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PARKS AND RECREATION

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



the future of park & facility construction

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IN THIS ISSUE



- 4 **From the Editor**
- 6 **Get on Board**
Developing the Leader Within
- 8 **Eye on the Profession**
IPRA Annual Update
- 10 **Statehouse Insider**
Spring Session Underway With Thousands of New Bills Introduced
- 12 **2019 Best of the Best Awards Gala Winners**
- 16 **Reimagining Facilities & Parks For a New Decade**
- 20 **Accessibility is a Four Letter Word... When Done Wrong**
- 26 **New Concepts to Encourage Outdoor Health & Wellness For All Ages**
- 32 **A Photo Finish**
See the winning photos from the 2019 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest!
- 34 **People and Places**
Updates and tributes in the park, recreation and conservation family

FROM THE EDITOR

When I became Publications Director last September, I was new to not only the Illinois Association of Park Districts but to the field of parks and recreation as a whole. My experience in journalism and the legislature showed me the importance of parks and outdoor activity, but I had (and have) a lot to learn.



Diving into preparations for the annual IAPD Best of the Best awards gala in my first month on the job was a great way to start. Agencies from all over the state were recognized for their dedication to improving the quality of life for the people of Illinois. Preparing for the event helped me not only learn about Illinois' excellent park and recreation system, but also about how parks and facilities have changed over the years.

We recognized a huge milestone at the gala last year; the Peoria Park District, the oldest and largest park district in Illinois, celebrated its 125th anniversary. This district was established before the use of electricity, cars or telephones was widespread and today couples technology with features like a zoo, children's museum and botanical gardens. Likewise, the gala celebrated agencies that are embracing change in their facilities through green practices, community partnerships and innovative uses of space.

In this issue, we explore top trends in recreation in *Reimagining Facilities and Parks for a New Decade* on page XX. *New Concepts to Encourage Outdoor Health and Wellness for All Ages* on page XX details some exciting ways to change the way we play outside. And *Accessibility Is a Four-Letter Word...When Done Wrong* on page XX shares information on accessibility laws and regulations so agencies can make sure their facilities are compliant.

As we enter a new decade, it's hard to say what the future of parks and recreation will look like. But, if the people I've met so far are any indication, it's safe to say Illinois will be at the forefront of it.

— Liz Mitchell, Editor



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

Developing the Leader Within

One of the foundational principles of IAPD is to foster and promote continuous learning.

Life-long learning is the key to developing as a leader and a board member. Illinois is unique as park and recreation services are overseen by locally elected officials with a wide variety of backgrounds. Yet these boards have a like-minded commitment to community, nature, open space and health and wellness.

The formula for the success we see across Illinois in these endeavors is the ability to govern effectively. This skillset needs to be tuned up periodically so that park districts, forest preserves and conservation agencies can keep up with the fast-paced changes in demographics, societal needs and trends in recreation.

To this end, IAPD is introducing its very popular 2020 **Leadership Institute**. For those who attend, I can guarantee a game-changing experience.

Bill Graham is our presenter this year and is someone who I have personally seen teach the keys to great leadership, game changing communication and making an impact on interpersonal relationships.

Bill Graham has helped people find powerful ways to tell their stories: in theatres, on television, in the office, and in the boardroom. Today, Bill helps people communicate better as leaders, managers, educators and elected officials through keynotes, seminars and workshops.

Bill spent over a decade directing and producing at Olney Theatre in Olney, MD. There, he practiced communicating, not just in front of theatre audiences, but also before planning boards, county councils and the state legislature.

For another decade, he served as Director of Creative Affairs for Procter & Gamble Productions, producers of the longest running shows in the history of television. Head writers that he developed, and their writing teams, won Emmy Awards for Best Writing 5 of the last 7 years he was at P&G. While at P&G, he began his next career as a speaker and trainer, including collaborating with Arch Lustberg, one of the great gurus in the world of communications.

Bill is on the faculty of the US Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organization Management, the Council of State Government's legislative leadership programs, and he has served on the faculties of New York University's Tisch School for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management, and Seton Hall University's Leadership Communication program.

The IAPD **Leadership Institute** begins on May 14th with a seminar followed by three webinars and ending in September with a final seminar. I invite you to participate and continue your commitment to life-long learning.

Those who learn and apply their knowledge faster than the competition are the ones best positioned to thrive.



A brief overview follows:

Seminar 1: *Improve Your Likeability* " *Improve Your Impact*
May 14, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

What is the impact of your likeability on your ability to communicate and accomplish your goals? You hire, elect and listen to the people you like, right? If you don't like them; you don't listen, and the law of reciprocity means if you are not likeable, they won't either.

This program will guide you in becoming the best "you," so that you can make positive, likable connections through effective communication strategies.

Learning Outcomes:

- Remove your walls: understand the impact of what people see and hear
- Develop professional trust: learn the signals of competence and confidence
- Create focus: Use stories to change the way you connect and communicate

Webinar 1: *Messaging and the Media in Crisis*

Thursday, June 18th, 11 a.m. – Noon

Great messages are not just remembered. They are repeated.

- What makes a good message?
- What makes a message *repeatable*?
- In times of crisis, how do you communicate your message to the media?

In this webinar, Bill Graham will share simple steps for creating powerful messages and outline the tools necessary for delivering your messages through today's challenging media.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn six steps for crafting repeatable messages.
- Take away a prep list for success with tough interviews.
- Get tips to make on-camera interviews work for you.

Webinar 2: *High Focus Communication for Face2Face and Email*

Thursday, July 23rd, 11 a.m. – Noon

"What do you think?" That's a trick question! Most people don't really care. If you want people to listen to you, you need to talk to them about them. *They* are what interests them. So, craft what you say from their point of view.

This program will help you learn the small, focused changes that you can make to get people interested in what you say. You will discover how the same techniques work for email communication as well.

Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to craft what you say ... to reflect their world.
- Recognize the power of your pronoun choices.
- Discover how *high focus* can get people to read your email.

Webinar 3: *Your Board and Your Strategic Plan*

Thursday, August 13th, 11 a.m. – Noon

Mission: Where we are going. Strategic Plan: The roadmap for getting there.

A strategic plan is a tool that a board uses to keep their agency and staff on course. The staff manages the journey. They decide the details of the trip.

Board members and staff have important and distinct responsibilities, and problems usually occur when responsibilities are confused. This webinar will review many of the structures and concepts that can help board members successfully achieve their mission.

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand your board's value, role and responsibilities.
- Learn your strategic plan's value for keeping all stakeholders in their lane and helping everyone stay focused on the mission.
- Review pitfalls and precautions for boards and strategic planning.

Seminar 2: *Driving the Future of your Agency: Vision, Leadership and Engagement*

September 17, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Leaders are tasked with envisioning the best possible future and creating a plan to motivate and inspire others to overcome obstacles in order to make that future a reality. This program will help you gain perspectives and learn techniques for creating a successful future for your community.

Learning Outcomes:

- Recognize the power of being mission-focused while driving toward your goal
- Understand key factors for affecting change through recognition, trust and culture
- Practice and learn techniques for engaging with all stakeholders.

I encourage you to take advantage of all of IAPD's educational offerings this year. They are specifically tailored to meet your needs and continue to develop the outstanding leader that you are.

