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PARKS AND RECREATION

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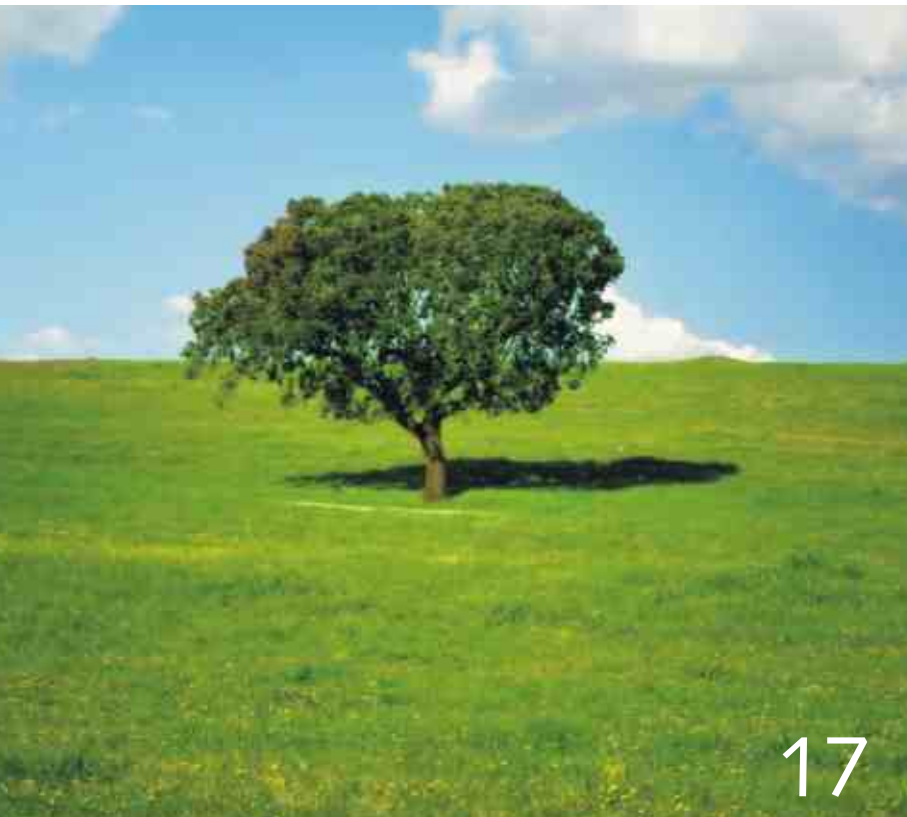


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FROM THE EDITOR

Sometimes you have to choose: You can have the cake or else you can gobble it up. But not both. When we are constantly forced to pick – Which cable package? Which medical plan? Which bank? – it becomes an easy to habit to view every option as an “either” or an “or.” Sometimes, though, the answer can be “both.”

That's good to remember.

When it comes to getting our messages out, the IAPD and IPRA are faced with some of the same operational choices your agencies are. One choice is: Do we go paper or electronic?

Think of your seasonal program guides. Many agencies have gone online with them. Some even use flip page technology, complete with swoosh sound effects as you turn from the odd to even pages. Even so, it's likely that most agencies with electronic seasonal guides still put the book out on paper, too. This is probably seen as a transitional move – a slight doubling effort just until the public's sophistication level rises and the publication can exist only electronically. That could happen.

Or, we could find ourselves working in mixed media forever. As one national advertising campaign claims, “During the 12-year life of Google, magazine readership actually increased 11 percent. What it proves, once again, is that a new medium doesn't necessarily displace an existing one. Just as movies didn't kill radio. Just as TV didn't kill movies.”

When we communicate with the public, our job is now not only to craft the message but also to choose the right medium – or the right media mix – to carry that message in a way that is both suited to the message and the audience. Someday, most people will access the “phone book” (which will really be a giant mobile-phone formatted file) from their wireless phones. But if a significant section of the public demands it, you'll still let your fingers do the walking through the yellow pages. Just so, even though it is easier for your clients to point, click and register for a season's park programs on a Web-based version of the seasonal guide, you still may find many of your people prefer to leaf through the program guide on the bus ride to work and then click to register later that night.

Illinois Parks & Recreation magazine is in that same boat. For a while now, we've been choosing to present information to you in paper and electronic formats, and this will continue to be the case for the foreseeable future.

That's why, for example, starting with this issue, you'll see an abbreviated version of the People & Places section in the printed version of the magazine. A more expanded version for each issue will be posted on the Web. Go to the IAPD home page, www.ILparks.org, and look for the More People & Places button near the top, or go to the “Publications” button on the left of the page and choose “Illinois Parks and Recreation Magazine” from the fly-out menu. In fact, you may find it useful to bookmark the magazine page. From there, you can access all the WebXtras that supplement the magazine and link to an electronic archive (called Illinois Periodicals Online) that will soon house every issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation* magazine from 1970 onward.

Paper or electronic? The IAPD and IPRA have chosen “both,” and we hope you'll find all the information helpful. Just think, if only *Illinois Parks & Recreation* were dessert, then you could have your cake and eat it, too.

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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Meeting Management - The Pathway To Success

One of the key indications of effective boards is how they engage with each other and the public at their board meetings. While the fundamentals of success seem straightforward, many boards drift away from these to accommodate prior traditions or new personalities.

I recommend that boards annually evaluate themselves on how meetings are conducted. Think of it as you do a spring tune-up for your automobile in order to meet an increased driving schedule or the heat of summer. Will your board meeting still run effectively when members disagree or in the heat of public opinion when the disfranchised few show up?

The Team Ethic

The right decision on issues at the board meeting isn't always the easiest one to make, but each board member needs to assess, "Are we operating as a team or are we operating as adversaries?"

Board members should recognize that in order to get things done they must work together and not pull in different directions. When board members work as a team, they are able to talk freely about issues without worrying about hurting feelings when disagreements arise.

Here are other questions you can ask yourself when evaluating the effectiveness of board meetings:

- Was the meeting conducted in a businesslike manner, resulting in actions that resolve problems?
- Were agenda items submitted to the board in advance with reports covering all items on which the board would make decisions?
- Were the reports succinct, clear and well prepared?
- Were all board members given an opportunity to participate in the discussion?
- Was the agenda strictly followed?
- Did the board discuss policy matters rather than day-to-day management decisions?

- Did the board seek counsel on matters that have legal ramifications? (Asking the agency attorney for an opinion not only gives guidance to a board, but also helps insulate it from liability.)
- Are motions written in advance of the meeting on complex or important issues?
- Is the meeting room conducive to a comfortable meeting?
- Does the meeting room accommodate visitors?
- Do all board members regularly attend board meetings?
- Are board members working together?
- How well does the board function as a team?
- Is there always controversy? If so why?

