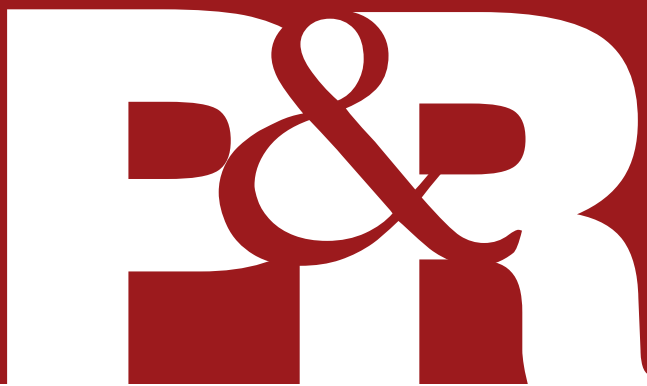


illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

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

A photograph of a golf course at sunset. A white golf ball sits on a red tee, with a golf club head visible behind it. The background shows a green field and trees under a warm, golden sky.

trends in golf

PLUS: Soaring to New Heights Conference Award Winners
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IN THIS ISSUE



- 4 **From the Editor**
Just FORE Fun!
- 6 **Get on Board**
Great Expectations
- 8 **Statehouse Insider**
Spring Session Underway
- 9 **Legislative Platform for the 101st General Assembly**
- 10 **Eye on the Profession**
IPRA Celebrates Our 75th Anniversary with 75 Stories & 75 Conversations Tour
- 12 **2019 Conference Coverage**
A summary of award winners from the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
- 18 **Golf and Water: How the Game is Working for Communities and the Environment**
- 22 **Examining the Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Future of Golf**
- 26 **A Photo Finish**
See the winning photos from the 2018 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest!
- 28 **Decatur Park District Transforms Shuttered Golf Courses into Community Gems**
- 32 **People and Places**
Updates and tributes in the park, recreation and conservation family
- 32 **WebXtra**
Read about new employees and promotions from park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation, and special recreation agencies.

FROM THE EDITOR

"The most important thing, so that you look like you know what you're doing, is to make sure you put the ball on the tee *before* placing it in the ground. Never put the tee down first and then try to put the ball on it. If you do that, everyone will know you've never played before!"



I still remember my dad's words of wisdom, spoken about 25 years ago when I stopped by to borrow his set of golf clubs. I was about to play my first round of golf in a best-ball outing, and I didn't want to look like a newbie.

After a short lesson from my dad, I raced home to complete my training by watching the movie *Caddyshack* for the 100th time. I paid close attention to the speech from wealthy golf guru, Ty Webb, played by Chevy Chase:

"I'm going to give you a little advice. There's a force in the universe that makes things happen. And, all you have to do is get in touch with it, stop thinking, let things happen, and be the ball."

I can't remember how my team did in that outing, or if we used any of my drives, chips or putts, but I *can* remember that I had a blast being outdoors, getting some exercise and socializing with people who, like me, were out there just for fun. Eventually, I purchased my own clubs, and my husband and I spent many days on a course, enjoying each other's company and having fun.

Golf is a unique sport that people of all ages can enjoy, and it offers an array of benefits for cardiovascular, respiratory, metabolic and mental health. Unfortunately, despite the many great reasons to play, the sport has witnessed a drastic decline, and a widespread supply/demand imbalance has resulted in the closing of hundreds of courses.

Examining the Challenges and Opportunities Facing the Future of Golf on page 22 outlines the specific challenges to the golf business and the opportunities to restore enthusiasm for the game. *Decatur Park District Transforms Shuttered Golf Courses into Community Gems* on page 28 explains how the park district cleverly transitioned course closures into progressive community assets. And, *Golf and Water: How the Game is Working for Communities and the Environment* on page 18 discusses how the natural filtration qualities of golf courses are helping to serve water quality goals in communities.

Indeed, *there's a force in the universe that makes things happen, and all you have to do is get in touch with it*. Illinois park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies are getting in touch with things happening in the golf realm, and they are making great strides with strategies to reinvigorate the sport and adjustments to effectively address the trends.

This issue of *Illinois Parks & Recreation Magazine* is *Trends in Golf*. Author Simon Zingerman said, "Don't try to follow trends. Create them." Whether you are new to the game or haven't played in a while, I encourage you to create a trend of making golf a recreational staple among your family and friends. Get out there and 'be the ball.' Trust me, you are in **FORE** a great time!

