Oct. 14



Best of the Best Awards Gala Chevy Chase Country Club Wheeling Park District

**Sept 20-22** 

NRPA Congress & Exposition Phoenix, AZ

Nov. 3



Legal Symposium Hyatt Lodge/ Conference Center Oak Brook, IL

Jan. 26-28



IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference Hyatt Regency,

The IAPD Loadorship Institute

Thursday, July 14, 2022 **Webinar #3:** 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

## EYE ON THE **PROFESSION**

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



## The Great Opportunity

By Barbara Arango, CAE IPRA Executive Director

We're all feeling it – the Great Resignation has hit us hard over the past couple of years. And now we're dealing with the Great Reshuffle. Workforce issues are universal these days. Between the lingering effects of COVID, the questioning of traditional job requirements, and the overarching search for purpose and meaning in one's career, agencies need to get creative to fill open positions.

IPRA has heard this issue come up time and again when talking to members. As programming ramps up, agencies are scrambling to find staff to support them. The fact that the IPRA career center is the busiest it has ever been underscores the extent of the crisis. We understand that this is a problem our members need support addressing. We'd like to help.

As we look a little closer, there are two separate facets to this problem. Filling part-time, especially seasonal, openings versus filling full-time positions. Let's look at each in turn.

The pandemic has caused many retirees and students to leave the workforce, and many are hesitant to return. Park, recreation, and conservation agencies that rely heavily on students to fill seasonal jobs will need to capitalize on their culture and benefits to successfully recruit this year. The "fun" aspect of Parks and Recreation can be a major selling point to students who are looking for seasonal work. Perks including free use of facilities are another benefit that retail and food-service jobs can't offer. And remember that your current staff are your best recruiters for new employees. Even past seasonal workers may be able to convince younger siblings or friends to join your team. But this does require a conscious effort to build a great working environment which will keep your current team happy and make them want to help you recruit.

Filling full time positions has been a different challenge. As the Great Reshuffle implies, most of the people leaving these positions are not leaving the workforce altogether, but rather just moving to a new organization. This may be a *Great Opportunity* for our industry to attract individuals disillusioned with Corporate America and looking for purpose and meaning in their professional lives. A recent article in Association Forum's Magazine outlines this phenomenon quite well. "Nearly two-thirds of U.S. employees say that COVID-19 has caused them to reflect on their purpose in life, McKinsey research found, and for almost half of them that means the kind of work they do. With so many associations being purpose-driven, now is the time to highlight that potential for doing good and making a difference in the world."

Of course, we all know what an amazing industry we are in – we just need to find ways to spread the word. With little wiggle room when it comes to salaries, start highlighting the intrinsic benefits instead. Step one is defining the message. Park districts, recreation departments, special recreation associations (SRAs), forest preserves, and conservation districts are all integral parts of our community. You provide healthy spaces and beneficial programs to promote wellness to our citizens. From playgrounds to theaters to zoos to river boats, our Illinois agencies provide places for the people in our communities to meet, learn and have fun. All the things our world needs so desperately right now.

Getting the message out there is the next step. When posting new positions, make sure you are focusing on this message as a way to inspire candidates. Everyone wants to make a difference. Show them that they can do just that as a member of your team. This also relates to your culture. Go ahead and brag about how dedicated (and fun) your team is. Make candidates see that your unique working environment can make all the difference. You can also focus on the perks mentioned above. Free pool passes? Tee times?

Discounts for family members? These are things that people might not even know they want until they hear about them.

As your professional association, we want to find more ways to help. Our career center is bustling with activity and can be an excellent way to promote open positions. We ran a free posting special the first two weeks of April and had 70 agencies participate with 208 jobs posted. Hopefully this was one tangible way we have been able to help during this challenging time. Additionally, our Education Roadshow Board of Regents partnered with the ORPR Department in Champaign-Urbana to develop and administer a survey on recruitment and retention challenges and strategies. The results of that survey were presented in a Learning Lab on April 27. If you did not get a chance to attend, you can access the recording on IPRAConnect. The Administration & Finance Section also hosted a roundtable back in February to discuss navigating hiring incentives and keeping quality staff in a desperate job market. These events provide members with opportunities to learn from each other and discover new ideas. Keep an eye out for future events on our website.

Another area where we have increased participation is with colleges and job fairs. IPRA will continue to promote the industry with students and provide resources for them as they enter the field. We also hope to expand our participation in job fairs in order to help our members connect with candidates.

There are some indications that the outlook is improving, albeit slowly. But in the meantime, IPRA will continue to support our members in as many ways as possible. We encourage you to take advantage of the various programs available and reach out with ideas for additional services we can provide. As a parting thought, don't forget to take care of current employees. Provide them with the support they need to grow in their own professional lives. That may mean providing them continuing education, allowing them to attend IPRA section events, encouraging them to develop their leadership skills as association volunteers or sending them to conference. Supporting a culture of learning and continuous improvement can go a long way toward a happy staff!

## **IPRA Upcoming Events**

#### **Unplug Illinois Day** July 9, 2022

Locations throughout Illinois We encourage people throughout Illinois to ditch their electronic devices and "unplug" to enjoy everything that their local park, recreation and conservation agencies have to offer. A list of Unplug Illinois Day events can be found here: community-

### **Tools of Impact - Beyond Programs and Surveys** July 13 & 21, 2022 Webinar

Presented by Lydie Gutfeld, Recreation & Community Services Manager for the City of Mission Viejo. This session will work to help identify key leadership skills

that can help translate into positive connections through impact which can be connected to improving staff team performance and creating a stronger community.

#### **Delegating Effectively** August 10 & 18, 2022 Webinar

Presented by Annie Frisoli, CEO of Creating Community, LLC. Delegating effectively focuses on creating an environment based on trust and establishing a rapport with colleagues to delegate successfully. Participants will learn tools to engage and empower people to resolve their problems and implement spontaneous delegation to protect discretionary time.

Visit ILipra.org for more information and to register.