2020 CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 10
Legislative Breakfast
Champaign County Forest Preserve District

April/May
Flying 4 Kids Sake

Tuesday, April 28
Parks Day at the Capitol
Illinois State Capitol

April 28-29
Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza Hotel
Springfield, IL

Thursday, May 14
2020 IAPD Leadership Institute
Improve Your Capabilities
Improve Your Impact
Park Ridge Park District's Prospect Park
Park Ridge, IL

Monday, June 1
Cary Park District Golf Tour
Foxford Hills Golf Club
Cary, IL

Thursday, June 18
IAPD Leadership Institute
Webinar #1: Messaging and the Media in Crisis

Thursday, July 16
IAPD Leadership Classic
Hoffman Estates Park District's Bridges of Poplar Creek Country Club
Hoffman Estates, IL

Thursday, July 23
IAPD Leadership Institute
Webinar #2: High Focus Communication for Face-to-Face and Email

Thursday, August 13
IAPD Leadership Institute
Webinar #3: Your Board and Your Strategic Plan

Saturday, August 22
Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair
Springfield, IL

Monday, August 24
Fox Valley Park District Golf Tour
Orchard Valley Golf Course
Aurora, IL

Thursday, September 17
IAPD Leadership Institute
Driving the Future of your Agency: Vision, Leadership and Engagement
Park Ridge Park District's Prospect Park
Park Ridge, IL

Friday, October 16
2020 Best of the Best Awards Gala
Wheeling Park District
Chevy Chase Country Club
Wheeling, IL

Thursday, November 5
Legal Symposium
McDonald's U/Hyatt Lodge
Oak Brook, IL

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

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



By Debbie Trueblood, CAE
IPRA Executive Director

IPRA Annual Update

For those who missed the IAPD/IPRA Conference or the IPRA Annual Business Meeting held at conference, I wanted to share with you the highlights of the presentations made. Before I do so, I realized at conference this year that some commissioners who are new don't know what IPRA is all about. In short, IPRA is the association for park and recreation professionals and IAPD is the association for commissioners and the agency as a whole. Jointly we serve the park and recreation community in Illinois and share our joint conference and this joint magazine.

2019 was a great year for IPRA! We celebrated our 75th anniversary! I spent the year traveling Illinois, meeting with members as part of the "75 Conversations Tour." My rules were to meet with any many individuals as possible, to never count more than 2 people in a room towards my goal of at least 75, and to ensure the focus of the tour was on listening to members. In total, I met with 147 individuals this year, nearly doubling my goal of 75, in addition to the many others who were part of the tour but exceeded my "two in a room" rule. I want to thank each person who shared their time and thoughts with me. I greatly enjoyed the tours of your parks, trails, zoos, facilities, playgrounds, and our conversations. Your suggestions have already been incorporated into our strategic plan. With your feedback, IPRA will become even better.

Our financial health has never been stronger. In fact, our turnaround story has been featured in national publications and I have presented our story several times for outside associations.

The Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation gave back to the field through student and professional scholarships. IPRF also sponsored ProConnect and Joint Section Education.

We formed a Diversity Leadership Task Force, focused on a) creating enhanced career opportunities for individuals of diverse backgrounds, b) providing resources for agencies who wish to become a more welcoming environment, and c) ensuring IPRA is a welcoming place for all people.

We advanced the conference, creating the new Unplug and Play Space, introduced our mascot, Parker the Chipmunk, and we created new session formats. For example, we hope

you enjoyed the new Municipal Roundtable session and the fireside chat with Kyle Schulze, the "Deaf Ninja" from "American Ninja Warriors."

We formed a Board of Regents to oversee our Road Show program, along with our partner, Western Illinois University, ensuring that the in-person education we bring to each region meets members' needs.

Unplug Illinois Day debuted in July 2019. We will be expanding the Unplug Illinois program this year with our partner, a5 Marketing and Branding, and expanding Unplug Illinois Day on July 11, 2020 to include many more agencies statewide.

IPRA announced our three new partnerships with PlayCore, Sourcewell, and National Fitness Campaign.



Our educational programs have gone national! Our webinar series now allows our sister state associations to offer our program to their members. Nine states have signed on to partner with us in 2020!

We represented IPRA nationally. IPRA was a finalist for a national public relations award for our "75 Stories" publication. We presented on behalf of IPRA at numerous conferences. Further, we were featured in national industry publications four times.

We supported students, faculty, and universities. We rolled out free dues for faculty. IPRA and IPRF each donated \$1,500 to support the organization that accredits park and recreation university programs, COAPRT. We also worked with Western Illinois University to publish a new Career Toolkit for professionals. The toolkit is available for members on our website to help you plan your careers.

We continued our partnership with University of St Francis for our ProConnect mentoring program and changed ProConnect to better meet your needs.

Membership numbers are at an all-time high. We have kept dues low for everyone, and have invested in programs and benefits to better serve you. We are grateful for the volunteers who support these programs. We couldn't do it without you. The result is that membership satisfaction has now reached 98.7% satisfied!

As we turn the calendar to 2020, we will be forming a new task force to identify new member benefits for professionals at forest preserves and conservation districts.

We will be hosting a job fair for to help you hire part time, seasonal staff, and interns.

HR Source has published the newest edition of the annual salary survey including more job titles, and it is available via the IPRA website.

We will be entering a new playground matching grant cycle with our partner PlayCore and their affiliates Gametime and Cunningham Recreation. The grant cycle and related five, free educational programs statewide will be starting the first week of March. Thank you for your ongoing partnership. To date, more playgrounds have been installed in Illinois through this program than any other state. We have a friendly competition with California to keep this title.

We are thrilled to announce a new partnership with Sourcewell. They are a government entity who offers a cooperative purchasing program, with over 300 awarded vendors on contract. They have 50,000 members nationally and they conduct competitive bidding. Thank you for your partnership. We are so excited about this new partnership.

We are also thrilled to announce our partnership with the National Fitness Campaign, or NFC. They are a health initiative based around the idea of installing outdoor "fitness courts" on the same footprint of tennis courts. NFC will award up to 10 agencies in Illinois a \$25k grant towards their fitness court purchase. NFC will also help agencies with fundraising. We look forward to this collaboration. Thank you, NFC.

Together, these three partnerships represent a combined potential of \$95,000 for IPRA and IPRF over the next two years. We are so grateful for these partners. Their support for IPRA and our members will allow us to keep costs down for you, subsidize programs, and create new member benefits.

In summary, we've had a great year and I look forward to 2020 as we Learn, Connect, and Inspire together! Thank you.

Upcoming Events

May 7, 2020

Park Pursuit Palatine

The 14th Annual Park Pursuit, sponsored by IRPA's Recreation (REC) Section, is modeled after the Emmy Award-winning reality television series 'The Amazing Race'. The event provides park district professionals with the opportunity to engage in a half-day race where team building, healthy competition, and recreation take center stage. The objective is for teams to complete a series of mental and physical challenges in a race to finish the course ahead of the competition. Recreational and Competitive divisions are available, so there is something for everyone.

Various dates

CPRP Prep Courses Chicago

Certified Park and Recreation Professional, or CPRP is a national certification program through the National Recreation and Park Association, and it is designed for park and recreation professionals that wish to put their career on the path to

success. Achieving and maintaining this nationally recognized certification illustrates a commitment to professional growth as well as an intricate understanding of key concepts within the field of parks and recreation. The exam prep program consists of four classes that will train and prepare participants to sit for the CPRP exam. Each class consists of learning modules that cover different areas of the exam: Human Resources, Communications, Finance, Programming, and Operations. Come learn and network with aspiring CPRP's and join an elite group of professionals that have committed to advancing the field of parks and recreation.

July 11, 2020

Unplug Illinois Day State-wide

On Saturday, July 11, 2020, communities across Illinois will celebrate Unplug Illinois Day! People will ditch their electronic devices and 'unplug' to enjoy everything their local park and recreation agencies have to offer. Unplug Illinois encourages people to get out, unplug, play, and engage with each other through experiences at local park and recreation agencies.