Each board member
needs to assess,
"Are we operating
as a team?"



- Should the board hold occasional educational programs on conflict management and boardmanship? (These programs should be held separate from the regular board meeting.)
- Does the board use the expertise of its chief executive or does it constantly go over every detail?
- Is the board wasting time on petty details?
- Is the board addressing big issues and looking at the bottom line of the agency?
- Is the board establishing achievable goals?
- Is the board making major decisions?
- Is the board concerned with the agency's future and does it demonstrate this by its action?

Will your board meeting still run effectively when members disagree or in the heat of public opinion when the disfranchised few show up?

Remember, Help is Here

If you feel your board meetings aren't operating as well as they should or that your board isn't working in concert, know that you are not alone. Park agency boards are human constructs and do not always work perfectly. That's why the IAPD has developed several useful resources.

If you haven't done so recently, I invite you to check out our Web site (at www.ILparks.org) and read over some of the services that we offer member agencies. You'll find information on our Board Self-Evaluation Program in which an IAPD representative develops and facilitates a tailor-made evaluation exercise with your board in a process that allows for maximum growth potential in a private setting while complying with the state's Open Meetings Act. There are books that can help, including *Get on Board* and the latest edition of the *Park District Code*. These are available at significant discounts to members. And a highly convenient interactive option is our new Online Board Member Education Series that you can link to from our home page or visit directly at www.iapdbaordtraining.com.

If you have questions about any of these services, or if you have specific concerns or suggestions about how IAPD can help your board function better, please contact me at 217-523-4554. Remember, you joined IAPD to have access to the assistance you need to be the best board you can be. Take advantage of that, and you'll serve yourself and your community effectively.

IAPD Events

May 26
Protecting Yourself From Hackers & Internet Thieves
Park District of LaGrange
Recreation Center

June 9
Protecting Yourself From Hackers & Internet Thieves
Collinsville Area Recreation
District Administrative/Activity
Center

June 21
Summer Golf Tour Event #2
Fox Bend Golf Course
Oswegoland Park District

July 12
Summer Golf Tour Event #3
Raid Tail Run Golf Club
Decatur Park District

July 22
Legislative Golf Outing
White Pines Golf Club
Bensenville

August 9
Summer Golf Tour Event #4
Settlers Hill Golf Course
Batavia

August 21
Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair
State Fair Grounds,
Springfield

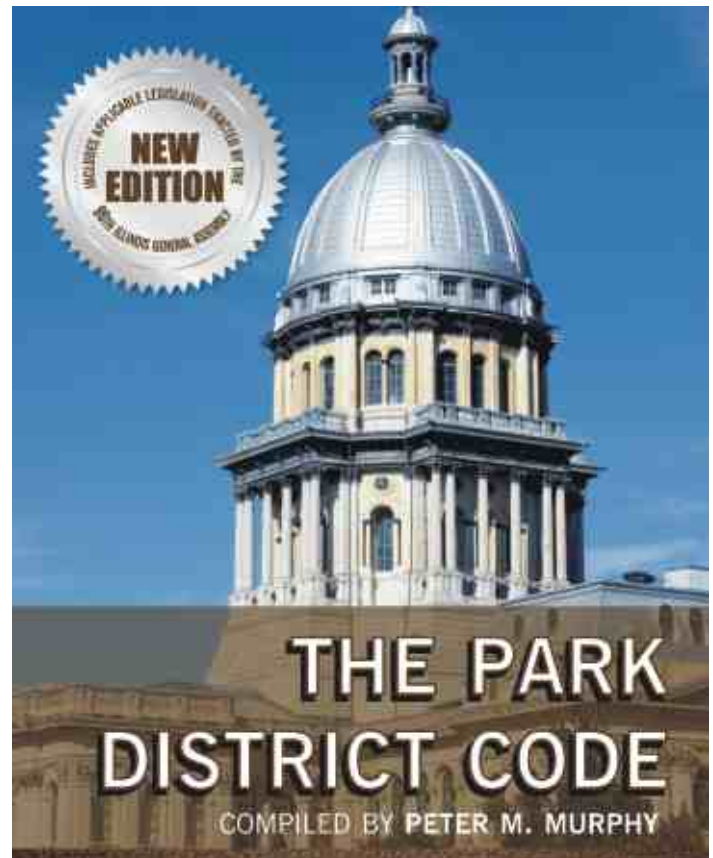
September 20
Summer Golf Tour Event #5
Glenview Park Golf Club
Glenview Park District

October 1
IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala
Traditions at Chevy Chase
Country Club
Wheeling Park District

October 25-29
NRPA National Congress and Exposition
Minneapolis, Minnesota

November 4
Legal Symposium
Hamburger University
Oak Brook

January 27-29, 2011
IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hilton, Chicago



The Park District Code contains the most **complete** compilation of laws affecting park districts. Key sections cover laws and amendments such as those concerning:

- **The Open Meetings Act** and sharing public information at each park district as required by revisions to the **Freedom of Information Act**
- **Statutory authorization of a new grant program** created for park districts by the Park and Recreational Facility Construction Act
- Updated **eligibility standards** for park board candidates
- Changes to the **Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)**
- New language for a district's **Truth in Taxation Notice**
- Park districts' authority to use **electronic reverse auctions**
- Rules for **hiring minors as sports officials**

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EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



Mike Selep, CPRP
IPRA Interim CEO

Pass on Your Passion to the Next Generation of Park and Recreation Professionals

I have a confession to make. I did something that I feel bad for not regretting. A few Sundays back, my seven-year-old son Josh wasn't very excited to be in church. It was the perfect spring day. Since I was eager to get outside, too, I decided to take my son to the park rather than sit through the service. I told my wife that we would be back in 20 minutes.

We walked over to the park and explored all the plants, rocks and birds near the pond. I pushed Josh on his swing for a while, and then decided that I wanted to swing, too. I nearly forgot how much I enjoy swinging. We both had a great time. We soared higher and higher on our swings and discussed everything from school to our favorite super heroes. I took a look at my watch. Time sure flew when we were having fun: Sixty minutes had passed.

When we returned to church, I was a little nervous about my wife's reaction to us being gone so long. I'm fortunate to have a wife that majored in parks and recreation. She could tell that we both had benefited from the time at the park, so there was no mention of us being late.

This brief bit of time recreating and seeing the impact of recreation on my son rejuvenated the passion that I have for recreation. In addition, I was glad that I was able to spend time with Josh, as I would be out of town visiting with students and educators at Southern Illinois University during the upcoming week.