## **Diversity Education** Institute

SEPTEMBER 9, 2022 GLENVIEW PARK DISTRICT SAVE THE DATE



## STATEHOUSE INSIDER

ISSUES & INSIGHTS FROM THE LEGAL/LEGISLATIVE SCENE



# IAPD Enjoys Another Highly Successful Spring Session

Jason Anselment General Counsel

The General Assembly recently concluded a very active spring session with an accelerated legislative calendar that included an April 8 adjournment date almost two months ahead of the typical schedule. Despite this condensed timeframe, the actual amount of legislative activity was not diminished. In fact, almost 3,000 of the 9,958 bills that were introduced in the  $102^{nd}$  General Assembly were filed this year along with almost 1,200 amendments. IAPD reviewed each of these to determine their impact on the IAPD membership and closely tracked 1,110 bills during the 14-week session.

While the faster pace, pandemic restrictions, and hybrid committee hearings presented numerous challenges, IAPD and its member agencies enjoyed another outstanding year of success at the Capitol.

## Two Additional IAPD Platform Bills Signed into Law

All three of IAPD's original platform bills were signed into law last year during the first year of the 102<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly. So, this year we added two more bills to the legislative platform. Each of these bills was also approved by both chambers during the Spring Session and has already been signed into law by the Governor.

SB 3050 / Public Act 102-0999 (Castro, C. / Hurley, F.) increases the bid limit under the Park District Code from \$25,000 to \$30,000. This change is effective immediately and only applies to park districts because the bid limit similarly increased for forest preserve districts and conservation districts on June 1, 2022, pursuant to HB 3160 / Public Act 102-0460.

The second IAPD Platform bill was originally introduced as **HB 4348 (West, M., II / Wilcox, C.)** and provides eligibility for law enforcement camera grants to those park districts, forest preserve districts, and conservation districts that maintain law enforcement agencies.

After passing the House earlier in the session, **HB 4348** stalled in the Senate. IAPD worked diligently behind the scenes to get this language incorporated into the 544-page Budget Implementation Bill or "BIMP." The BIMP, **HB 4700** /

Public Act 102-0699 (Harris, G. / Sims, E., Jr.), is an omnibus bill that contains the statutory changes that are necessary to implement the state budget.

These IAPD Platform initiatives, along with the three IAPD Platform bills that were signed into law last year during the first year of the 102nd General Assembly, will help agencies in their day-to-day operations by offering additional flexibility, creating new funding opportunities, and earning additional revenue.

## **Historic Grant Funding**

This year's state budget, **HB 900 / Public Act 102-0698** (Welch, E. / Sims, E., Jr.), contains a historic \$56 million appropriation for new OSLAD grants -- twice the amount of the current level of funding!

In recent years, IAPD members have spent countless hours advocating in support of OSLAD to avoid special fund sweeps, for budget appropriations, and to obtain the release of funds. This year's substantial increase in OSLAD matching grants is the culmination of these efforts.

Members of the General Assembly, Legislative Leadership, and Governor Pritzker also deserve much credit for recognizing that OSLAD is an essential investment of dedicated funds that will provide a substantial return to the State and that this funding is needed now more than ever.

The 3,447-page budget bill also contains the necessary reappropriations for all existing OSLAD, PARC and Public Museum grants as well as member initiative project funding from the 2019 Rebuild Illinois long-range capital plan.

### **Local Revenues Protected**

The issue of property taxes continued to be a significant topic of discussion at the Capitol, and IAPD remained vigilant throughout the Spring Session with regard to legislation that proposed to freeze or substantially diminish property tax revenues. This included our participation in stakeholder meetings and as one of only two organizations testifying in opposition to **HB 436 (Walker, M.)**, which would have significantly diminished local revenues by

eliminating 50% of the current exemption for new property from the limiting rate calculation under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL).

Ultimately, neither HB 436 (Walker, M.) nor any of the bills that would have reduced available property tax revenues moved forward. Instead, the state is funding property tax relief from its general revenues as part of a property tax rebate program that is outlined with other tax changes in SB 157 / Public Act 102-0700 (Hastings, M. / Zalewski, M.).

One piece of property tax legislation that contains numerous changes to the Property Tax Code was approved by both the House and Senate during the final days of session. SB 1975 / Public Act 102-0895 (Martwick, B. / Kifowit, S.) contains language that is intended to provide flexibility in the tax levy process to park districts, library districts, community college districts, and some school districts that are subject to PTELL by providing an option for these taxing bodies to forgo increasing their annual tax levy by the CPI growth without losing the opportunity to capture that growth forever subject to certain restrictions such as a 3-year recapture limitation and a 5% cap on the increase over the tax extension in the prior year.

SB 1975 / Public Act 102-0895 also contains changes that impact the application process for existing exemptions like those for persons with disabilities. Other changes increase the general homestead and senior citizens exemptions in the Collar Counties, but because the impacted taxing districts are all subject to the PTELL, the effect of these changes simply shifts the tax burden to other property owners and should not reduce the amount of available funding to an individual taxing district.

#### Park District Model Secured

If signed by the Governor, SB 3789 (Morrison, J. / Carroll, J.) will establish the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act and require most units of local government to form a committee to study local efficiencies within one year, and at least once every 10 years thereafter. A written report will need to be filed with the county that includes recommendations regarding efficiencies and increased accountability within 18 months after the formation of the committee.

When this legislation was originally introduced last year as HB 162 (Keicher, J. / Morrison, J.), it was primarily focused on local government consolidation, would have allowed counties to appoint committee members, and would have also imposed many burdens and other costs on local governments, including a mandatory public survey of at least 10% of residents, as part of its unfunded mandates.

IAPD worked with the sponsor and another stakeholder organization to make several important changes to alleviate the most concerning portions of the bill and to shift focus from consolidation to efficiency. While the bill is still a mandate in that it requires a study and report every 10

years, it now gives park districts, forest preserve districts and conservation districts the ability to appoint the membership and provides an opportunity for these agencies to demonstrate the countless ways in which they efficiently deliver park, recreation, and conservation programs, facilities, and services to their residents.

If signed into law, IAPD will work with the Joint Legislative Committee to develop resources that member park districts, forest preserve districts, and conservation districts can use to formulate this report.

## **Unfunded Mandates Avoided**

As is the case every session, we also worked behind the scenes on numerous other bills that would have negatively impacted IAPD member agencies by imposing costly unfunded mandates, exposing agencies to potential liability, and/or attacking local control. Fortunately, most of those measures did not move forward this spring.