For details and registration, please visit the IPRA event calendar at Ilipra.org



Unplug Illinois Day Saturday, July 11, 2020

On Saturday, July 11, 2020, communities across Illinois will celebrate Unplug Illinois Day! People will ditch their electronic devices and 'unplug' to enjoy everything their local park and recreation agencies have to offer.

Unplug Illinois encourages people to get out, unplug, play, and engage with each other through experiences at local park and recreation agencies.

What's your outlet?
unplugillinois.org





Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Spring Session Underway With Thousands of New Bills Introduced

As this issue goes to press, the second year of the 101st General Assembly is well underway with legislators having introduced thousands of new bills since the beginning of the calendar year. When added to the number of bills that were filed last year, there are now more than 9,700 total bills that have been filed in the 101st General Assembly.

IAPD has spent many hours reviewing the details of each of these bills for their potential impact on park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies, and we are currently tracking more than 900 bills. Throughout the Spring Session, we will also be reviewing hundreds of amendments to these bills and updating our bill tracking list.

As always, IAPD will keep members updated on the latest developments during the Spring Session through Legislative Updates and Alerts, but it is important to note that members can also stay connected through our “Bill Tracker” on the IAPD website. In addition to the current status of all legislation we are tracking, important legislative deadlines and legislative awareness events are also easily accessible 24-hours a day, 7 days a week through the Legal & Legislative Update hyperlink on the IAPD homepage at ILparks.org.

IAPD Platform Addition

The IAPD Legislative Platform is a two-year platform that spans the two-year cycle of the General Assembly. With the support of the IAPD membership, all seven IAPD Platform bills were already approved and signed into law during the first year of the 101st General Assembly. This year, we have added one additional platform initiative.

HB 4405 (Burke, K.) / SB 2956 (Manar, A.) will clarify that OSLAD grant agreements may be extended for a period longer than two years to allow grantees to complete approved projects and receive reimbursement. Historically, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources routinely granted extensions, but the current OSLAD grant manual indicates that the Department believes they are unable to grant extensions to the two-year agreement.

While the two-year grant term limitation is not an issue for most OSLAD grants, unforeseen circumstances such as weather

delays, the seasonal timing of a grant award, or contractor disputes could trigger the need for an extension to an OSLAD grant agreement to allow for project completion. This IAPD platform initiative will address any confusion regarding the ability to extend OSLAD grants in the future.

Other Newly Introduced Bills with the Potential to Impact the IAPD Membership

While it is still too early in the legislative process to know which proposals will have support to move forward this spring, the bills below provide a small sample of those we are closely tracking because of the potential impact on IAPD member agencies. As a reminder, all bills that were not signed into law or vetoed during the first year of the 101st General Assembly are also still viable, so we are continuing to closely track those bills as well.

HB 4062 (McDermed, M.) amends the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act to add “youth athletic program workers” to the list of mandated reporters and defines “youth athletic program worker” to mean an individual performing services for a youth athletic program including, but not limited to, coaches, doctors, and program employees. The bill would also require a youth athletic program to have a background check performed for each such worker by a reputable, licensed third-party vendor to include driving records and multijurisdictional state, county and federal criminal records searches.

HB 4241 (Walker, M.) would amend the PTELL to limit the exclusion for new property from the limiting rate calculation to only 50% of the value rather than 100% beginning with levy year 2021.

HB 4415 (DeLuca, A.) would attempt to address the longstanding problem caused by unfunded mandates by making any future unfunded mandate void and unenforceable if the mandate necessitates additional expenditures from local government revenues unless the General Assembly makes necessary appropriations to implement the mandate.

HB 4454 (Robinson, L., Jr.) would require governmental units to adopt an ordinance or resolution establishing a policy of diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence training.

HB 4494 (Ugaste, D.) amends the Bond Authorization Act to provide that the authority of a public corporation to levy taxes in connection with the payment of bonds or other evidences of indebtedness ceases upon the maturity date of the bond or other evidence of indebtedness or upon the discharge of the debt, whichever comes first.

HB 4580 (Wehrli, G.) would require all open meetings to be audio recorded by the public body, and the recordings maintained for at least one year after the date of the meeting for which the recording was made.

HB 4652 (Mazzochi, D.) would require all taxing districts, other than financially distressed school districts, to annually certify their levy on or before the third Tuesday in December rather than the last Tuesday in December.

HB 4691 (Keicher, J.) would create the Decennial Committees on Local Government Consolidation and Efficiency Act and would require within one year and at least once every 10 years thereafter, each unit of local government (except municipalities and counties) to form a committee to study local efficiencies, including an analysis of whether to consolidate with another governmental unit, municipality, or county and create a report with recommendations regarding efficiencies, increased accountability, and consolidation. The committee would be composed of the elected members of the local government's governing board, at least 2 residents of the governmental unit appointed by the county board chair, at least one government studies representative from a community college or university in the county where the local government is located, and the chief executive officer of the governmental unit. A report would be due within 6 months of the date the committee was formed.

HB 4762 (Ugaste, D.) would prohibit a taxing district from holding more than 150% of its previous levy year's property tax collections in cash or cash-equivalent assets. If, at the end of any fiscal quarter, the taxing district had more than that amount in cash or cash-equivalent assets, then the excess amount would have to be refunded to taxpayers pro rata based on each taxpayer's percentage of the total levy for the previous year.

HB 5021 (Stava-Murray, A.) would amend FOIA to prohibit a public body from charging a copying fee to a taxpayer within the jurisdiction of the public body unless the request is made for a commercial purpose.

HB 5661 (Walker, M.) would amend PTELL to provide that a taxing district's aggregate extension base is the greater of (A) the district's last preceding aggregate extension limit or (B) the district's last preceding aggregate extension, subject to certain adjustments. "Aggregate extension limit" would equate to the district's last preceding aggregate extension if the taxing district had utilized the maximum limiting rate permitted without referendum for each of the 5 immediately preceding levy years.

SB 2339 (McConchie, D.) and **HB 5660 (Walker, M.)** would amend the PTELL to require a taxing district to reduce its aggregate extension base for the purpose of lowering its limiting rate for future years upon referendum approval initiated by the submission of a petition signed by at least 10% of the voters of the district at the immediately preceding gubernatorial election.

SB 2511 (Holmes, L.) and **HB 5091 (Kifowit, S.)** would provide immunity to a public entity or a public employee for injury caused by any unauthorized access to government records, data, or electronic information systems by any person or entity under the Tort Immunity Act.

SB 2999 (Castro, C.) and **HB 5253 (Hurley, F.)** would create the Forest Preserve District and Conservation District Design-Build Authorization Act to allow a forest preserve district or conservation district to enter into design-build contracts. The bill would also amend the Conservation District Act, Downstate Forest Preserve District Act, and Cook County Forest Preserve District Act to increase the bid limit threshold from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

SB 3225 (Barickman, J.) would amend the Compassionate Use of Medical Cannabis Program Act to require a park district to authorize a program participant's parent, guardian, or other designated caregiver to administer a medical cannabis infused product to the program participant on the premises of the park district if both the program participant and the parent, guardian, or other designated caregiver are cardholders. The bill provides that a member of the park district's staff is not required to administer a medical cannabis infused product to a program participant and prohibits a park district from authorizing the use of a medical cannabis infused product if the park district would lose federal funding as a result of the authorization.