Encouraging New and Soon-to-Be Professionals to Experience the Benefits of Their Association

The ability to participate in the Allen Symposium at Southern Illinois University was well worth the six-hour drive from Chicago to Carbondale. This annual professional development opportunity for students, faculty and alumni is a highlight of the year for me. Tim Carter, the current chair of the IPRA Student Section and Illinois State University student, and I were able to co-present a session regarding the benefits of involvement in a professional

association and the importance of becoming involved as a student to begin building a professional network.

What is most striking about the Allen Symposium, like other annual professional development conferences that are conducted at Western and Eastern Illinois Universities, is the involvement of the alumni who attend, speak and interact with the students. I was extremely excited that one of my mentors and former co-workers, Rick Hanetho, director of the Northbrook Park District, was honored as the Alumni of the Year. Rick has served as a great example by always taking time to mentor and cultivate staff. There are many professionals in the field that have worked with him, some learning about the career when they worked under his direction as seasonal staff in high school or college.

It is critical for professionals to reach out to those that demonstrate the desire and ability to contribute to the field of parks and recreation.



A New IPRA Video Will Help You Recruit New, Good Talent for our Field

It is critical for professionals to reach out to those that demonstrate the desire and ability to contribute to the field of parks and recreation. The IPRA College and University Relations Committee will release an interactive video CD in the coming months that will be available to agencies and educational institutions to help high school and college students explore the variety of career opportunities in the field of parks and recreation.


The future of the profession depends on continued diligence to the recruitment and development of quality staff. We all play a role.

Videos of professionals with different positions in the field, as well as information about educational and career options available, are shared on this interactive CD. The information and videos will also be placed on the IPRA Web site to provide increased viewing opportunities and accessibility. This project was made possible with funds contributed by the sections of IPRA membership.

When the video CD becomes available, please share it with your seasonal and part-time staff to encourage those with a passion to consider a career in parks and recreation. The future of the profession depends on continued diligence in the recruitment and development of quality staff. We all play a role. If the profession is to continue advancing, every professional needs to become actively involved in the cultivation of staff that they supervise and encourage individuals that have a strong potential for success in the field to consider a career in parks and recreation.

Regroup, Recharge and the Share the Passion for Parks and Recreation

Let's take advantage of spring, this time of annual renewal, to become enthusiastically involved in some form of recreation in order to maintain or rejuvenate the passion that we feel for the profession. Summer is very nearly upon us, and its extremely challenging to go into the summer without charging up and getting a full supply of passion. We need this passion to share with patrons, family members and potential future professionals. You may not have to skip a church service like I did. But if you do, I promise not to tell.



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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Park Bills Move Through the Legislative Process as the Legislature Eyes Adjournment

At this writing, the Illinois General Assembly is winding up its substantive business in both the Illinois House and Senate with budget issues remaining to be solved.

The following bills are ones that you should be aware of and we will keep you up to date on all final action through electronic IAPD legislative updates.

Debt Service Extension Base

I am extremely pleased to report to you that **Senate Bill 3139**, which provides for an increase in the Consumer Price Index for the debt service extension base of Illinois park districts, has passed the Illinois General Assembly. It did so on the afternoon of our Legislative Conference on April 28.

After School Programs

At presstime, **House Bill 1826** was on third reading in the Senate. Under the measure, after school demonstration programs will be used to establish standards and policies to design and fund a statewide system of quality after school programs accessible to all youth. Positive youth development activities are to be provided to youth between the ages of 6 and 19 during the hours before or after school, during summer recess from school, or during the weekends.

The Department of Human Services, in coordination with a newly created Illinois Youth Development Council, would establish and administer a three-year, statewide, quality Afterschool Demonstration Program with an evaluation and outcome-based expansion model. Park districts would be eligible to apply for funding under this program.

Another bill concerning after school programs is **Senate Bill 3543**, which passed both houses in late April. The measure creates the Afterschool Youth Development Project Act and the Illinois Youth Development Council. The council will provide oversight and coordination to the state's public funds currently invested to support positive youth development programs and activities and will set system-wide policies and priorities.

Investment of Bond Proceeds

House Bill 4945 allows a governing body to invest proceeds of bonds or money on deposit in any debt service or in a reserve fund in obligations whose interest is tax-exempt. The governing bodies can also join with the treasurers of other governmental units to jointly invest the funds of which the treasurer has custody. The bill passed both houses in late April.

Performance Evaluations and FOIA

House Bill 5154 passed both houses in late April. It provides that disclosure of performance evaluations under the Freedom of Information Act shall be prohibited.

Approval and Disclosure of Meeting Minutes

At presstime, **House Bill 5483** was awaiting concurrence in the House and provides that a public body shall approve the minutes of its open meeting within 30 days after that meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later. The minutes of meetings open to the public shall be available for public inspection within 10 days after the approval of the minutes by the public body. It also provides that any person shall be permitted an opportunity to address public officials at meetings subject to this act under the rules established and recorded by the public body.

Automatic External Defibrillators

House Bill 5838 passed both houses in late April. This bill provides that it is no longer required for the person responsible for supervising an activity at an outdoor physical fitness facility to ensure that an AED is available at the outdoor facility during the time that the event or activity at the facility is being conducted.

Playground Safety

House Bill 6034 requires the Department of Public Health to provide on its Web site technical assistance materials on playground safety based on guidelines or standards such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's guidelines, the U.S. Access Board final guidelines, or the standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials by June 30, 2011.

Regulations on Rainwater Harvesting

At presstime, **Senate Bill 2549** was in the House Rules Committee. The bill defines "plumbing" to include rainwater harvesting distribution systems, but does not include any rainwater harvesting

Follow the Action on the Web

There are a number of bills that your agency should be aware of, only a few of the more important ones can appear in this column.

Please check our Web site at www.ilparks.org and click on the Public Policy Section. You may then choose to view the "2010 Priority Bills – House" or the "2010 Priority Bills – Senate." If you would like to review the complete list of new 2010 bill introductions and the last action taken on them click on the following link: <http://www.ilga.gov/mylegislation/default.asp> and then enter the following information.

Email: IAPD@ILParks.org

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Once you have logged into the database, choose "View."

distribution system or rainwater harvesting collection system unless otherwise required by the Illinois Plumbing Code. The bill requires the Illinois Department of Public Health to adopt and publish a minimum code of standards for rainwater harvesting collection systems and rainwater harvesting distribution systems by March 1, 2011.

Longer Maturity Dates for Forest Preserve Bonds

House Bill 4639 amends the Conservation District Act and the Downstate Forest Preserve District Act to provide that bonds issued by a conservation district or a forest preserve district, other than "Build America Bonds," shall mature not later than 25 (instead of 20) years after the date of issue. The measure passed both houses in late April.