One bill that was approved by both chambers is **HB 4165** / Public Act 102-1036 (Cassidy, K. / Peters, R.), which creates the Lake Michigan Rescue Equipment Act and requires park districts and other units of local government that own a pier or drop-off on the Lake Michigan shoreline to install public rescue equipment, including, at a minimum, ring life buovs.

Although this legislation affects just a handful of IAPD members, IAPD was actively engaged in discussions with the House sponsor for many weeks to protect those members by ensuring that the proposed mandates can be practically implemented. As a result of our efforts, we were able to obtain several important clarifications and alleviate many of the concerns relating to the practicality and potential implementation costs that were contained in the original bill.

### **Future Exposure to Liability Averted**

A bill that IAPD supported was also approved by both chambers and is awaiting the Governor's signature as this issue goes to press. If signed by the Governor, SB 3467 (Johnson, A. / Didech, D.) will offer protection to park districts, forest preserve districts, conservation districts. and recreation departments from exposure to some liability when leasing property from a public utility. The legislation provides that lease provisions which require these local government agencies to indemnify or hold harmless a public utility against liability resulting from that public utility's own negligence are against public policy, unenforceable, and void.

The bills discussed above are only a small sample of the hundreds of bills that IAPD closely tracked this Spring Session. A complete list of these bills is available through IAPD's Bill Tracker on the IAPD website at ILparks.org. The bill status is updated as the Governor takes action on bills that were approved by both chambers.



entertainment destination now known as Corrine J. Rose Park. How did we get to this point? Below are the factors that led to the park's spectacular transformation.

For years, Howard E. Ganster Pool was the only public swimming pool in Waukegan, a community of nearly 90,000 residents. Built in 1956, the outdoor pool had exceeded its expected lifespan and the district needed a plan to move forward. The pool required extensive and costly annual repairs. Renovating and updating the diving well and bathhouse to meet today's standards and codes was nearly impossible, and very expensive. The Waukegan Park District prides itself in building world class facilities and a new pool would have to be a special addition.

swim lessons, water aerobics group exercise classes and related programs were permanently moved from the outdoor pool to the indoor facility where weather was not a factor in day-to-day operations.

Planning to replace the outdoor pool began in 2017. An architectural firm was hired to design the outdoor aguatic center. Their first task was to develop a cost estimate for bonding the pool's replacement. Bonding was successful, and as the district began to move forward with the development phase, the projected costs had increased by a staggering \$2.7 million. The district halted the project in early 2018. After multiple community meetings and research, an alternate plan was presented to the board of commissioners.



The revised plan proposed installing a dramatic new playground, three story water tower, slides, large splash pad and a bathhouse with concessions. Along with adding picnic shelters, grills, exercise equipment, walking paths, updated parking, replacing the bocce ball courts, and renovating the recreation center, all while demolishing the administrative building to create additional space for the aquatic facility and add more open green space. Building a splash pad instead of a pool allowed for greater flexibility in operating logistics, more operating days and reduced operational costs compared to an outdoor pool. The new plan reflected the community's need for a destination park and the SplashZone was the component to tie everything together.







## **Landscape Architecture and Planning**

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The second component, the SplashZone, opened in June 2021. It includes a three story Splashtacular structure. There is a 500-gallon dump bucket, four run-out slides, two connected kiddie slides and many water-play features throughout the structure. Immediately adjacent to the splash tower is a separate splash pad area that can be operated independently at no cost to residents or nonresidents. The facility is called the SplashZone to differentiate it from a pool, although two lifeguards are on duty during operating hours.

Water pumps through the SplashZone at 3,000 gallons per minute. The facility utilizes a recirculating pump system that pushes water through a state-of-the-art Filtrex filter system before being chlorinated. This allows us to collect as much runoff water as possible in the 40,000-gallon surge tank before it is heated and returned to the tower.

The SplashZone includes a bathhouse with locker rooms, showers, restrooms, concession stand, guard office and cashier booth. There are also two restrooms on the west side of the building that services the whole park. Plenty of chaise lounges, tables and chairs are available for families to gather inside the facility. There are shade sails and designated areas for rentals. Concessions are run by a local contractor and accessible to both park and SplashZone patrons.

The SplashZone was free to residents of the Waukegan Park District for its inaugural year, and non-residents were charged a daily rate of \$6 for youth and \$10 for adults. For 2022, a minimal fee will be charged to recover a portion of the operating cost. The facility is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, weather dependent. Swimsuits are required in the splash tower section. The facility hosts monthly themed family nights, field trips, and internal and external camps throughout the summer.



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Sunburst Bay Aquatic Center is part of the Cary Park District. Project Completion Date: June 2022

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Integrated Project Delivery

Project Management







The final piece to completing the park was a percussion playground, opened in late summer of 2021. The percussion playground was financed by a Waukegan Parks Foundation capital campaign. The percussion playground, made by Percussion Play, features nine outdoor musical instruments, including drums, chimes, marimbas, and xylophones. This unique addition to the park helps attract a more diverse population.

The park is located at the corner of two major intersections in the heart of the city. With the multicolored three-story playground and SplashZone equipment, the park's transformation is on display for the entire community. Families gather on the new playground, fitness equipment, and water structures. On weekends, hundreds of children enjoy the challenges of the obstacle course and play equipment. Parents, along with their families, occupy shelters and green space throughout the park. The SplashZone averaged 145 in weekday attendance and around 250 on weekends in its first year.

Corrine J. Rose Park benefits the community in many ways through different recreational structures. Not only is this a sought-after park for the residents, but many also travel to Waukegan to visit the SplashZone. This project was a remarkable success and well managed by staff and the Board of Commissioners from start to finish. The Waukegan Park District looks forward to the residents it can serve through the park that has so many opportunities for structured and organic play, family time, events, and many other possibilities.

# Design, Supply, and Installation of Park and Recreation Structures



Corrine J. Rose Park - Waukegan, IL



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# Meeting the aquatic needs of an entire community

By Paul Palian, Superintendent of Marketing & Communications, Bensenville Park District

According to the Center for Disease Control, half of all adults with disabilities do not get any aerobic physical activity. Fortunately, swimming is an activity that can be enjoyed by most everyone if the facility is accessible. Because water activities like swimming often reduce or eradicate mobility issues once in the water, swimming can also be a fun and relaxing way to exercise.