— Bobbie Jo Hill, Interim Editor



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

Great Expectations

Leaders are made not born.

As winter turns to spring, it heralds in the election cycle for park board and municipal elections. With new and returning board members comes a wonderful opportunity for learning about the rules and responsibilities of board service. IAPD conducts its highly popular commissioner boot camps in order to help fast track good governance at your agency. (See the schedule of upcoming Boot Camps in the sidebar.)

These are engaging, impactful and immersive educational opportunities that hit the major topics and issues that boards typically face. Attorneys will be present at every location to answer any questions participants may have on park district policies and procedures. The boot camps will also fulfill the open meetings act learning requirements of all new board members. As board members begin their terms of office, they should do so with the expectation that, with the proper training, they can accomplish great things on behalf of their park district and community.

- Be yourself.
- Be natural.
- Don't get angry.
- Use eye contact.
- Stay alert.
- Don't be rushed.
- Avoid distractions.
- Don't repeat negatives.
- Use your own vocabulary.
- Repeat the question to give yourself time to think.
- Stop when you've answered the question. By continuing, you could introduce topics that you would rather avoid.
- Be honest.
- Be conversational.
- Use anecdotes.
- Turn negatives into positives.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Keep answers short and to the point.
- Correct misstatements.
- Use gestures as you would in normal conversation

If you have any additional tips, please share those with me at pmurphy@ilparks.org.

Strategies for Working With the Media

Twenty-One Interview Tips for Board Members

If you have been designated by your board as a spokesperson for the board, then you'll likely be asked to appear on radio or television talk shows or to give an in-depth interview for your paper or maybe your community magazine. These can be tricky propositions, but the interviews are also a golden opportunity to get your agency's message out to the public. So, don't be shy about interviews, just be careful. These tips should help.

- Do your homework before the interview. Anticipate questions and learn the interviewer's angle.
- Prepare mini-speeches that you can insert when the opportunity is right. But don't let your remarks sound rehearsed.

Welcoming New Board Members

With the new year comes the election of new officers and board members for IAPD. Our incoming chairman, Kevin Dolan, is from the Mundelein Park & Recreation District and his biographical information can be seen on page 15.



The following three board members were elected at IAPD's Annual Meeting:

William (Bill) Casey

(Glenview Park District)

Bill grew up in Morton Grove as the youngest of seven children. The Baby Boom generation was in full swing and the kids needed a

place to go when they were not in school. The Morton Grove Park District served that purpose. He remembers parks as being a place to play and establish relationships. His first involvement with parks was chaperoning 7th and 8th grade ski trips to Wisconsin as a teenager. Bill bought a home in Glenview and found himself once again in the parks, this time with his children. The flexibility he enjoys with his job allows him time off during the week, and he was looking for volunteer opportunities. During the 2003 park board election, nine candidates ran for three positions. His campaign was successful, and he had the honor to serve the Glenview Park District and give back to his community for the last 15 years. Bill has served on the IAPD Joint Legislative Committee since 2014.



Mary Kay Ludemann

(Plainfield Park District)

In 2009, Mary Kay was elected to serve as a commissioner for the Plainfield Park District. She was re-elected in 2015 and is currently serving as the president of the Plainfield Park District. Mary Kay works in the fire service in fire prevention. She is the Fire Marshal for the

Plainfield Fire Protection District. Mary Kay enjoys being active and giving back to her community. She is also a member of the Plainfield Lion's Club. Mary Kay is a strong proponent of IAPD's educational seminars and workshops serving park and recreation elected officials from across the state.



Mike Reid

(Skokie Park District)

Mike was first elected to serve as a commissioner on the Skokie Park District in 2005 and was re-elected in 2011 and 2017. During his tenure on the board, he has served as president from 2008-2016 and vice-president from 2016 to present. He has participated in 12 IAPD/IPRA

Soaring to New Heights Conferences and IAPD Legislative Conferences. Mike attributes the knowledge gained and the networking opportunities with other park district officials and industry leaders helpful in making the Skokie Park District the district that it is today, an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency. In January 2017, Mike earned the Master Board Member award from IAPD. He has worked diligently to bring about the collaboration with the Village of Skokie, Skokie Library, and Chamber of Commerce on such events as the Backlot Bash, the 4th of July parade and the Festival of Cultures, among others. Mike has served on the IAPD Research Advisory Council since 2018.