Summit Park District Tax Levy Validation

Senate Bill 3265 passed out of the Illinois General Assembly on April 28. This bill creates the Summit Park District Tax Levy Validation (2010) Act. It validates levy ordinances and tax extensions to the extent they do not exceed the maximum amount authorized under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law if the district had taken into account the tax increment value from the expiration of the West Summit TIF.

Abusive Work Environments

At presstime, **Senate Bill 3566**, cited as Abusive Work Environment Act, was in the House Rules Committee. The stated purposes of this act are: (1) to provide legal relief for employees who have been harmed, psychologically, physically, or economically, by being deliberately subjected to abusive work environments; and (2) to provide legal incentive for employers to prevent and respond to abusive mistreatment of employees at work.

The measure sets out a definition of abusive conduct. It allows that a single act normally will not constitute abusive conduct, but an especially severe and egregious act may meet this standard.

Under the measure, if an employee were subjected to an abusive environment, an employer would be vicariously liable for an unlawful employment practice and an employee may be individually liable for an unlawful employment practice. The court may enjoin the defendant from engaging in the unlawful employment practice and may order any other relief including, but not limited to, reinstatement, removal of the offending party from the complainant's work environment, back pay, front pay, medical expenses, compensation for emotional distress, punitive damages and attorney's fees.

Where an employer is found to have committed an unlawful employment practice under this act that did not culminate in an adverse employment action, its liability for damages for emotional distress shall not exceed \$25,000, and it shall not be subject to punitive damages. This act must be commenced no later than one year after the last act that constitutes the alleged unlawful employment practice.

Personnel Record Reviews via E-mail

Senate Bill 3588 passed both houses in late April. This bill amends the Personnel Record Review Act by stating that an employer who receives a request for records of a disciplinary report, letter of reprimand or other disciplinary action in relation to an employee under the Freedom of Information Act may provide notification to the employee in written form as described or through electronic mail, if available.

Park District of Forest Park Supplemental Budget

Senate Bill 3696 provides that to take advantage of the increased limiting rate for levy year 2009 approved by a majority of voters at the general primary election held on February 2, 2010, the Board of Park Commissioners of the Park District of Forest Park may adopt an additional or supplemental budget by a vote of a majority of the full membership of the board to defray expenses and liabilities of the park district to be incurred for corporate purposes of the district during that fiscal year. The bill passed the Illinois General Assembly on April 23 and was sent to the governor on April 28.

A Resolution Concerning Unfunded Local Government Mandates

Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 94 was in the Senate Executive Committee at presstime. It provides that if the General Assembly or any state executive action requires a unit of local government to establish, expand or modify its activities in such a way as to necessitate additional expenditures of revenue by the unit of local government, then the state must provide funds to reimburse the unit of local government for the costs necessary to carry out the mandated requirement. A mandated requirement that is not funded is not enforceable.

CPI Rate for 2010 Extensions is 2.7%

The IAPD has received many inquiries regarding what Consumer Price Index (CPI) "cost of living" or inflation percentage to use in computing the 2010 extensions (taxes payable in 2011) under PTELL.

Section 18-185 of the Property Tax Code defines CPI as "the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor." This index is sometimes referred to as CPI-U. Section 18-185 defines "extension limitation" as "the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price index during the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year" (emphasis added).

For 2010 extensions (taxes payable in 2011), the CPI to be used for computing the extension limitation is 2.7%. The CPI is measured from December 2008 to December 2009. The U.S. City Average CPI for December 2008 was 210.228 and 215.949 for December 2009. The CPI change is calculated by subtracting the 2008 CPI of 210.228 from the 2009 CPI of 215.949. That amount, 5.661, is then divided by the 2008 CPI of 210.228, which results in 2.69%, which is rounded up to a 2.7% CPI.

Information on PTELL may be accessed through the Illinois Department of Revenue's Web site at www.tax.illinois.gov under the category of "Local Government," then look for the "Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)" option.

Illinois Department of Revenue History of CPIs Used for the PTELL

Year	December CPI	% Change From Previous December	% Use for PTELL	Levy Year	Year Taxes Paid
1989	126.1	--	--	--	--
1990	133.8	6.1	2.0 (5% Max)	1991	1992
1991	137.9	3.1	3.1	1992	1993
1992	141.9	2.9	2.9	1993	1994
1993	145.8	2.7	2.7 (5% for Cost)	1994	1995
1994	149.7	2.7	2.7	1995	1996
1995	153.5	2.5	2.5	1996	1997
1996	158.6	3.3	3.3	1997	1998
1997	161.3	1.7	1.7	1998	1999
1998	163.9	1.6	1.6	1999	2000
1999	168.3	2.7	2.7	2000	2001
2000	174.0	3.4	3.4	2001	2002
2001	176.7	1.6	1.6	2002	2003
2002	180.9	2.4	2.4	2003	2004
2003	184.3	1.9	1.9	2004	2005
2004	190.1	3.1	3.1	2005	2006
2005	196.8	3.4	3.4	2006	2007
2006	201.8	2.5	2.5	2007	2008
2007	210.056	4.08	4.1	2008	2009
2008	210.228	0.1	0.1	2009	2010
2009	215.949	2.7	2.7	2010	2011



Governor Pat Quinn and GOP gubernatorial nominee Senator Bill Brady shared their visions of the future of parks and recreation in Illinois.

GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES BRING THEIR MESSAGES TO THE 32ND ANNUAL IAPD LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Governor Pat Quinn and the Republican nominee for governor, Senator Bill Brady, shared their visions for the future of park and recreation services in Illinois with the more than 350 delegates that attended IAPD's Legislative Conference in Springfield on April 28.

"Parks are a priority," said Governor Quinn. He pointed to the passage of the Park and Recreational Facility Construction Act, which will make grants available to park agencies. "We want you to come up with big dreams and big plans" to take advantage of the grant resources, which will come from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, said the governor.

GOP gubernatorial candidate State Senator Bill Brady focused his remarks on Illinois' financial state. He pointed out that "a strong and vibrant economy" will lead to more real estate transfer fees, which is the source of funding for the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Program. He promised that if he were governor he would not sweep revenues from their dedicated funds. He pointed out that he opposed governor Blagojevich's attempts to do so and he opposed Governor Blagojevich's closure of several state parks.



LEFT: Former Vernon Hills Park District Commissioner and first-term State Representative Carol shared her experiences as one who lobbied and one who is lobbied.



RIGHT: Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Marc Miller kicked off the legislative conference with an address concerning the challenges and opportunities the department faces.