The Bensenville Park District strongly believes in the concept of developing a park system for everyone. Although many of the features of its water park and other facilities are accessible to all, the district also realized that most of its parks and facilities were completed before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted in 1992, and thus were not built with these standards in mind.

Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association (NEDSRA) Recreation Supervisor Sean Fritsch identifies several things that make the Bensenville Water Park & Splash Pad accessible, including the main entrance, which has a ramp which is easy for power chair accessibility.

There are handrails and textured, non-skid surfaces located throughout the water park. There is plenty of space on the pool deck to walk or move safely, whether walking or using a mobility device.

The facility's Splash! chair lift/hoist meets the 2010 standards, providing a safe and reliable means to ensure guests can continue to gain access to their pool, especially during retirement years. The 344-degree rotation ensures a safe transfer for those up to 400 lbs. The zero depth is very helpful, especially for children who are just getting used to the water.

Many people need assistance getting in and out of a pool as stairs or depth can be dangerous. Staff are sufficiently trained to help in their operation. At the Bensenville Water Park & Splash Pad, inclusion services also include swimming instructions simplified for persons with cognitive disabilities.

#### **EVOLVING AND ADAPTING**

Several years following the Department of Justice's release of the 2010 Standards of Accessible Design, the district embarked on an audit of each of its facilities. Hoffman Estates-based WT Group was selected to conduct the audit and to develop an ADA Transition Plan. The plan was completed in 2020 and approved by the district's board of commissioners. The report includes recommendations that meet federal and state requirements and incorporate smart practices.

The transition plan contains a phased approach to retrofits and outlines a step-by-step approach to integrate these into capital plans. Several specific water park improvements include renovation to doors, locker rooms and showers, installation of accessible hardware and lower service counters at concession stands. These recommendations are key to the Bensenville Park District 2.0 capital plan.

The results have been positive. A meeting was held in October 2020 to engage the community in these matters and was attended by many residents. The district also developed "Access Bensenville," its newsletter for a community in motion, to communicate information and resources related to accessibility. The district is planning a grand opening for its new, state-of-the-art playground for all at Breiter-Palm Park in June 2022. The new playground will feature abundant play components that promote sensory, motor, cognitive, and social-emotional skills, as well as strength.

There is still much to be done at the water park and throughout the district, but it is an important journey to take. For more information, visit BvilleParks.org/ada.

Swimming offers numerous benefits for those of all abilities. It helps differently-abled children feel more connected to others as well as gain independence while increasing physical strength and stamina without putting undue stress on the body. The following are specific benefits of swimming:

• **Builds Muscle and Bone Mass** - A 2017 article in the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD) blog describes swimming as "an aerobic exercise that tones the whole body and increases muscle strength and definition." Swimming strengthens about every muscle group in the body, and according to research published in the Journal of Applied Physiology, it also builds bone mass.

#### • Alleviates Pressure on Joints and Muscles -

Being in the water is often described as being weightless. The water supports your body and reduces the effects of gravity. People with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, or muscular dystrophy can move easier in the water due to this antigravity effect. Water yoga helps with balance, flexibility, and coordination, and low-impact aquatic activities provide aerobic and strength training without pressure on joints, says WebMD.com.

#### • Improves Heart and Lung Health -

BraunAbility.com lists improving heart health among the top seven benefits of swimming: "Aerobic activities strengthen your heart. As your heart becomes larger and stronger, it's better able to pump blood, thereby increasing circulation."

- **Reduces Pain** Studies show that swimming reduces pain for people with multiple sclerosis (MS), arthritis and other disorders that cause chronic pain. Swimmers with these conditions can "stretch and strengthen weakened arms and legs within their full range of motion," according to a 2000 article in WebMD. "While standing in a pool, they can also use the weight of water to help correct problems in gait and balance with less effort than on land."
- Increased self-confidence and independence -

Learning to swim or otherwise enjoy water can increase the self-confidence of someone with a disability. According to researchers in public health publication Salud Pública de México (2010), being involved in recreational and competitive sports such as swimming can greatly increase their independence, which, in turn, improves self-confidence,

leading to improved quality of life. Enjoying water or swimming gives an individual with a disability something he or she may excel in and this will make it easier to imagine independence in other areas.

- Helps Maintain a Healthy Weight Swimming burns many calories, making it a terrific treatment for obesity. According to Swimming.org, one can burn between 200 and 400 calories in a half hour. The best strokes for weight loss are breaststroke (200 calories), backstroke (250 calories), freestyle (300 calories) and butterfly (400 calories).
- Improves Motor Skills and Coordination -Swimmers of all ages experience a boost to their brain development due to kicking legs and moving arms at the same time, which results in a boost in motor skills. Instructors at Premier Aquatics say swimming also helps children with disabilities work on balance and coordination in addition to gross motor skills.

## • Improves Mental Health and Social Wellbeing

- Research shows that swimming improves the symptoms of anxiety and depression, reduces stress and fatigue and builds confidence. Exercise releases endorphins and serotonin, which improve mood. With a regular swimming regimen, those chemicals can impact everything from depression to anxiety. BraunAbility notes those who learn to swim and regularly go to the pool are "sure to meet other people with disabilities who enjoy similar activities." Participating in a swimming class with specials needs also provides valuable socialization opportunities. Interacting with the instructor can teach valuable social skills as well, according to B&C Aquatics. Those interactions can foster trust, which can be a powerful tool for helping children overcome their disabilities.





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We're excited to announce that Ameren Illinois offers an **EARLY COMPLETION BONUS** for energy efficiency projects completed between now and September 2022. Lighting, HVAC, and many custom projects for your community's particular needs may be eligible for our cash incentives — and when you finish your energy efficiency project early, you can add additional money to your budget!