SB 3311 (Peters, R.) would require park districts, forest preserves, municipal recreation agencies and other entities to test each source of potable water in each of its public buildings and parks and notify the public of the results. The proposed legislation contains some requirements for testing and notification but proposes to defer other details such as compliance schedules, the procedure for submission of analytical results to the Department of Public Health, testing parameters, remediation requirements, and validation for remediation to the rulemaking process.

SB 3796 and **SB 3797 (Plummer, J.)** would require a unit of local government to compile a list of the pay and benefits of every employee, consultant, contractor, and other personnel of the unit of local government whose accumulated payments or compensation are at least \$1,000 during each fiscal year and a list of each entity, address of each entity, product or service supplied by each entity, and amount paid to each entity for any expenditure of government funds greater than \$3,000 from the unit of local government during a fiscal year. These lists would need to be published on the local government's website and updated monthly and, if it does not have a website, in a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the unit of local government is located, on a monthly basis.



2020
IAPD/IPRA
**SOARING to
NEW HEIGHTS**

CONFERENCE AWARDS

IAPD LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR



Senator Laura Fine

Since joining the General Assembly as a member of the House of Representatives in 2013, State Senator Laura Fine has been a leading voice for parks and recreation.

She has been the chief sponsor of two IAPD platform bills: Senate Bill 246, which exempts purchases of fuel and petroleum products from the competitive bidding requirements under the park district code, and House Bill 1363, which helps promote intergovernmental cooperation between park districts and other units of local government.

As a member of the Senate Local Government Committee, Senator Fine has been a strong voice on many issues that are important to IAPD member agencies, and she regularly attends IAPD legislative awareness events.

the maximum term for leasing real property that is no longer needed for park purposes from 50 years to 90 years. Senate Bill 1273 will help protect taxpayers in land transactions by ensuring that park districts receive fair market value for their property.

Senator Curran was also instrumental in supporting capital funding for local park and recreation facilities this year.

Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch

Since joining the General Assembly in 2013, Representative Welch has been one of IAPD's strongest allies.

Representative Welch has been the sponsor of two IAPD platform bills. Thanks to his leadership, House Bill 2124 was signed into law last year, extending the closed meeting exception for employees to also cover volunteers and independent contractors such as coaches and recreational instructors. During his first year in the General Assembly, Representative Welch also sponsored Senate Bill 1410, which provided park districts with the ability to use a streamlined process to spend unexpected revenues during the fiscal year by adopting a supplemental appropriation ordinance.

Representative Welch has also been a tremendous advocate when it comes to grant funding for local capital projects that improve the quality of life of Illinois residents and help grow the economy.



Senator John Curran

State Senator John Curran has been a strong proponent for local government since joining the Illinois Senate in 2017. He consistently fights for local control, and as the minority spokesperson on the Senate Local Government Committee, he has been a reliable supporter of IAPD initiatives and helped in the fight against unfunded mandates.

This past year, Senator Curran was the chief sponsor of two of IAPD's platform bills. House Bill 2073 nearly doubles



IAPD RISING STAR AWARD

Ted Schulz, Board President

New Lenox Community Park District

Ted Schulz began his journey with the New Lenox Community Park District in 2013 and was elected by his park board peers to serve as vice president in 2015 and president in 2018. In addition to performing his job at an exemplary level, Ted demonstrates an outstanding commitment to the New Lenox Community and to park district staff. Ted keeps the park district's mission of quality community life close at heart in everything he does.



IPRA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Michael Loszach, Program Manager
Park District of Oak Park

Mike Loszach is driven and passionate and keeps a positive attitude in any situation. His drive to improve the quality of his programs and the impact of his agency is evident through the work he does. In Mike's current role, he oversees all general recreation programming, four full-time employees, and more than 100 seasonal and part-time staff. Mike embodies the spirit of being in "the business of fun" by keeping a good balance of professionalism and sense of humor.



IAPD HONORED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Jan Arnold, Executive Director
Park District of Oak Park

Jan Arnold is living out her calling as executive director of the Park District of Oak Park. Her passion for the park district shines through in everything she does. Jan maintains excellent relationships with representatives in Springfield and creates strong partnerships with community organizations. Jan has worked diligently to promote sustainability, one of the park district's main focal points. She has made a tremendous impact on the Park District of Oak Park.

IPRA COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

Brad Wilson, Director of Recreation and Facilities
Naperville Park District

Brad Wilson has built an impressive career as a recreation leader. For the past 20-plus years, he has stewarded his knowledge and skill to fulfill the community's recreational needs. He is also a decorated administrator, with honors bestowed by the Naperville Jaycees and Rotary Club. Brad Wilson's name is synonymous with leadership in recreation. His ability to build relationships and advance the park district has made recreation more accessible and integrated into the fabric of everyday life.

IAPD MIKE CASSIDY COMMISSIONER COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

James M. Long, Board President, Westmont Park District



Jim Long joined the Park Board in 1982 and has been at the head of the table for every discussion, negotiation, policy decision and visionary action that has shaped the park district since then. Jim's vast knowledge and experience as a banker, real estate developer and broker has proved immeasurable, along with his perspective as a loving husband, father and grandfather. Time after time, Jim was the driving force behind a new project, land acquisition or creative idea that kept the park district relevant and forward thinking.

IPRA PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sandy Gbur, Executive Director, Western DuPage Special Recreation Association



Sandy Gbur has committed her professional life to promoting the benefits of parks and recreation throughout Illinois and introducing individuals with disabilities to the joy of participating in recreational activities in the communities she has served. As executive director for the past eight-plus years, she develops and manages a \$4 million budget with 31 full-time and regular part-time staff serving nine park district communities. Sandy has made a long-lasting impact on the communities she has served and on the park and recreation profession.



IAPD COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Wally Frasier, Board Vice President
Mundelein Park & Recreation District

Wally Frasier is a shining example of commitment to his community and the field of parks and recreation. He has spent a cumulative 26 years on the Mundelein Park & Recreation District's Board of Commissioners since first joining in 1982, serving as president, vice president and treasurer. For countless individuals, Wally Frasier has been both a mentor and a friend. His dedication and service to his community and the field of parks and recreation is unmatched. He is truly a model citizen, and no person is more deserving of this award.



IPRA ROBERT ARTZ LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Amy Charlesworth, Director of Parks and Recreation
Rolling Meadows Park District

Amy Charlesworth has held almost every position within the Rolling Meadows Park District and has built it into an impressive, accredited, financially healthy, gold medal award finalist agency. Amy's hard work has established the park district as a pillar of the community. She lives and breathes the ethic of her community. From participants to neighbors to other local government officials, everyone in town knows and loves her. She has left an impact that reaches back through the years and will continue for generations to come.

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Cindy Kessler, Vernon Hills Park District
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Park District



IAPD CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Adriane Johnson, Buffalo Grove Park District

Johnson joined the IAPD board in 2015. As chairman, she will lead the 19-member board in advising the association in its service, research, advocacy, public awareness and educational programs. IAPD's membership includes more than 360 park, recreation and conservation agencies and nearly 100 affiliated business partners. Johnson serves on the IAPD Ambassadors, Board Development, Constitutional By-Laws, Executive, Membership, Nominating and Program

Committees, as well as the Research Advisory Council. She also serves on the IAPD/Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) Joint Editorial Committee, is the Events Chair of the IAPD/IPRA Conference Committee and is a member of the IAPD/IPRA Joint Legislative Committee.