A panel of State Representatives Elaine Nekritz, Art Turner and Bob Biggins offered advice on how best to catch the ears of legislators.



Joint Legislative Committee Co-chairs Wally Fraiser and Sandy Gbur stressed the process of building ongoing and long lasting relationships with legislators.



Quinn and Brady were among the many public officials and legislators who took time to address the association membership. Former Vernon Hills Park District Commissioner and first-year legislator Carol A. Sente shared her stories of what it is like to be a voting member of the legislature that she formerly lobbied. Following up on Representative Sente's remarks were State Representatives Elaine Nekritz, Arthur L. Turner and Bob Biggins, who spoke on "How to Get the Attention of Your Legislator." Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Marc Miller kicked off the conference with a presentation of pressing issues confronting IDNR.

Rounding out the plenary session was a presentation on making a difference through lobbying by IAPD President and CEO Peter Murphy with IAPD/IPRA Joint Legislative Committee co-chairs Wally Frasier, a commissioner with the Mundelein Park and Recreation District, and Sandy Gbur from the West Suburban Special Recreation Association.

Break-out session topics included information on the revised Freedom of Information Act, new grant opportunities available through the Park and Recreation Facility Construction Act of 2009 and fine tuning advocacy skills.

Delegates then spent the afternoon meeting with their legislators. Many picked up on conversations begun the evening before at the IAPD Legislative Reception, held at Springfield's Illini Country Club. That event offered park and recreation professionals and board members a chance to visit with state legislators in a relaxed setting.

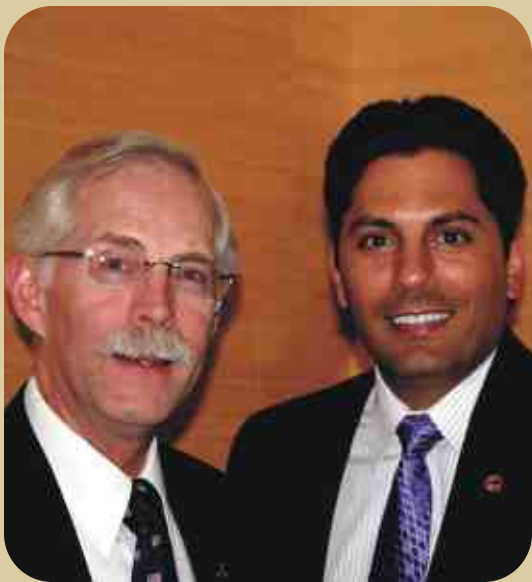
The Legislative Reception event sponsor was Let's Go Play, Inc. Call One sponsored the beverages, and IAPDLAF+ sponsored the hors d'oeuvres.



Jeff Janda of the Berwyn Park District, Sandy Gbur of WSSRA, Representative Karen Yarbrough, and from the Park District of Forest Park Larry Piekarz, Sam Alonzo, Erin Parchert, Eric Entler and Cathleen McDermott.



IAPD Chairman and Schaumburg Park Board President George Longmeyer congratulates fellow IAPD Board Member and East St. Louis Park Board Member Carolyn Edley. The IAPD recognized the East St. Louis Park district for being the subject of an award-winning magazine story written by Dr. Bruce Wicks and a team of University of Illinois Students entitled "A Partnership for Park Revitalization: The University of Illinois and East St. Louis." The article appeared in the July/August 2009 issue of Illinois Parks & Recreation.



Lan Oak Park District Commissioner Dennis Flanagan and Representative Anthony DeLuca.



Doug Nickels of the Lake Bluff Park District, Representative Carol Sente, Senator Terry Link with Kurt Gronau and Ron Salski of the Lake Bluff Park District.



See More Photos of the Legislative Conference and Reception at the IAPD Web Site. Go to www.ILparks.org. On the left side of the home page, scroll over the "Resources" option and choose the top item of the fly out menu titled "Photo Gallery."



Carole Pankau (center in blue) with a delegation from the Elmhurst Park District, including Brian McDermott, Norman Reinertsen, Colette Kubiesa, Jim Rogers, Rich Grodsky and Megan McNamara.



A Capitol visitor stops by the Wheeling Park District Display in the State Capitol Rotunda. As part of Parks Day at the Capitol, agencies from across the state set up displays to remind legislators of the public services park, recreation, conservation and special recreation agencies give to their communities. Parks Day at the Capitol took place on April 27.



Representative Mike Fortner and Mike Clark, Batavia Park District executive director.



IAPD Executive Director and CEO Peter Murphy addresses the legislative conference.



This break-out session of the Legislative Conference featured round table discussions about effective advocacy skills.



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by Emy Brawley

LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGIES FOR PARK AGENCIES

No one knows for certain what the real estate market will look like in six months. However, one certainty is that today is a buyer's market. For example, the Illinois Association of Realtors reports that while the volume of home sales may have picked up recently, prices remain stubborn. Developers are liquidating inventory; some homeowners are looking to get out of mortgages they cannot afford; and there are foreclosure sales by banks. There are also fewer buyers competing, and financing for developers has dried up. These trends were well documented in issues of magazines published in the summer 2009 by the Land Trust Alliance and Trust for Public Land, among others.

For park agencies looking to meet future (or even current) needs through expanded park sites, this should be a good thing. However, the down economy can inhibit action, despite the unprecedented opportunities for land buyers. Park agencies – understandably – want to be conservative about making future financial commitments. They are also sensitive to the impact taxes have on residents already feeling hit by the economy. While recognizing that caution can be a virtue, I'd like to suggest that this is an ideal time for park agencies to consider how they can use the current market to their advantage. In particular, if a parcel of land identified in planning documents as a future park site is currently for sale, park agencies should think creatively about how to secure that land for purchase. The market will rebound; the opportunity may not.

This article offers an overview of some of the mechanisms and tools that park agencies can use to secure new park lands, with the goal of encouraging an innovative outlook on how to implement land acquisition plans. Individual agencies should consult their professional advisors concerning applicability, limitations and requirements.



Buying in a Buyer's Market

To take advantage of the current real estate market, a park agency may need to act quickly. For time-sensitive transactions, interim mechanisms such as a bridge loan or the use of an interim landholder are options for many park agencies. These mechanisms will allow a park district to secure an available parcel now, without having to pay the entire purchase price up front. Although in some cases there may be transaction costs associated with types of interim financing, these costs may be lower than the alternative of waiting to purchase the property in an up market, or losing the opportunity altogether. Taking out a commercial mortgage is not an option for an Illinois park district. However, there are other mechanisms to fund an acquisition without having cash on hand.