2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April-May, 2019
**Flying for Kids Month,
Statewide Kite Fly**

Tuesday, April 30, 2019
Parks Day at the Capitol
State Capitol, Springfield, IL

IAPD Legislative Reception
Illini Country Club

Wednesday, May 1, 2019
IAPD Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza
Springfield, IL

Monday, May 20, 2019
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour
Outing #1**
Park District of Highland Park
Sunset Valley Golf Club

Wednesday, May 29, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #1
Deerfield Park District

Thursday, May 30, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #2
Hoffman Estates Park District

Tuesday, June 4, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #3
Lockport Township Park District

Wednesday, June 5, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #4
Wheaton Park District

Thursday, June 6, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #5
Oregon Park District

Saturday, June 8, 2019
IAPD Boot Camp #6
Washington Park District

Monday June 17, 2019
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour
Outing #2**
Mundelein Park &
Recreation District

July 11, 2019
IAPD Leadership Classic
Lake County Forest Preserves
ThunderHawk Golf Club

Saturday, August 17, 2019
**IAPD Park District
Conservation Day**
Illinois State Fair

Monday, August 26, 2019
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour
Outing #3**
GolfVision Management Inc.
Settler's Hill Golf Course

Wednesday, September
18, 2019
**IAPD Summer Golf Tour
Outing #4**
Glenview Park District
Glenview Park Golf Club

September 24-26, 2019
**NRPA Congress &
Exhibition**
Baltimore, MD

October 4-6, 2019
IAPD Board Retreat
Tentative

Friday, November 1, 2019
**Best of the Best
Awards Gala**
Wheeling Park District
Chevy Chase Country Club

Thursday, November
14, 2019
Legal Symposium
McDonald's U/Hyatt Lodge

January 23-25, 2020
**2020 IAPD/IPRA Soaring
to New Heights
Conference**
Hyatt Regency Chicago

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

IAPD
Illinois Association of Park Districts



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Spring Session Underway

The 2019 Spring Session marks many new beginnings at the Capitol. The new 101st General Assembly is well underway with dozens of new legislators and thousands of new pieces of legislation having been filed. Meanwhile, new Illinois Governor JB Pritzker has completed his first full month in office during which he attended the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Annual Awards Luncheon and announced the release of \$29 million in 2019 OSLAD grants to 89 agencies.

While there are many new faces in both the executive and legislative branches with new ideas that will be discussed throughout the spring session, it is already apparent that we will also confront many familiar issues from recent General Assemblies as well. The State's budget will continue to dominate discussions in Springfield as in recent years. At the same time, as illustrated by a number of the bills listed below, other issues from the past several legislative sessions such as property tax freezes, local government consolidation, and unfunded mandates have again made their way into proposed legislation while minimum wage legislation that has been debated for nearly a decade has already been approved and signed into law.

As this issue goes to press, we are already tracking 345 bills for their impact on the IAPD membership. While it is still too early in the legislative process to know which proposals will have the necessary support to move forward this spring, the bills below are just a few examples of those we will be closely monitoring because of their potential impact.

In addition, IAPD has introduced seven different legislative initiatives as part of the 2019-20 IAPD Legislative Platform, which are identified on the brochure that is affixed to this page as a convenient, detachable guide. We will also be advocating throughout the Spring Session for a full OSLAD appropriation for new grants, funding for the PARC grant program as part of a new statewide capital plan, and the rest of the issues outlined on the IAPD Platform.

Local Government Consolidation & Dissolution

HB 307 (McSweeney, D.) is a reintroduction of the "Citizen's Empowerment Act" that we have discussed in numerous Legislative Updates during the past few years. While this

measure does not specifically target park districts, it would allow just 5% of voters at the last general election to initiate a referendum to dissolve any unit of local government and transfer all its property and other assets to any other unit of government. Contrary to its title, the legislation provides no protections for citizens when it comes to their long-term investments in facilities, programs and services. Instead, the legislation places public assets and services at risk without providing citizens with any safeguards to protect those assets. Moreover, any claimed efficiencies would be merely conjecture because nothing in the legislation requires or guarantees any savings whatsoever to taxpayers.

Unfunded Mandates

SB 1270 (Peters, R.) / HB 3327 (Villanueva, C.) would require every park district, municipal park and recreation agency, and special recreation agency to test each source of potable water in a park for lead contamination and impose minimum testing requirements. The bill would also mandate specific reporting and notification requirements depending upon the results.