2020 CHAIRMAN OF THE IPRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Erin Folk, Oregon Park District

The Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) has installed Erin Folk, executive director of the Oregon Park District, as its 2020 Chairman of the Board at the association's annual conference, held January 23-25 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Erin has been with the Oregon Park District since 2006, a Certified Park and Recreation Professional, and an IPRA member since 2002. Erin was promoted to Executive Director in 2013 after serving as a Facility Manager, Superintendent of

Recreation and Assistant Executive Director. Erin served on the IPRA Foundation board in 2016 and was elected to the IPRA Board of Directors as the North West representative in 2017.

By Caius Jennison
RIBA, LEED AP, Principal, Farnsworth Group, Inc.

REIMAGINING FACILITIES & PARKS FOR A NEW DECADE

The world of sports and recreation never slows down. New technologies, new equipment, new programs and a renewed focus on the value – both social and economic – that parks and rec plays in our communities has leaders always looking to reach the next level of adventure, leisure, and services for their constituents and patrons.

Of course, the endeavor to make our parks and rec centers all they can be always faces the inherent pressures of competing interests that can derail progress. Funding continues to be a challenge, the availability of or access to open space affects many, and ongoing maintenance/operations issues can eat up plans for expansion and renewal.



The opportunity to take an existing property or facility and give it new use is both fiscally responsible and an opportunity to continue its storyline for generations to come.

Districts are getting creative in how they envision – and re- envision – their environs, and we're impressed and excited to be helping move these visions forward. Here's a few new uses we see that are gaining momentum.

Reimagining What Was

One of the most significant movements in parks and recreation – and communities in general – is reimagining what once was and making it new again. The opportunity to take an existing property or facility and give it new use is both fiscally responsible and an opportunity to continue its storyline for generations to come.

While landscape architecture used to be about planning new spaces and maintaining and enhancing what was already built, park and recreation districts are increasingly looking to reimagine and repurpose existing structures.

A good example is in Chillicothe, a central Illinois community of just over 6,000 residents, where a former park had become tired and dilapidated, attracting unruly teenagers and loiterers. The city responded to numerous complaints about the area while the park district racked up maintenance expenses resulting from vandalism. The district advocated renovating the area to not only rid itself of the nuisance issues, but to turn the space into a revitalized park that would become a destination for families in the community.

Today, the 3.5-acre park is a vibrant community gathering space that features picnic areas, playground, splash pad, sledding hill, sandlot baseball diamond and a ¼ mile walking path that attracts families year-round.

Communities are also wrestling with the declining interest in golf and what to do with courses that were packed full a

decade ago. Costs to maintain these courses are significant and continue to increase. Combine that with the trend toward fewer people golfing and subsequent dwindling revenues, and suddenly districts are saddled with significant real estate and requisite expenses that are no longer sustainable.

These expanses of land – often prime real estate – create opportunities to reimagine what these spaces could be and hold opportunity to do everything from maintaining the green space to constructing new buildings and development ... or both.

Recreation Centers – the Heart of the Community

The days of a park recreation center serving solely as an athletic facility have changed. Today, districts and communities are treating these venues as civic buildings that combine sports, fitness and wellness with community events and gathering spaces. In many instances, these new full-service recreation centers serve as the hub of a community. They serve as a common center for sports and fitness, a routine destination for young children through the elderly, a venue for meetings for groups large and small, and art presentation and performance spaces.

The community of Fairview Heights, part of the Metro East region located on the Illinois side of the Mississippi River, desired a new recreation center that would become iconic in the region. Community leaders wanted the facility to be more than a place to swim or exercise, expanding its use to be a place where people could gather as a community while attracting visitors from throughout the metropolitan area. In fact, the facility was purposefully located along Interstate 50 to make it visible to the thousands of travelers that would pass the facility daily.



The REC opened in 2019 and includes an aquatic center, running track, climbing structure, fitness center, gymnasium, outdoor soccer field, dog park and playgrounds. The REC also meets another important goal of the community: Injecting additional commerce into the surrounding area and supporting the area businesses. In its first year of operation, the REC anticipates having 3,000 members and will host more than 500,000 visitors.

Dog Parks

There's good news for our four-legged friends: Parks dedicated to dogs are becoming one of the most popular and requested additions to any park system. And why not? Pet ownership – in particular dog ownership – is at an all-time high.

Dog parks are certainly great playgrounds for dogs, and adding this amenity helps parks advance their goals of becoming destinations for the whole family. While parks now offer expanded uses including outdoor workout spaces for all ages, outdoor courts, athletic fields and fishing, the ability to bring a dog to the park with a dedicated area for them to walk and play increases opportunities to engage the family in the community park.

When the northern Illinois community of Sycamore was making plans for its new park, residents requested a dog park be included in their new space. Today, the Sycamore Park District has a 3-acre dog park with native grasses and flowers and plenty of room for dogs to play. The district combines the dog park activities with pet seminars ranging from dog training to your pet's health and wellness.

Expanded Facilities on a Budget – Splash Pads and Sled Hills

Who doesn't like running through a fountain of water? Or shooting water out of a water cannon? Splash pads are a popular and cost-effective way to add water features and

playground to any new or existing park area. Splash pads can serve two purposes: create a water play area for young kids (and maybe adults, too) and offer the aesthetic values of water fountains, sprays and nighttime lighting. In Pontiac, Illinois, leaders wanted to incorporate a splash pad into their community park. They took that idea one step further and imagined a state-of-the-art lighting system – the same lighting concepts used in Las Vegas – to illuminate the water fountains, creating a nighttime light show.

Known for being a stop on the historic Route 66 highway, the City of Pontiac welcomes visitors from all over the world. Today, visitors frequent the museums during the day, let their kids play in the park and splash pad, and then stay after dark to view the splash pad light show, resulting in an economic stimulus for the community.

Park districts are also discovering additional uses for their public spaces during the winter. Districts that are fortunate to have diverse terrain in their parks often take advantage of natural landscapes for winter sledding. But communities with flat terrains need not suffer from elevation envy.

For the Sycamore Park District, a 40-foot sled hill slope was created with the use of fill material and dirt. Donors provided dirt, minimizing the cost. In the winter, residents use the slope as the go-to sledding spot.

Likewise, residents in Chillicothe wanted a sled hill in their park. While the sled hill created in Santa Fe Park is a popular winter attraction, residents get creative in the summer by rolling plastic sheets down the hill to form a water slide.

Most challenges communities face tend to be about overcoming obstacles or resolving problems – e.g., old sewerage, crime, crumbling roads, etc. However, unlike infrastructure, police/fire protection, garbage collection and

the many other functional aspects of local government, parks and recreation is entirely devoted to the quality of life of a community. Plus, if parks and recreation facilities are developed and maintained in more comprehensive and creative ways as discussed above, the park district or department can play a growing and substantive role in adding to the community revenues to help support both the park and the community infrastructure.

The eager involvement and sustained enthusiasm that residents demonstrate when asked about improving their park districts is always impressive. Residents are given the opportunity to participate in something that allows for and indeed requires creativity, excitement and optimism.

From simple ideas – turning a sled hill into a summer water slide – to planning and constructing a new multi-million-dollar recreation center, parks are becoming the core, and sometimes the greatest pride, of the community. Today, park districts and communities are aiming to make the very most of their recreational venues – and reimagining what they can be.

Caius Jennison is the Principal in Charge of Farnsworth Group's Parks & Rec Studio, a leading Illinois architecture and engineering firm with 11 offices statewide.

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The Rec Fairview Heights, IL
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A photograph of a person sitting in a wheelchair, with their hands clasped together in a prayer-like gesture. The person is wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and blue jeans. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

ACCESSIBILITY IS A
FOUR LETTER WORD...