Some non-profit conservation groups maintain revolving loan funds, such as Openlands (in northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region) or The Conservation Fund (nationally), which can be used to fund bridge loans. Openlands, for example, will serve as an “interim landholder” by purchasing a property and holding it until permanent financing can be secured – sometimes for a term of years – with park agencies often managing the sites in the meantime. Working with an interim landholder has an added advantage when applying for certain state grants, since grant rules disallow grant funds to be used to reimburse an agency for costs incurred before the grant award.

Park agencies can also use creativity in structuring a real estate transaction to act now and pay later. There are ways to secure a property for future purchase with modest up-front payments to the seller. With fewer buyers in the marketplace, landowners may see variations on these “seller financed” transactions as attractive. The term “seller financing,” as used here, includes not just the traditional model, where a seller assumes the role of the bank, but more broadly includes any arrangement under which the seller makes concessions in terms of timing in exchange for the certainty of the sale. Seller-financed transactions allow for great flexibility in meeting the seller's and buyer's particular needs. The first step is to understand a seller's motivations and constraints, which will provide a framework for structuring a proposal.

Creative Negotiation Strategies

Park agencies might explore whether there is the potential for a partial donation of the property (also known as a bargain sale). Donations of land to agencies may qualify as tax deductible contributions, thereby providing the landowners with certain tax benefits. For corporate landowners, a partial donation of land for a park may generate publicity that has a perceived value, offsetting the lower sales price for the property. Any adjacent land retained by a seller may have an enhanced value as a result of the future park use next door.

A partial donation may not be an option for a distressed landowner. However, if the ‘distressed landowner’ does not prefer to sell its property, but needs financial assistance to keep it, then seller financed strategies may provide some common ground. Here, a purchase subject to a life estate; the purchase of an option or right of first refusal; or a type of lease-purchase, installment sale, or rolling option contract should be considered. These alternatives would provide a current cash infusion to the landowner, while assuring the park agency will ultimately acquire the property. Some sellers may find a few years of steady monthly payments more desirable than a lump sum cash payment in certain situations. If the future acquisition price is negotiated and locked in based on today's market, there may be added savings to the agency down the road.

Another way to structure a transaction to offset the acquisition cost is to consider carving off a portion of the land for a post-closing sale. Is the potential park on a corner of a busy intersection, and could a small corner site be sold for commercial development? Since per-acre prices tend to rise as the size of a parcel goes down, a park agency might recoup more than its pro-rata cost by selling a smaller parcel. Perhaps the future adjacent park use will enhance the post-development use, creating additional value to the parcel to be sold. Park districts have the authority to sell part of an acquired parcel under certain circumstances – check with your legal advisors. Under the Park Commissioners Land Sale Act, park districts can sell parcels of less than three acres that are determined to be no longer needed or useful

after petitioning the circuit court where the parcel is located. Openlands can also assist park agencies with this work, by purchasing a larger parcel, processing a subdivision, and then selling the smaller lot to a private party before conveying the remaining land to the agency.

The flip side of this scenario is for a park agency to purchase a smaller portion of the entire available parcel. Some local land use codes provide exceptions to the subdivision rules where the subdivision is for certain public purposes. Also, land trades or other local governmental partnerships should not be overlooked.

Project Permanence

Of course, any interim financing mechanism is just that – interim – and a long-term mechanism for funding the acquisition must follow. Obtaining grant funds is a common way to help pay for park agency land acquisitions. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources' OSLAD (Open Space Land Acquisition and Development) grant program reimburses successful park agency applicants for up to fifty percent of an acquisition cost, with a maximum grant of \$750,000 in most cases. Any particular piece of property may have attributes, in addition to the intended park purposes, that qualify an acquisition for other grants. A bit of time searching online may yield a potential funding source that was previously unknown. Is there a trails component involved in your land acquisition and development? The Illinois Trails Grant Program funds up to eighty percent of certain recreation trail projects, including acquisitions. Some conservation groups have looked to state Clean Water Revolving Loan Funds to fund land acquisitions that provide water quality benefits such as stormwater infiltration, and to state wildlife grants for acquisitions that provide wildlife habitat benefits. Private foundations, such as the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (which funds acquisitions of land with high natural resource values) and private donations – whether from individuals or user groups – should also be considered as potential sources.

Even where grants are obtained to help with the purchase, an agency match is typically required. Issuing bonds secured by future tax revenues is often used to generate matching land acquisition funds. Under Illinois statutory law, general obligation bonds do not require a public referendum in cases where the new debt, together with existing indebtedness, will not exceed 2.875 percent of the value of the taxable property in the district. This amount may even be exceeded in certain cases, but it is also subject to certain caps. Park districts can also levy special assessments to acquire and maintain real estate. Your legal and financial advisors can provide advice specific to your situation and inform you whether you have the necessary capacity to act without voter approval.

Where voter approval is required, some park agencies will hesitate to ask. Illinois park agencies may be surprised to learn that voters will support public funding of parks and open space, even in a down economy. In November – when real estate prices were in free-fall – voters nationwide approved sixty-three out of eighty-nine conservation finance measures on state and local ballots. Although 2008 and 2009 referenda results in Illinois were mixed, IAPD's analysis suggests that ballot questions to fund the acquisition of a specific parcel are received more favorably, as are requests to borrow funds rather than increase the tax burden. (See the articles on referenda results that appear in the March/April issues of this magazine.) There is even some evidence that voters appreciate the great acquisition opportunities currently available: Voters in early February approved a tax increase allowing the Park District of Forest Park to fund the purchase of a 2.5-acre site that had fallen into foreclosure. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) tracks referenda results nationwide at www.landvote.org and also offers technical assistance to help public entities design successful ballot measures and manage winning campaigns. Contact the TPL Conservation Finance group for more information.

Where is Your Opportunity?

While this article cannot provide parcel-specific solutions for park agencies, perhaps it has stimulated some creative and optimistic thinking about how to approach obtaining new parkland. Given the current wealth of land acquisition opportunities, balanced against the long-term trends of both increasing property values and increasing populations, I hope park agencies will look beyond current revenue shortfalls and take creative action to implement longer-range land acquisition plans.

Emy Brawley is a land preservation specialist at Openlands. Founded in 1963, Openlands is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the natural and open spaces of northeastern Illinois and the surrounding region to ensure cleaner air and water, protect natural habitats and wildlife, and help balance and enrich our lives. Openlands Land Preservation provides technical assistance and serves as an interim landowner to help local governments acquire parks and open space. Find Openlands on the Web at www.Openlands.org.