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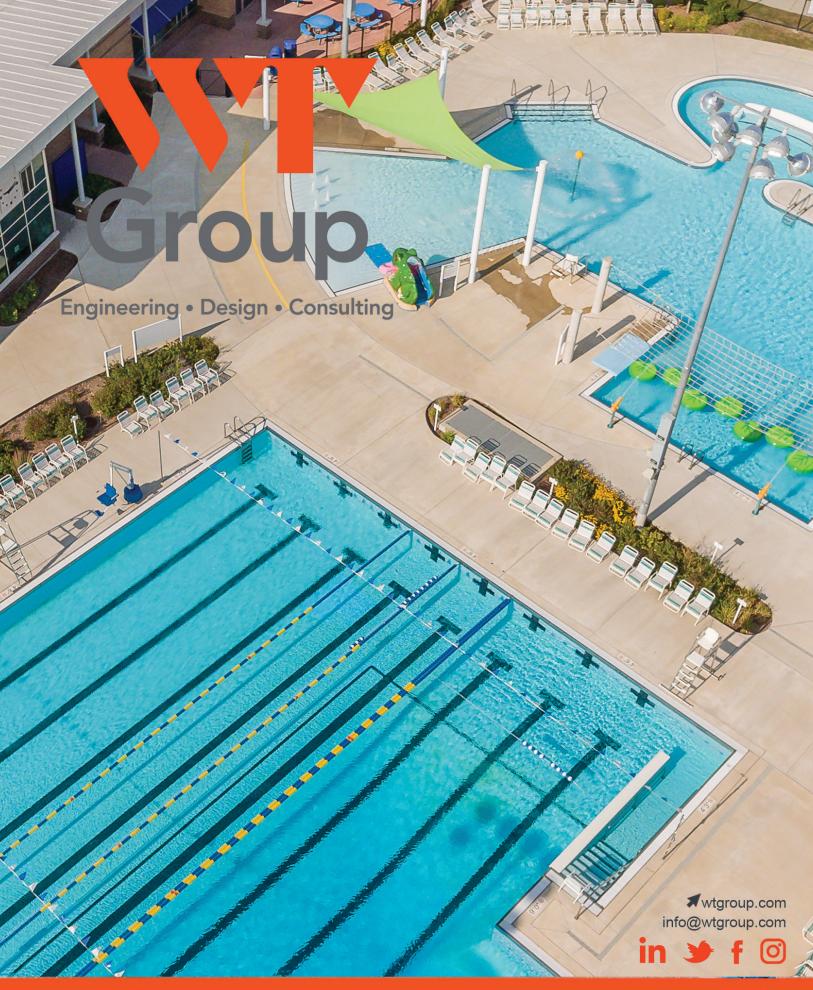






Still, access for those of all abilities needs to be a priority for park districts that have an aquatics program. The U.S. Department of Justice offered the following accessibility considerations for public entities such as park districts as part of its 2010 Standards for Accessible Design:

- How to provide swimming programs in the most integrated setting appropriate;
- The ways in which people participate in the programs (e.g., individually, in families, in youth groups);
- Locations where the programs are offered;
- What programs are offered at each pool and to which constituencies (e.g., family swims, children's swimming lessons, older adult exercise classes, high school swim meets);
- · Which pools are accessible and to what extent; and
- Level of dispersion of the accessible locations and convenience to reach them (e.g., one pool in each quadrant of the town, all on accessible mass transit).



Since 1971, the WT Group has been passionate about providing engineering, design and consulting solutions for the communities in which we live and work. We are committed to providing the strategies necessary to make recreation and public facilities safe, compliant and accessible to all members of the community.

# Saving Energy is Like a Walk in the Park

By embracing energy efficiency, your park district can lower its energy bills, freeing up additional funds to provide even better recreational experiences for the community. Moreover, investment in energy efficiency demonstrates leadership on sustainability issues, helping ensure outdoor spaces are beautiful and usable for future generations.

The ComEd Energy Efficiency Program offers discounts, incentives and services for parks and recreation organizations to upgrade indoor and outdoor lighting, modernize heating and cooling systems, install energy management technology, and implement other energy efficiency opportunities.

## Uncover Savings Opportunities with FREE Facility Assessments

ComEd offers FREE facility assessments to help your park district identify energy-saving opportunities, whether it's lighting, HVAC systems, chillers or motors. A ComEd energy engineer will spend approximately two hours with you at your facility to identify energy-efficiency opportunities and provide a report detailing recommended energy efficiency projects, many with short turnaround times and minimal disruption. Each recommendation includes estimated cost and projected ROI.

Smaller park district facilities—those with under 400 kW peak demand—are eligible for the Small Business offering.

Getting started is easy!
Simply complete
the business facility
assessment request form
(scan QR code), or call
1-855-433-2700. Once we
receive your request, a
ComEd representative will
contact you to schedule
your assessment.





## **Enhanced LED Lighting** and Controls

From gymnasiums and swimming pools to tennis courts and ballfields, park district participants rely on bright lighting for their safety and enjoyment. Energy-efficient LED fixtures direct daylight-quality light only where it is wanted, eliminating negative impacts on surrounding areas and neighbors. LEDs instantly turn on to full brightness as soon as light is needed. ComEd provides incentives for installation of LEDs, as well as occupancy sensors, daylight controls and timers, helping make sure areas are well lit whenever they need to be—and aren't wasting energy when they don't.

All public sector customers, including park district facilities, are eligible for instant discounts on commercial-grade lighting and exit sign products. Save instantly at the time of purchase, with no paperwork necessary!

## Enhance Indoor Comfort with HVAC Upgrades

Heating, ventilation and cooling accounts for nearly a third of energy use in a typical recreation facility. ComEd offers incentives and technical assistance to tune-up or replace your inefficient HVAC system, saving money while improving the comfort of guests. Consider installing air side economizers—also incentivized— which take in and filter outside air to cool the building more efficiently.

Each HVAC unit tune-up, conducted by a trained ComEd Service Provider, includes a thorough inspection and adjustment of the unit's thermostat, economizer, refrigerant charge, coils and belts for optimal performance. Incentives are also available for HVAC system component upgrades like water and air-cooled chillers, and energy management systems.



## Money-Saving Solutions for Pools and Aquatic Centers

Did you know that ComEd can help make your swimming pools and aquatic centers more energy efficient? Reduce the energy use of water pumps by installing variable speed drives, which continually alter the motor speed to meet actual demand. Likewise, demand-controlled ventilation modulates airflow throughout the aquatic center, easing the stress on HVAC systems.