WHEN DONE WRONG

By John N. McGovern, JD, Principal in Charge, WT Group Accessibility Practice

A funny thing happened on the way to your ribbon-cutting...the accessibility standards changed. Accessibility, and compliance with federal, state, and local requirements, means that someone at your agency has both the authority and the knowledge to make certain that construction projects, from trails to playgrounds or pools to ice rinks, comply.

This article will review federal and state mandates in this area, identify common errors in the transition from a design to a facility packed with people, and provide strategies for park, forest preserve, and conservation districts; municipalities; and special recreation associations (SRAs) that will make certain your next project is done right, and that you will avoid the four-letter words of *cost, fail, loss, and risk*.

What is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulation?

The ADA is a broad civil rights statute. It prohibits discrimination, intentional and unintentional, against people with disabilities. No agency intentionally discriminates. But, the design of a site or site asset may unintentionally discriminate against people with disabilities because the asset or site is inaccessible.

The ADA became effective for Illinois agencies on January 26, 1992, more than 28 years ago. The US Department of Justice (US DOJ) issued an implementing regulation in 1991, and that guided us well for two decades. US DOJ issued an amended regulation for title II, which applies to units of state and local government, in 2010, and it became effective March 15, 2011. Do not ignore title II. It imposes design, construction or installation, and maintenance requirements.

That regulation requires Illinois agencies to be certain that new construction, alterations, and additions fully comply with the federal or state requirements, whichever is more stringent (see title II section 35.151). A common misconception is that the design standards rule your decisions; that is not so. The title II regulation is the big dog.

Below we discuss both the federal and state requirements.

What is Title II and What Are the Federal Accessibility Standards?

The US DOJ published the title II implementing regulation in 1991, and it requires all 89,004 units of state and local government to follow the federal design standards. The first federal design standards were published in 1991, and they became effective January 26, 1992. Known as ADAAG (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines), these were developed by the US Access Board over a 10-year span. ADAAG addressed common building elements such as parking, entries, signs, restrooms, assembly areas, drinking fountains, and more.

Realizing that ADAAG was incomplete, the Access Board worked with NRPA, IPRA, IAPD, other state associations, people with disabilities, and safety experts to create new standards for recreation assets such as playgrounds, locker

rooms, sports fields and courts, aquatic facilities, amusement parks, golf courses, fitness facilities, shooting ranges, and more. These were completed in 2004 by the Access Board and published as part of the design standards for federal agencies. In 2010, the US DOJ published the same content, and it was effective March 15, 2012 for states and local governments.

The 2010 Standards are historic, as they are the first to address recreation assets. However, the work at the federal level is not finished. The current administration will not release standards for trails, campsites, picnic areas, beaches, viewing areas, and more. These are complete but will not be published. However, these assets must still be available to people with disabilities.

What Are the Illinois Accessibility Standards?

Illinois laws preceded the ADA in the form of the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act, effective May 1987. The Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC) was adopted the same year, and like the federal statute and code, did not directly address recreation assets. The IAC was amended in 2018 to be consistent with the federal standards format and to add all federal standards or guidelines, whether adopted by US DOJ or not.

The result? Illinois now has a final and enforceable standard for trails, beaches, picnic areas, campsites, and other outdoor assets, regardless of federal activity. For several reasons, this is important. A design professional can lose her license if her design fails to meet the IAC or have his license renewal refused if he fails to meet IAC requirements. These are bad outcomes intended to incentivize forethought and plan review.

The new IAC also eliminated some provisions that were more stringent, such as the approach to alterations or additions at an existing facility. Today, federal and Illinois requirements regarding alterations or additions are in harmony.

What Are the Common Mistakes?

The ADA and IAC set a floor, not a ceiling. You invite the four-letter words of cost, fail, loss, and risk when you do not embrace the standards and instead grudgingly accept them.



Some tips to keep in mind:

- 1. Never specify the minimum requirement.** A ramp can have a maximum running slope of 8.33%. There are so many factors that affect ramp slope. Aim for 7.9% and have the flex for unanticipated field conditions or errors.
- 2. Do not specify a range.** When a range exists, pick the middle. An accessible restroom grab bar must be mounted between 33" and 36" aff. When the grab bar is centered at 36", the top of the grab bar is out of the range and is an instant fail. Pick a spot in the middle, perhaps 34.5", and let contractors center on that. You have left 1" either way...it is likely that all is well!
- 3. Cannot exceed 2% in any direction means...measure twice and pour once.** Accessible parking stalls, and the access aisle that serves the stalls, cannot be steeper than 2% in any direction. In the Land of Lincoln, that can be hard to meet at some sites.
- 4. Trust, but verify.** Every new facility, when audited, reveals access deficits. Our 39-page report after auditing a new and so-called "compliant" \$139 million facility is evidence of that. Do not assume that the best architect, the best contractor, the best suppliers, will get it right. The dissonance between design and construction is borne by the agency.
- 5. Agency project management efforts are critical.** Agency staffs must know the IAC and federal requirements, and any local requirements, such as different fine amounts for accessible parking violations. Make inservice training or continuing education an integral part of your risk management regarding accessibility.
- 6. This is not just about design.** Accessibility is a function of three elements: design, construction or installation, and maintenance. A perfectly designed facility may fail because of construction errors. Or a design with flaws, that is constructed per the design, will fail. Finally, if the owner entity does not maintain accessible features (elevators, playground surfaces, doors, etc.), the site will fail.

How Have Access Requirements Been Enforced?

The Illinois Attorney General's Disability Rights Bureau (DRB) has enforcement authority for the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act (EBA), and the 2018 Illinois Accessibility Code (IAC) has a broader scope than federal requirements. The DRB has knocked on doors in the northern suburbs, Chicago, southern Illinois, western Illinois, the northwest suburbs, the south suburbs, and eastern Illinois. DRB seeks injunctive relief, in other words, to fix the problem. However, DRB can also impose penalties if it believes the lack of access was intentional.

We do note here that the new IAC continues the practice of suspending or denying renewal for professional licenses if it determines a design professional willfully ignored an IAC requirement. This is a significant penalty for a noncompliant plan.

Federal District courts have seen facility lawsuits for everything from professional sports arenas to upscale coffee shops to taverns to golf courses. The trend is in favor of the complainant. Losing in Federal District Court is much more expensive, typically, than doing it right the first time.

In 1995, Ellerbe Becket, an architecture firm that specialized in stadia design, entered into a consent decree in Federal District Court. The firm designed several professional or collegiate sports arenas that failed to comply with the federal access requirements. Litigation like this was filed in 2019 at the University of Nevada-Reno.

Regionally, in 2008 the University of Michigan renovated the Big House and it too entered into a settlement agreement after failing to comply with ADA seating requirements. See [Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America v. University of Michigan](#). Whether you are an Illini, Hawkeye, Buckeye, or Wolverine, you do not want a lawsuit by the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

The lesson learned? The entity is responsible for an ADA fail, but so is the architect.

What Helps Agencies Avoid These Problems?

We suggest a five step approach. All will require some resources, but every one of them is less costly than going to federal district court and losing fiscal resources and the trust of your community.

- 1. Dedicate the time of a staff member to access and inclusion.** Create a go-to person who can receive complaints and solve problems.
- 2. Stay current** on changes to the regulations, standards, and codes that implement federal and state accessibility requirements. That means spending resources, for training events and staff time and travel.
- 3. Have a staff member become a Certified ADA Coordinator.** It has no prerequisite degree and exposes staff to smart practices in facility access, policies, and program supports for people with disabilities.
- 4. Create an access and inclusion advisory council.** Find citizens with disabilities and service providers to complement your own beliefs or that of your special recreation association. Once created, use them and invite their advice.