Creative Acquisitioning in Action

Have you ever biked, hiked or run along a public path and wondered what it would be like to live in one of the houses or condos you can see from the path? The developer of a 32-unit condo and townhouse development, just steps from a public park along the Chicago River, was betting on the desirability of the units, based partly on their proximity to recreational amenities. But when a loan came due and only 25 percent of the units were pre-sold, the developer was willing to talk to Openlands about selling the land for an addition to the City of Chicago's Ronan Park. "The playing field has really been leveled in this economy," explains Robert Megquier, Openlands' Land Preservation director. "Land that was not for sale during a boom real estate market is now available."

Openlands purchased the parcel and held it for just less than a year while the City of Chicago assembled funding and processed the necessary approvals to acquire it from Openlands. Openlands turned the property over to the City of Chicago in July 2009, creating additional open space in a neighborhood considerably underserved by parks.

The Northbrook Park District recently capitalized on the opportunity created by a motivated seller, when it asked Openlands to help it acquire land for a new neighborhood park. The park district's comprehensive planning documents established the area as non-served and needing a park in that location. Openlands purchased a three-quarter acre lot, including a single-family residence, while the Northbrook Park District sought grant funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, conducted public outreach and site design work, obtained village re-zoning on the property and solicited bids for demolition of the house. Fourteen months later, with an award of \$339,500 in OSLAD grant funds in hand, the Northbrook Park District was able to buy the property from Openlands and began the development of a multi-use park.



The background of the entire page is a solid orange color. Overlaid on this background are the silhouettes of several children, their arms raised in the air, suggesting a joyful or celebratory moment. The silhouettes are in a darker shade of orange than the background.

9

steps

TO A HEALTHY CAMP

by Barry Garst, Linda Ebner Erceg, Susan Baird and Sandra Thompson

Since the outbreak of H1N1 during the summer of 2009, camps have been diligently updating their health and safety practices for the management of communicable diseases. By using information from the Centers for Disease Control, the American Camp Association® and the Association of Camp Nurses, camps are improving their health practices by incorporating new knowledge into their day-to-day operations.

Developing sound practices for health and safety conditions requires careful monitoring of the factors that cause significant injury and illness events in camps. New information about promising practices of healthy camps is available now from the Healthy Camp Study, and camps can take advantage of what the camp community has learned to implement proactive health care strategies.

Here are nine steps you can incorporate into your camp operations to improve the well-being of campers and staff involved in your program.



Step #1 Stress Safety

Research on injury rates from camps and youth sports shows that children are less likely to be injured in day and resident camps than in organized sports in which youth are involved. Camp professionals should promote the safety of the camp experience to parents, caregivers and the public.

Step #2 Encourage Campers to Take Sick Days as Needed

Children are more likely to become ill at camp – or to spread a communicable disease to others – than they are to become injured. One of the most important things parents can do to improve a child's summer camp experience is to keep a child home when he or she is sick. Camp professionals should educate parents and caregivers about their roles in injury and illness prevention at camp. A parent flyer titled, "A Healthy Camp Starts at Home," is available through the American Camp Association with key messages for parents. Visit www.acacamps.org/research/enhance/reduce_injury_illness_resources.php for more information.

Step #3 Perform Health Screenings

Health screening can substantially reduce the spread of illness in camps. Conduct screening procedures to minimize the potential that ill campers will impact the camp community. Don't forget that screening starts at home when parents decide if their children are well enough to attend camp. Parents should be aware of a program's criteria for inclusion based on a child's health.

Monitoring Camp Injuries and Illnesses

The American Camp Association®, in cooperation with Nationwide Children's Hospital and The Ohio State University and the Association of Camp Nurses, has completed four years of the five-year Healthy Camp Study, a national injury and illness monitoring program in U.S. camps. More than 180 day and resident camps have participated in the study to date, submitting weekly on-line reports of significant injury and illness events experienced by campers and staff. The consistency of the results over the past four years of the study has provided insights into organizational practices for the health and safety of campers and staff.

The Healthy Camp Study, funded by the Markel Insurance Company, an ACA Mission Partner, is the only national study of camper and staff injuries and illnesses. The study began in 2006 and will end after the summer of 2010. The goals of the study are to improve the overall camper experience, improve staff effectiveness and, eventually, to lower camp healthcare costs.

Using an on-line reporting tool (CAMP RIO™), "reporters" identified at each participating camp (e.g., director, camp physicians, nurses, EMTs or other healthcare staff) entered injury and illness data for campers and staff for each week of summer camp. Not every injury and illness was entered into CAMP RIO, only those that matched specific criteria. For day camps, injuries and illnesses that took campers and staff out of the camp experience for more than one hour were included. For resident camps, an injury or illness had to take campers and staff out of the camp experience for more than four hours to be included in the study.

At the end of each summer of the Healthy Camp Study, each participating camp receives an injury and illness report specific for that camp, which it can use for health and risk management planning. Information about enrolling in the Healthy Camp Study can be found at the end of this article.



Markel Insurance Company

Step #4 Plan for Outbreaks

When outbreaks such as H1N1, Norovirus or lice occur, camps can access a range of reliable resources to manage these situations effectively. Available resources include existing emergency plans, ACA's crisis response toolkit, and ACA/CDC H1N1 response recommendations. Your camp's plan should be evaluated and updated regularly.

Step #5 Prepare Campers for Risks

Don't forget the basics. Remember, the camp experience comes with some unique inherent risks, which may be different than those children experience in a typical day at home, such as slips and falls on uneven surfaces or unfamiliar terrain. Directors and staff have critical roles to play in preparing children for a healthy and safe camp experience. For example, make closed-toed shoes and protective equipment mandatory for all applicable activities. No exceptions! Camp Professionals should also continue to evaluate slip, trip or fall hazards.





Step #6 Use Knives Safely and Properly, if at All

Campers and staff are sustaining injuries associated with knives and other sharp objects. Train both paid and volunteer staff (and campers, if applicable) to handle and store knives appropriately. Require staff to attend knife safety training and demonstrate mastery of the safe use of a knife.

Step #7 Supervise Campers, Even During “Down Time”

A high percentage of adverse events are occurring in day camps during less structured time (for example, free time) when supervision may vary. Camp professionals should clearly define for staff the behaviors that reflect appropriate supervision during less structured time.

Step #8 Stay Well Rested

Data from the Healthy Camp Study continues to point to fatigue as a contributing factor to injury and illness. Develop staff policies that reinforce how important it is that staff members take proper care of themselves, including sufficient amounts of rest.

Step #9 Do Your Homework

The ACA provides a wide range of educational resources to help camp professionals and parents make good health-related decisions for children, including injury and illness prevention on-line courses, which have been shown to be effective in reducing injuries in targeted areas. Camps participating in the Healthy Camp Study in the summer of 2010 will receive a free CD copy of ACA's injury and illness prevention e-courses.