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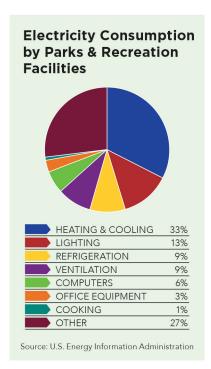
## Want More Information?

Visit www.ComEd.com/IPRA, call 1-855-433-2700, or email <u>BusinessEE@ComEd.com</u> to speak with a ComEd Energy Efficiency Program representative.



COMED IS A PROUD MEMBER OF ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PARK DISTRICTS AND ILLINOIS PARK AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION.





## Technical Assistance, Incentives on New Construction Projects

Is your park district planning a major renovation or new construction project? The ComEd Energy Efficiency Program provides comprehensive building modeling services at no cost to you. We will work with your design team to maximize savings and incentives to help your new construction project exceed Illinois Energy Conservation Code requirements.

New developments and major renovations of at least 5,000 sq. ft. are eligible. Be sure to involve the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program team as soon as possible—the earlier we are engaged in the design process, the higher the incentive values and the greater the long-term savings!

## ComEd Energy Savings Case Study: Salt Creek Rural Park District

The Salt Creek Rural Park District, which serves portions of Arlington Heights, Palatine and Rolling Meadows, features a nine-hole golf course, aquatic driving range, fishing lake and walking path. Park district facilities had exterior lighting that was dim and required frequent bulb changes. Not only was this a strain on maintenance resources, it also created potential safety hazards. The park district decided to make lighting improvements and turned to the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program for incentives to make the project more affordable.

#### The Solution

The ComEd team worked with Chris Paisley, superintendent of parks and golf, and his staff to identify money-saving opportunities with LED lighting upgrades at Twin Lakes Golf Course and Recreation Area. Additionally, the park district took advantage of ComEd incentives to reduce project and operational costs.

To improve aesthetics, Paisley directed numerous upgrades to building perimeters. The park district installed new exterior LED wall pack lighting at the clubhouse, and replaced conventional high-intensity discharge fixtures (including high-pressure sodium lights) with energy-efficient LEDs, giving the perimeter of the building a cleaner appearance.

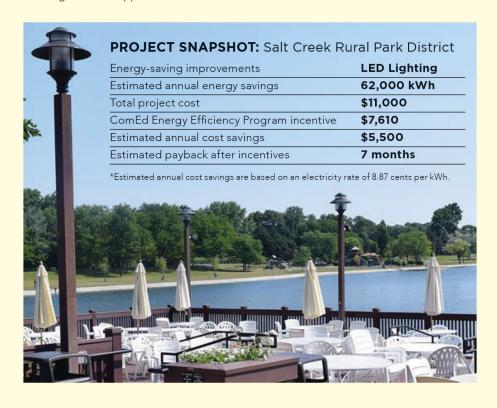
Additionally, on the golf course, staff removed 1,000-watt fixtures and replaced them with new LED fixtures to reduce maintenance costs.

"Before we did the upgrades, when you looked out over the property and the building exterior, everything had an orange glow at night," Paisley said. "Now, it's much more inviting, and the lights have a much more uniform look."

## **Project Benefits**

The Salt Creek Park District received \$7,610 in incentives from the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program and will save approximately \$5,500 in annual energy costs as a result of the LED lighting upgrades. In addition to the financial benefits, Paisley has observed improved staff productivity. The new LED lights have also contributed to safer working conditions because the maintenance staff does not have to perform high-pole bulb changes as frequently.

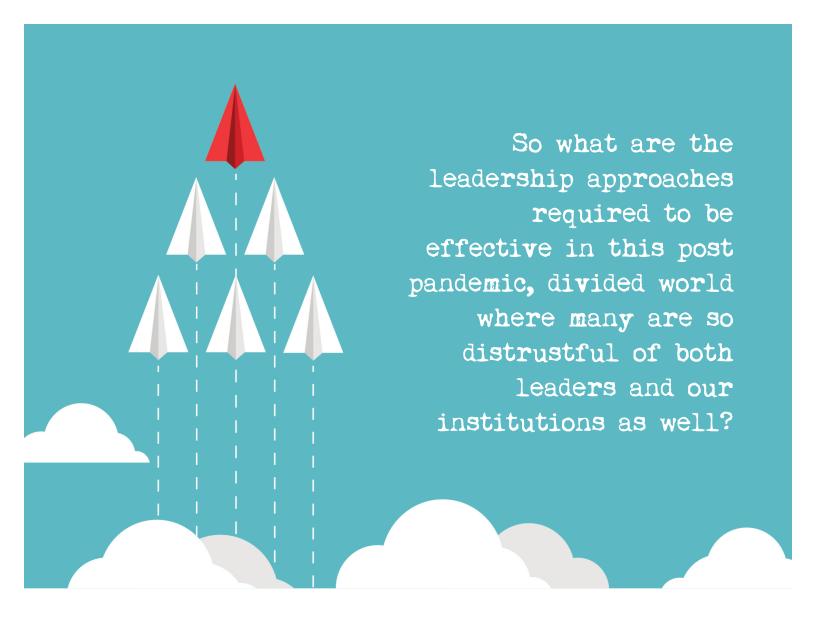
The park district is pursuing additional energy-efficient lighting opportunities at other surrounding park locations. Paisley intends to continue with the ComEd Energy Efficiency Program until all park district facilities are upgraded.



## By Ian Hill

The late American business guru Peter F. Drucker once said "Every few hundred years in Western history there occurs a sharp transformation. Within a few short decades, society rearranges itself Fifty years later, there is a new world. And the people born then cannot even imagine the world in which their grandparents lived." I think pre-pandemic, Drucker was right, we were in a time of transformation. However, we are no longer in a time of transformation, we are in unprecedented times!

# Leadership in Unprecedented Times



So what are the leadership approaches required to be effective in this post pandemic, divided world where many are so distrustful of both leaders and our institutions as well? What are the leadership approaches required for success?

If we see and understand the changed "ecosystem" in which we live today, we then clearly understand that the "command and control" autocratic approach to leadership is not what the times require. It is not the approach that will get best from our people, nor will it be the approach that solves the complex and multifaceted challenges that we face today. The days of the individual on the white horse swooping in to save the day are long gone, the challenges we face are too much for any one person to solve. I call this leadership approach a "Community Builder."