5. Ask for help! Attend sessions on this issue at the IAPD/IPRA conference. Reach out to nearby agencies and ask for referrals to qualified consultants. Do follow the leaders, not the losers.

Conclusion

Anyone who tells you in the RFQ process that the deliverable is compliant is not right until inspection occurs. As said earlier, access is a function of design, construction or installation, and maintenance.

It is your site, and your taxpayers paid for this development. Yes, your contractor and your design professional must help solve the problem, but it is your problem. Spend an ounce on prevention instead of a pound on the cure.

About the Author: McGovern leads the Accessibility Practice at the WT Group, LLC, and helps counties, cities, park districts and other entities comply with the ADA, from coast to coast. Before joining WTG, he began his parks and recreation career for the City of Albuquerque while earning a BA and MA in Recreation Administration at the University of New Mexico. He came to Illinois to work in the remarkable park district and special recreation association system, serving as Executive Director at WSSRA and NSSRA. Always interested in civil rights, he attended night school at Loyola University of Chicago School of Law and graduated in 1987. An active IPRA and NRPA member, he represented parks and recreation professionals on the US Access Board federal advisory committees that developed the design requirements for park and recreation assets. He co-chaired the IAPD/IPRA Joint Legislative Committee twice, including the year the 5-8 levy was exempted from the PTELL aggregate, and he was an active member of the Committee for more than 20 years.

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*—Oakbrook Terrace
Park District*



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NEW CONCEPTS TO ENCOURAGE

Outdoor Health & Wellness

FOR ALL AGES

by Michele Breakfield, *Cunningham Recreation Director of Marketing*

Research shows that 74 percent of kids between the ages of 5 and 12 get less than one hour of outdoor play time per day. Children 8 years of age and younger spend about 48 minutes a day in front of an iPad or mobile device. Furthermore, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average American spends 93 percent of their lives indoors, leaving only 7 percent of your entire life outdoors. That's only one half of one day per week outdoors. And we wonder why obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States.

Q. So, I ask you ---In today's digital world, how can we get children and their families to go outdoors and be more physically active for longer periods of time?

A. We need to be more creative and innovative, think multigenerational, be inclusive and provide more opportunities for communities to be physically active. *How? Let's explore a few concepts.*

INTERACTIVE PLAY

What is interactive play? Interactive play is where the digital and physical worlds around us meet. In short, it is "real-life gaming." The electronic video game portion brings challenge, problem solving and a continued renewal of game options to play. The physical portion brings benefits such as exercise, social interaction, teamwork and experiencing the outdoors in a healthy manner.

Yalp has five interactive play and sports products. Most popular, the Yalp Sona is an interactive dance and play arch. It is an audio-guided play space, especially designed for outdoor use. Games are played by motion and encourage physical activity, learning and socialization. It provides an awesome workout – 40 percent more intensive than competitive basketball. Games can be changed and updated regularly to keep continued interest and challenge for the user. Park districts can also track the play statistics—like what games are played the most, how long the equipment was in use, and when it was used.

The Yalp Sutu is an interactive soccer wall containing impact-sensitive panels which measure and react to ball impact. Vivid LED lights and audio speakers give players feedback and encouragement on their performance. Again, these type of interactive real-life gaming products give park districts the ability to change or update games regularly, and the mobile app encourages friendly competition among friends, classes and schools. It's fun for all ages and ability levels, not just avid sports fans.

Other interactive products include learning and math games, health and nutrition, and an outdoor DJ booth for those older adolescents and the musically inclined. Interactives of this type are great for city centers and retail areas. Interactive products provide all users of varying abilities the opportunity to stay fit and be physically active, along with fostering social and cognitive development. The versatility of interactive products makes them one of the most popular multigenerational play activities.

Interactive play is suitable for outdoor parks as well as indoor rec centers. Just like traditional play, interactive play can be performed anywhere. The equipment is designed to be durable, accessible and inclusive for people of all ages and abilities. Communities can easily incorporate one or two of these products into their existing parks and/or recreational facilities to encourage families to be more active, get outdoors and live healthier lifestyles.

FAMILY FIT ZONES

Family Fit Zones are multigenerational destination play and fitness parks that provide the entire family an opportunity to play, stay physically active and develop good practices for health and wellness together. Family Fit Zones can vary in size, price point and layout, but all of them should include a traditional play component, an interactive play and/or sports product, and outdoor adult fitness or obstacle course activities, along with shade, site furnishings and safety surfacing.

A few things to keep in mind when considering a Family Fit Zone:

- We all know what traditional play looks like. Just keep in mind many families will have toddlers, so the 2-5 age group should also be taken into consideration.
- Interactive play and sports products, as discussed above, bring children and families outdoors to explore this new "real-life gaming" concept.





Research proves those who exercise outdoors tend to exercise more frequently and stay with a fitness program longer than those who work out inside at a gym.

- Make sure to look for adult outdoor fitness equipment that identifies muscle fitness, balance and flexibility, and core and aerobic fitness for a well-rounded total body workout.
- Obstacle course events, like GT Challenge Course, make for a great social fitness experience that encourage friends and family to exercise and achieve their personal fitness goals while having fun outdoors. They are the perfect solution for older children and teens looking for something more challenging and different from traditional play.
- Freestanding shaded areas or shaded benches, site furnishings and various types of safety surfacing provide comfort and a better user experience.

Using these varied play and fitness components will not only give your design its own unique look, but create something that will appeal to all ages, abilities and fitness levels. They can provide adequate places for caregivers who may need to take a break or families that want to bring a lunch and stay an extended amount of time.

When planning a Family Fit Zone or a destination play or fitness park, it is important to keep in mind several things: location and accessibility, restrooms, additional amenities, and future expansion or growth. Make sure it is truly a place where the entire family can find something they like.

PLAYFUL LANDSCAPES

Playful landscapes are play spaces that offer a wide range of open-ended play options and allow people to be creative and use their imagination. Sometimes these playful

landscapes can look and feel like a natural environment, using rocks and boulders combined with nets and ropes for climbing. Most designs incorporate the topography of the land where they are building the play space, adding another element of play: for example, a hillside slide or terraced play elevation change.

These playful landscapes can also be whimsical in nature, using bright colors, ropes, nets, mounds and trampolines to push the boundaries of traditional play. They can vary in height and style. Playful landscapes can include theming elements and pieces of playful art or play sculptures. Play spaces like this encourage free play and provide opportunities for safe risk taking and challenges. These types of play spaces often draw visitors from other areas because they are different by design and have non-typical play equipment, creating one-of-kind experiences.

Providing unique recreational play and fitness spaces will not only be a great draw to your community, but also promote health and wellness. Research proves those who exercise outdoors tend to exercise more frequently and stay with a fitness program longer than those who work out inside at a gym. Not to mention the added benefits of being outdoors in nature. Those who begin to develop active lifestyles and take an interest in nature at a younger age tend to stay healthy, remain physically active longer and be a good steward of the world around them. Bringing new play and fitness concepts to your park district's community is a great way to encourage physical activity and time spent outside.



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The 2019 IP&R Magazine Photo Contest Awards

Congratulations to all our 2019 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest Winners!

The winners for the 2019 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest have officially been selected. This year, we had nearly 500 submissions in our four categories: Nature/Landscapes, Recreation/People at Play, Wildlife and Sports. Award winners were given framed copies of their photographs at the Soaring to New Heights Conference.