Access and incorporate ACA injury and illness prevention information and resources. Start at the ACA Web site, www.acacamps.org/einstitute/healthycamp.

Joining the Healthy Camp Study

Camps across the country are benefiting from the information they're learning about injuries and illnesses at their camp. With only one more year left in the Healthy Camp Study, if your camp isn't already involved, the time to join the study is now. You will get camp-specific information to enhance your camp's risk assessment, management and safety programs. Participation is free and confidential, and no special affiliation is required. Your camp does not have to be ACA accredited to participate. Visit www.acacamps.org/research/enhance/reduce_injury_illness.php for more information.

Barry A. Garst, PhD is the director of program development and research application at the American Camp Association.

Linda Ebner Erceg, RN, MS, PHN is the associate director for health and risk management at Concordia Language Villages in Minnesota and a member of the Association of Camp Nurses.

Susan Baird, RN, MPH is a retired camp nurse and a member of the Association of Camp Nurses.

Sandra Thompson, CPRP is recreation supervisor for the Crystal Lake Park District.

PEOPLE & PLACES



Frankfort Park District Executive Director Retires

After 40 years in the parks and recreation field, Frankfort Park District Executive Director **Jeff Boubelik**, retired on April 30. Boubelik served as the director in Frankfort for the past 11 years. His many years of service in parks and recreation include serving as the director of the Hazel Crest Park District for nine years, as director of the Dolton Park District for 11 years and as director of the Lan-Oak Park District for nine years.

"Parks and recreation has been a wonderful career choice for me. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the people of the communities I have worked in," said Boubelik.

Throughout his career, Boubelik has served on numerous boards, advisory commissions and local organizations. He has been a member of Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) since 1971 and served as a member of its board from 1995 to 1997. Additionally, he was a founding member and two-time president of the South Suburban Park and Recreation Professional Association (SSPRPA). He has been a member of National Recreation and Park Association since 1977. He has received the 2000 IPRA President's Award, the 2005 SSPRPA Professional of the Year Award, and in 2010 he was named the Illinois Association of Park Districts Honored Professional.

Although Boubelik plans to remain active in the field after retirement, he and his wife Jan hope to spend a great deal of time at their home in Colorado and with their grandchildren in Indiana.



Frankfort Park District Hires New Executive Director

The Frankfort Park District has hired **Tom Carstens** as its new executive director to succeed **Jeff Boubelik**, who retired on April 30.

Before joining the Frankfort Park District, Carstens worked for 14 years at the Bolingbrook Park District and most recently served as that agency's deputy director/director of recreation, revenue facilities and marketing. While at Bolingbrook, Carstens developed and started the Bolingbrook/Romeoville Character Counts Coalition, expanded programs and facilities to accommodate a rapidly growing community and won the Illinois Park & Recreation Association's

Chairman's Award in 2006. Carstens also played an instrumental role in the Bolingbrook Park District winning the National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal in 1999.

Carstens has a bachelor's degree from North Central College, where he majored in recreation administration and psychology.

Carstens's official start date will be May 24.

The Frankfort Park District Park Board of Commissioners used the IAPD Director Search Service in the process of hiring its new executive director.

Oak Brook Park District Hires New Executive Director

Dr. Laure Kosey, CPRP, is Oak Brook Park District's new executive director. Dr. Kosey, who holds several degrees, including a B.A. in financial management and marketing, an M.S. in athletic administration and a doctorate in education with a focus on curriculum studies, was previously employed as the director of parks and recreation for the Village of Riverside. Dr. Kosey has extensive experience in grant procurement, programming, sponsorship fulfillment, fundraising, capitol projects and special events. At the Oak Brook Park District, she assumes responsibility for the Family Recreation Center, the fitness center, an indoor family aquatic center and a racquet club, as well as a banquet room. She oversees a full-time staff of 27 and a part-time staff of more than 100.





Lemont's Treasurer Becomes its New Executive Director

Louise Egofske is the new executive director of the Lemont Park District. She succeeds **Brian Sullivan**, who accepted a similar position with the Morton Park District. Egofske became the district's treasurer last year. She is a CPA who had been a senior accounts manager at US Foods prior to joining the Park District.

Park District Board Vice President **Michael J. Colaizzi** points to Egofske's 20 years of experience as a corporate financial

executive as a big plus. "Her fresh outlook, as well as her financial background should make us fiscally responsible to the community, especially after opening a new 70,000-square-foot fitness and aquatic center," said Colaizzi.

Read More People and Places Online

Want to know more about the latest milestones, hires, promotions and award-winners in the Illinois park and recreation industry? Keep up with the latest happenings with the new online supplement to People & Places, *More People & Places*, found at the IAPD's Web site. Go to the home page, www.ILparks.org, and look for the More People & Places button near the top, or go to the "Publications" button on the left of the page and choose "Illinois Parks and Recreation Magazine" from the fly-out menu.

You can be alerted to the latest online People & Places postings by following the magazine on Twitter at twitter.com/ILParksMagazine.

Want to submit news from your agency for inclusion in People & Places? E-mail information and jpegs to IAPD@ILparks.org. Jpegs should be 300 dpi at about 2 inches tall.



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It's also a convenient opportunity for you to make tips or suggestions for future issues.

Bolingbrook Park District Announces New Executive Director

The Bolingbrook Park District Board of Commissioners announced **Susan Hoster-Suggs** as its new executive director in January. Hoster-Suggs has more than 23 years



of public administration experience, including 13 years in parks and recreation with the Bolingbrook Park District. She previously served as the district's director of finance, technology and human resources. Prior to joining the Bolingbrook Park District, she served as finance director for the Orland Fire Protection District.

Hoster-Suggs holds a B.A. in political science from Lewis University. She currently serves as the finance chair for the Park District Risk Management Association (PDRMA). Hoster-Suggs has received the IPRA Administrative and Finance Professional of the Year. She has also served as the chair of IPRA's Technology Committee, authored technology-specific articles and served as a presenter at the IAPD/IPRA annual conference. She was awarded the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for nine years straight.

Volunteers Needed for Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair - Saturday, August 21

The Illinois Association of Park Districts is seeking volunteers to assist with Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair, one of the largest outdoor public awareness events for park districts, forest

preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies.

Volunteers receive free parking and free admission to the Illinois State Fair on Saturday, August 21. If you are interested in volunteering, register online or download a registration form at www.ILparks.org. Click on "Calendar of Events" on the left, scroll down to August and click on "Park District Conservation Day."



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Source: Illinois Park Districts: Citizen Perspectives, a report of the University of Illinois Office of Recreation and Park Resources, Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, March 2007.



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