As introduced, **SB 2058 (Murphy, L.)** would amend the Park District Code to impose nearly 20 pages of training, administration and notification requirements on all park districts related to asthma medication, epinephrine injectors, and opioid antagonists used by program participants and would also require each park district to adopt certain emergency response protocols related thereto.

HB 2686 (McDermid, M.) would amend the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act to require recreational and athletic program and facility personnel to complete mandated reporter training. The bill would also enhance the criminal penalty for any person who knowingly and willfully violates certain reporting requirements for mandated reporters by making it a Class 4 felony for a first offense. **SB 1778 (Morrison, J.)** would also make changes under the Act and require mandated reporters to complete specified training within three months and at least every three years thereafter.

Open Meetings Act, FOIA and other Required Disclosures

HB 2283 (Morrison, T.) is an unfunded mandate that is similar to bills that have passed the House in recent years and would generally require units of local government to maintain an Internet website with more than a dozen categories of information. Each local government would also be required to create and maintain searchable expenditure and revenue information and update financial data at least monthly. An automated Rich Site Summary (RSS) feed must also be created to notify subscribers of updates to the posted information.

HB 2615 (Grant, A.) would amend the Open Meetings Act and FOIA to make it easier for courts to impose attorney's fees by lowering the standard to cases where a party obtains some of his or her requested relief or where that party's claim was a "catalyst for a unilateral change in position" by the opposing party.

HB 3138 (Halbrook, B.) amends FOIA to provide an elected or appointed public official of a public body with a right to all non-exempt records of that public body and each subsidiary of that public body without requiring the official to submit a FOIA request.

HB 3263 (Mazzochi, D.) would require an IMRF employer to post on its publicly available website (1) all documents pertaining to the adoption of a resolution to participate in the Fund; (2) all documents pertaining to its annual projected future contributions to the Fund; and (3) information about the amount of its past required contributions to the Fund for each year of participation unless the information is not subject to disclosure under FOIA.

HB 3651 (Edly-Allen, M.) would require public agencies that permit public officers or employees to use government-issued credit cards to post a copy of each expense charged on the credit card on the agency's website on or before 60 days after the date the expense was charged and to keep such charges on the website for at least one year after the expense was originally posted.

SB 1216 (Cullerton, T.) would amend FOIA to require a public body to prove by clear and convincing evidence that the release of a requested record would harm an interest that is protected by a FOIA exemption before asserting the exemption. The bill would also mandate attorney's fees in all FOIA cases by removing the requirements that a public body's failure is willful and wanton or that it otherwise acted in bad faith and would require (rather than permit) a court to impose an additional penalty of up to \$1,000 for each day the violation continues under certain circumstances.

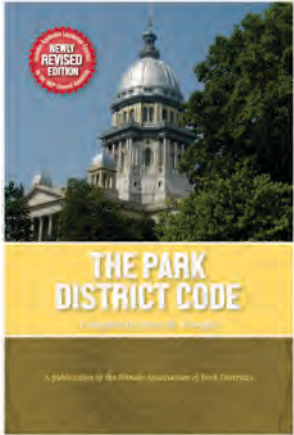
Local Property Tax Freeze or Reduction

HB 317 (McSweeney, D.) would impose a permanent statewide property tax freeze while **HB 320 (McSweeney, D.)** would impose up to a 10% property tax reduction. **HB**

2630 (Skillcorn, A.) would also impose a statewide property tax freeze until the first levy year to occur after a "revenue neutral school funding formula" is enacted while **HB 2428 (Skillcorn, A.)** would freeze property taxes for a tax-capped district if its EAV is declining. **HB 3656 (Crespo, F.)** would freeze property taxes for a district that has reserves of 50% or more of its operating budget for that levy year. **HB 3281 (Batinick, M.)** would require a taxing district to reduce its levy upon referendum approval initiated by 10% of the voters of the district in the preceding gubernatorial election.

Finally, **HB 3135 (Halbrook, B.)** would create the "Local Accumulation of Funds Act" to limit the amount of funds a unit of local government can reserve, excluding its capital fund, to an amount equal to or greater than 2.5 times the annual average expenditure during the previous 3 fiscal years of the unit of local government.

Again, these are just a small sample of the bills we will be closely tracking during the Spring Session, and it is too early in the process to predict whether there will be sufficient support for these particular bills to move forward. IAPD members can view the status of these and all bills we are tracking at ILparks.org.