NATURE/LANDSCAPES

1st Place - Ryca Shih, Park District of Highland Park | *"First Sunrise"*

2nd Place - Justin Sienkiewicz, Schaumburg Park District | *"Spring in Schaumburg"*

3rd Place - Chad Merda, Forest Preserve District of Will County | *"Turkey Tail McKinley Woods"*



RECREATION/PEOPLE AT PLAY

1st Place - JP McNamara, Palatine Park District | *"Brotherly Love"*

2nd Place - Danielle Strohmier, Downers Grove Park District | *"Summer Fun"*

3rd Place - Sally Norlie, Northbrook Park District | *"Newsies Unite"*



SPORTS

1st Place - Scott Walker, Skokie Park District | *"Beginning Ballers"*

2nd Place - Becky Tilton, New Lenox Community Park District | *"Catch Me If You Can"*

3rd Place - Joy Stuart, Northbrook Park District | *"Death Spiral"*



WILDLIFE

1st Place - Jeff Nelson, Cook County Forest Preserve District | *"Pick a Good One"*

2nd Place - Rachel Voss, Champaign Park District | *"Have My Eyes On You"*

3rd Place - Suzy Lyttle, Forest Preserve District of Will County | *"Northern Water Snake Swimming"*



A heartfelt thanks to everyone who submitted a photo in 2019.



PEOPLE & PLACES



John Ohrlund

The Skokie Park District's Executive Director John Ohrlund recently retired after more than three decades in leadership roles at the award-winning district.

Among the Skokie projects he led were the renovations of the Skokie Heritage Museum, Devonshire Cultural Center, Oakton Community Center, Emily Oaks Nature Center and the Skokie Water Playground —

as well as the building of many new playgrounds, the Weber Leisure Center, Skokie Sports Park, The Exploritorium, Tot Learning Center, the Devonshire Aquatic Center and the Dammrich Rowing Center.

Ohrlund also cultivated rich relationships with the Village of Skokie, the Skokie Public Library, Skokie's school districts and the Maine-Niles Association of Special Recreation. He served on the boards of the Skokie Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club of Skokie Valley, as well as in leadership roles with Skokie Cares and the Midwest Institute of Park Executives (MIPE). He also, for many years, has been a proud member of both the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association (IPRA) and the National Recreation and Parks Association. Ohrlund is a past winner of "Park Professional of the Year" from both MIPE and the IPRA's Parks & Natural Resources Management Section.

Ohrlund will now spend more time with his wife Terry, traveling and spending more time with their children and grandchildren.



Michelle Tuft

Michelle Tuft was recently named executive director of Skokie Park District.

Tuft has worked as the district's superintendent of recreation and facilities since 2012 after serving as its

superintendent of recreation from 2006 to 2012. She was an integral part of administrating the district during the modernization of many of its 12 facilities over the past decade. Tuft also was instrumental in creating the district's largest event, Skokie's Backlot Bash, an event that she has chaired since its inception in 2007. She also served as the chair of the iconic Skokie Festival of Cultures from 2007 to 2012. She previously worked as the facility manager of the district's Weber Leisure Center and its Oakton Community Center after recreation supervisor stints at three other suburban park districts in the 1990s.

Tuft has also served as the district's Freedom of Information Act officer, as a past president of the Rotary Club of Skokie Valley, as a past member of the Illinois Arts Council Ethnic & Folk Arts grant selection committee, and as a past committee member of the University of Illinois Alumni Board. She is also Open Meetings Act certified by the Illinois Attorney General's Office.



Mark Ponton

Mark Ponton was sworn into office as Commissioner for the Frankfort Park District on Jan. 28. The Park District Board conducted interviews to fill the vacated seat of former Commissioner John Reilly, who resigned. Mr. Ponton will serve the remainder of the term through April 2021.

Mark is originally from St. Anne, Illinois, and moved to the Frankfort area around 1986 after obtaining a BS degree from Eastern Illinois University. His career experience includes IT project management for financial and food service companies. He has three children, two sons in college and one daughter in high school. His previous board experience includes St. Anthony Pre School and St. Mary Mokena School Board and Athletic Board. He is very excited to join the Frankfort Park District Board and looks forward to working with everyone.



Nancy Miner

After 29 years of outstanding dedication and service to Western DuPage Special Recreation Association families and participants, Nancy Miner, WDSRA's Superintendent of Recreation, retired on Dec. 31, 2019.

Nancy served the agency in several capacities, including Program Supervisor and

Outreach Manager. For the past 15 years, she has served as the Superintendent of Recreation.

She was a forerunner in offering a number of programs, including the Rec & Roll day program for adults, which now serves 135 individuals at 6 different sites, and the Kiwanis Aktion Club, a community service club for adults living with disabilities. A strong proponent of education and advocacy, Nancy was instrumental in creating WDSRA's first Disability Awareness program, which consists of hands-on disability simulation activities designed to create empathy and awareness for community members.

Nancy's service goes beyond WDSRA as well. She is a member of the Glen Ellyn Kiwanis Club and 110 Women Who Care, and she has served as a Board Member for the National Association for Down Syndrome. In 2011, she was presented with the City of Wheaton's Good Citizen Award.

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Ted Adatto

Western DuPage Special Recreation Association welcomed Ted Adatto as the new Superintendent of Recreation as of Dec. 11, 2019.

Ted firmly believes access to community-based recreation and social interaction is essential to enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities. He looks forward to continuing to develop cutting-edge programming and providing the exceptional staff experience from which families benefit.

Ted's 15 years of experience includes time spent as a special education teacher, working at three special recreation associations (NSSRA, WDSRA and NWSRA) and AutonomyWorks. He is a graduate of the University of Vermont, with a BS in Special Education. Ted is also a frequent presenter at state and regional conferences including ILTRA, IPRA/IAPD and local police departments. In 2015, he was awarded the ITRS Professional of the Year.

Ted resides in Northbrook with his wife Pam and four children, all under the age of 7. In his free time, Ted enjoys coaching his children's sports teams, being outdoors and spending time with his family.

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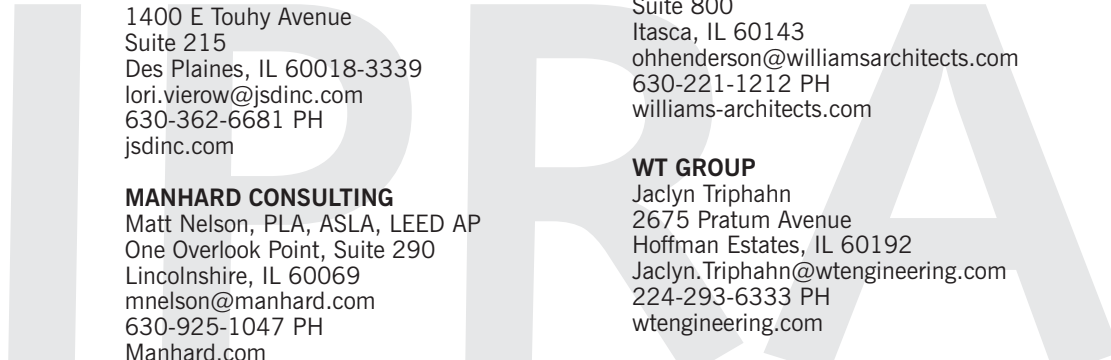


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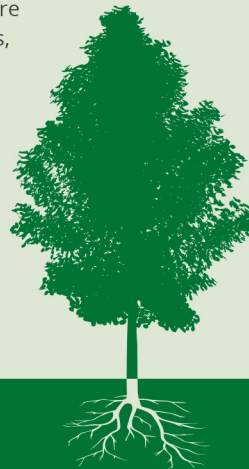


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