The Community Builder has the ability to marshal all the forms of human capital (intelligence, passion, work effort, innovation and so on) of the various stakeholders they interact with and move them towards a common goal. Rather than being a leader who requires, they are leaders who inspire. The Community Builder brings significant value to those they serve and those they lead. They channel the energy of stake holders by acting as a catalyst, convener and force multipliers. The Community Builder has the capacity and skill to tap into the collective intelligence of all stakeholders to create great plans that have deep buy-in and actually produce meaningful solutions and tangible results.

The Community Builder is authentic, honest, direct, and comfortable in their own skin. They care about others and do what's best for the broader good even when it hurts.



While it may seem simplistic, perhaps the kind of leadership I've described does not need to be all that complicated. It may just boil down to three leadership competencies.

First, we want our leaders to be **Agents of Change**. Leaders who understand, demonstrate, and exert influence by building trusting relationships to act as a catalyst for change. We are hungry for leaders who have the courage, passion, and motivation that is respected by others so that barriers can be addressed and overcome.

The Agent of Change is keenly aware that "the skills, abilities and competencies that won the battles behind us may not be the skills, abilities and competencies to win the battles before us." The enlightened leaders are not changing their values or principles; they are looking at the changed "ecosystem" around them and adjusting their leadership approaches to meet the changed context they operate in.

They are also aware that the aforementioned "command and control" autocratic approach to leadership is misguided. Instead, I would suggest the times actually require a "command with limited or even no control" approach. There are just not enough resources (time, energy, effort) to micromanage all that we have to get done. So we have to let go and marshal (move into action) the human capital around us towards the goals we hope to achieve.

Next, we want leaders who are big picture, holistic, optimistic, proactive, also known as **Systems Thinkers**. This big picture or systems approach is essential because the issues in our communities and departments are too complicated to be solved by any one person or sector.

The challenge for leader's today is more is expected than ever before. As leaders, we are expected to be great as spouses, parents, business leaders and community members! Regrettably, we have a finite amount of time,

energy, and resources at our disposal to get done all that is expected of us to do. To be our best we must have some way to be able to accomplish all that we want to achieve.

Archimedes said, "Give me a place to stand and I will move the world." How he was able to make such a bold statement is simple, he had a system. Archimedes's lever and fulcrum made it possible to move what was previously impossible for one man to move. In the same sense, what is seemingly impossible to get done (all that is expected of us as leaders) can be accomplished with great systems.

There is another challenge we have to deal with as leaders; systems are being constantly created. They can either be initially created or they will naturally and organically evolve on their own. Whether it is our own leadership habits or the "that's just what we do it around here" way of doing business, make no mistake, there are systems constantly evolving and taking root in all that we do.

Fritjot Capra said that "Systems' thinking involves shifting attention from the parts to the whole, from things to relationships, from structures to processes, from hierarchies to networks, from the rational to the intuitive, from analysis to creation."

Simply put, "a system is an organized collection of parts that are highly integrated to accomplish an overall goal." By definition then, "the system is systemic, meaning relating to, or affecting, the entire system. (This is not to be confused with systematic, which can mean merely that something is methodological. Thus, methodological thinking -- systematic thinking -- does not necessarily mean systems thinking.)"

The times require leaders that don't leave systems development to "organic chance," instead they set out to proactively create the systems that will produce the results they desire. They realize that if they are unsatisfied with the results they are getting, they take a look at the systems that are in place and make the change the times require. We don't expect leaders to do it by themselves either, we want them instead to be Catalysts for Responsibility in

others, engaging and cultivating a sense of pride and ownership in all those around them.

Today's effective leaders are in command but not necessarily in control. They cultivate a sense of ownership in all stakeholders; those they lead, work with, work for and in the communities they serve. They realize that there are proven ways to improve efficiency, effectiveness and get more done with less, and they are sophisticated enough to know that these ways are often intangible! Take for example Pride.

Pride is an intangible force of human capital unlike any other. When pride is instilled, cultivated and deployed it creates significant impact. Investing time and energy into building organizational and individual stakeholder pride will provide greater dividends than any other tool in a leader's tool kit.

Deep organizational pride leads to innovation and creative ideas, increased participation in problem solving, a sense of ownership that creates a "the organization is a reflection of me" attitude and higher morale.

Employees with a deep sense of individual pride; regularly exceeded job expectations, take ownership of their specific task, and live out the spirit of their job description and not just the letter. They need less supervision. The cumulative effect of increased both organizational and individual pride is that more is done with less!

Change is here, but it's not trickling down from an ivory tower. It's coming from the bottom up, from leaders who recognize they may not be able to change the whole "big bad" world, however, they can handle their little corner of it.

I believe every individual, every department, every neighborhood and every community is one idea, one voice, one action - one person - away from being better tomorrow than it was yesterday. By understanding the leadership competencies that the times require, you can be that one person!



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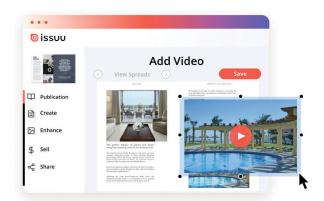
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## PEOPLE & PLACES



# Ronald D. Lehman Celebrates 50 Years as a Channahon Park District Commissioner

Ronald D. Lehman is celebrating five decades of loyal service as a commissioner of the Channahon Park District. Ron was appointed to the board on April 13, 1972, exactly eight months after the park district's formation. He helped to guide the park district

through its impressive growth from one 12-acre park to more than 500 acres, 19 parks, and four facilities. He was instrumental in the acquisition of 120 acres of land which later became Community Park, the park district's largest park; and he spearheaded planning for the development and opening of Tomahawk Aquatic Center and Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club, which has been recognized as one of the top public golf facilities in the nation. Ron has cultivated numerous community partnerships, the most recent of which resulted in Sengo Adventure Garden, the first inclusive playground in the area. He is a founding member of the People for Channahon Parks Foundation, which has raised more than \$2 million to build Arroyo Trails, a unique 78-acre nature park and trail.

Ron's leadership has transcended the boundaries of Channahon through his service on the Illinois Association of Park District's Board of Trustees for eight years, two of which he served as president; and his service on the National Recreation and Park Association's Board of Directors for 12 years, serving as Chairman for six of those years. Ron was recognized as IAPD's Commissioner of the Year in 1993, the American Park and Recreation Society's Meritorious Citizen of the Year Award in 1995, the NRPA Great Lakes Region Citizen Board Member of the Year in 1997, and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association's Distinguished Service to Leisure Award in 2007. He is a founding member of the National Association of Park Foundations, where the prestigious Lehman Award was established to recognize excellence in park foundations. Under his leadership, the Channahon Park District has been recognized as an IAPD/IPRA Distinguished Accredited Agency since 2014 and was a National Gold Medal Finalist in 1996 and a Grand Award Winner in 1997.

Congratulations to Ron for 50 years of faithful and inspiring service to parks and recreation.



Bourbonnais Township Park District Hires Dr. Edward Piatt as Executive Director

Bourbonnais Township Park District hired Dr.

Edward Piatt as executive director at their April board meeting. Piatt is a former adjunct professor of business at Trevecca Nazarene University in the doctoral program and serves as a doctoral advisor. In addition, he is also an adjunct professor of business at Olivet Nazarene University.

He is a bi-weekly business columnist for the Daily Journal writing on a range of business topics from strategic, transformational, servant leadership, leadership theories, organizational culture, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and how to create diamond organizations. He has written over 350 articles in the last ten years. He is considered an expert in ethical leadership and Emotional Intelligence (EI).

He retired as the north east senior account manager for the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and was tasked with representing the Governor's economic development strategy for the northeast region. He has worked in state government for 32 years as a front line manager.

He has a bachelor's of science degree in business management from Purdue University, master's of business administration from Governors State University, and a doctorate in ethical leadership from Olivet Nazarene University.

## In Memoriam



Illinois Parks and Recreation magazine extends it condolences to the family of **Dean Parkman**, who passed away April 26, 2022.

Dean moved to Lindenhurst with his family in 1981 when he was assigned to U.S. Army Recruiting Command at Fort Sheridan. He retired from the Army in 1988 after serving 20 years as an infantry officer. After completion of law school

in 1991, Dean started his second career as an attorney with the Department of Veteran Affairs from 1992 to 2007.

Dean became a park commissioner in 1991 and served as the president of the Lindenhurst Park District for over 30 years. At that time, the Lindenhurst Park District had an office at the village hall. Since his service began on the board, the Lindenhurst Park District has completed many major projects including Phase I and II of the Community Center, acquisition and development of Millennium Park, acquisition and development of Oak Ridge Park, and most recently, a new playground in front of the Community Center. Dean served on IAPD's Board of Commissioners as a trustee and was also a member of the Joint Legislative and Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Committees.

He was a member of St. Raphael the Archangel Church, Lake Villa VFW Post #4308, and coached for the Lindenhurst Soccer Program for many years. Dean enjoyed gardening, traveling, and especially spending time with his family.



## Park District of Franklin Park Announces New Director

The Park District of Franklin Park announced that **Dan LoCascio** has been named to the position of director of parks and recreation after the retirement of Joe Modrich on May 1.

Dan LoCascio started his parks and recreation career as in intern at the Park District of Franklin Park in 2003. He was hired full-time in 2004, and in various roles since then he managed Franklin Park's camps, aquatics/pool, fitness programs, athletic programming, and the Community Center. In 2012, Discovery Day Camp was awarded the IPRA/IAPD Outstanding Program/Special Event. Dan was promoted to superintendent of recreation in 2018. He was awarded the Recreation Section Professional of the Year in 2015 and the Distinguished Member in 2021. He has an undergraduate degree from Northern Illinois University and a masters degree in recreation administration from Aurora University at George Williams College.

## Want to Read More?

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

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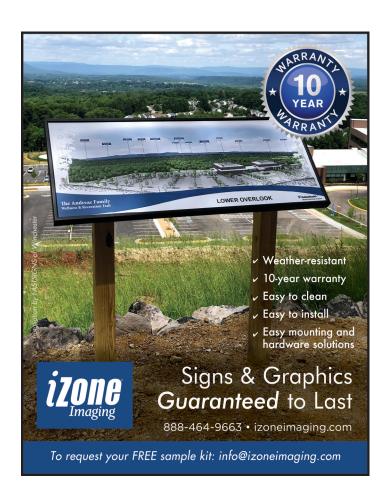
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# The Park District of Franklin Park Announces Retirement of Director

The Park District of Franklin Park announced the retirement of **Joe Modrich** as director of parks and recreation after 22 years of service in the position on May 1

Modrich had his first tenure with the district from 1974 to 1990, then came back in 2000 as director. During his time as director, the park district invested more than \$23 million for park district renovations/acquisitions and facility upgrades, while securing \$12 million in grants for capital projects, parks were redesigned and renovated, girls/women's locker rooms were installed, the Ice Arena's original refrigeration system was replaced along with other upgrades, and both the Community Center and the pool were renovated.



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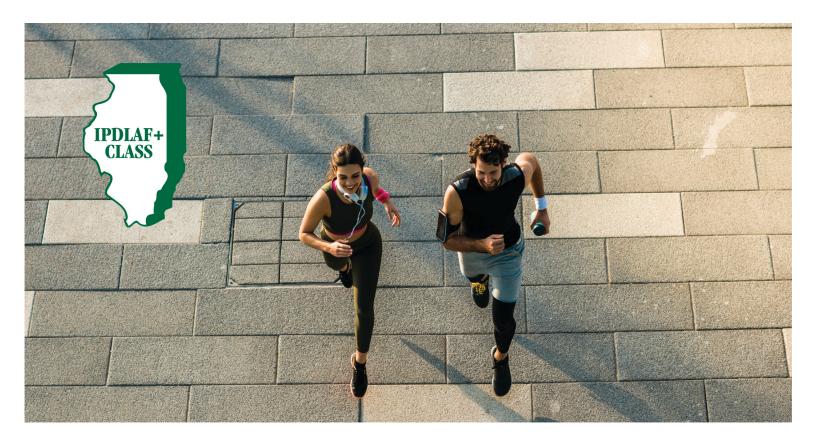
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