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By Debbie Trueblood, CAE
IPRA Executive Director

IPRA Celebrates Our 75th Anniversary with 75 Stories & 75 Conversations Tour

At the IPRA Annual Business Meeting held Friday during Conference we announced that we are celebrating Our 75th Anniversary. To roll out the occasion, attendees were treated to cake and a champagne toast.

IPRA is made up of talented, committed, and creative professionals, many of whom were recently recognized for their efforts. Congratulations to all the individuals and agencies who received recognition at this year's conference! You can read or download the list of winners on our website News page at www.ilipra.org click on About, then News in the dropdown menu.

To celebrate the people who have been the heroes of our story these 75 years, as well as those who will lead us in the future, we have published a book of "75 Stories." Our story wasn't made just by those who had already reached the summit of their careers, but by people who served IPRA during their journey. So, we feature all kinds of people in our field, of all backgrounds, all sizes of agencies, across Illinois. The book is available to download on our website at www.ilipra.org for all to enjoy.

Just a few excerpts from the pages of 75 Stories are:

Mike Baiardo - *For those of you who know me, I haven't been the extrovert I am today. ...As I gained more experience as a student and meet more people in the field, I realized this terrifying word: "networking" was no more than building relationships with others who share commonalities.*

...Both Kelly and Sue encouraged me to get involved with IPRA committees and even provided me with a template to doing so, knowing who to contact, volunteering at Supervisor Symposium and IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference. These opportunities led me to work with many professionals and volunteers throughout the state on committees and boards such as: Supervisor Symposium, Facility Management Section Board, Student/Professional Connections, Western Open/BMW Championship and Joint Conference Committee.

...Through networking I have made many long-lasting relationships with other professionals. These relationships have allowed me to get feedback on work initiatives, learn from each other and share trends. Without IPRA, the word networking would have fallen on my deaf ears. Until I saw it in action at IAPD/IPRA's Annual Conference as a student, I would have never known my mentors. Networking has made me who I am today and allowed me to excel in my career path. With the assistance of IPRA I have learned to be a better supervisor, leader and understand what we all do impacts those that we serve on a daily basis.

Mary Liz Jayne - *When thinking of a "story" to tell about my journey so far in Illinois Parks and Recreation, the word that stuck in my head was relationships. Creating relationships is something that has been consistent with all of my time in parks and recreation. Growing up as a participant in recreation programs, I remember the relationships I made with dance teachers, camp counselors, the other participants, and even some of the recreation staff. Back then I had no idea that some of these relationships would evolve into being colleagues and mentors.*

...Once I officially entered the workforce, I jumped right into getting involved in various committees through IPRA. I have been able to make connections that have turned into friendships with the colleagues I've met through the Teen and Special Event Committee as well as the Supervisor Symposium Board of Regents. It's so great to have a network of people who are experiencing the same things as you that you can call for advice, or just to grab a beverage after work. In addition to friends and colleagues that I've connected with, I've also had the opportunity to find mentors to learn from. It's great to have people to talk to who have once been in my shoes and can give great advice to help me reach my goals.

My parks and recreation "story" definitely has a lot of characters who have influenced my career path in one way or another. As my career progresses, I hope to play a part in many other people's stories and continue building new connections and relationships.

Mat Emken - *When I graduated high school in 1990, much like George Costanza, I thought I wanted to be an architect. After three grueling semesters in the University of Illinois' Architecture program watching the seasons change from behind the windows of the studio, I knew it was not for me.*

...By 2006, I was ready to take the next step and accepted the assistant superintendent of parks position with the Vernon Hills Park District. This job really helped fill out the deficiencies in my resume. I ran the day-to-day operations while learning the ropes of the administrative side of things. I got to oversee OSLAD and construction projects and help plan the future. I also was encouraged to get my CPRP. This job set me up well for my current position.

I am now the superintendent of parks and development for the DeKalb Park District. Not only did I reach my goal of becoming a superintendent, I also got to do it in a more rural setting, closer to how I grew up. Win, win! This job has come with a whole new set of challenges, but I am working with a great team of people who are making some great strides in moving us forward. I am excited about the future.

Nicole Ginger - *...This field and the professionals within have taught me so much. Unlike corporate America, park & recreation professionals are always willing to lend a helping hand and share resources. They are consummate professionals but are also easy going—and how could they not be, when you get to “play” for a living?*

IPRA has been a part of my career since my very first week in the field; former IPRA Executive Director Mike Selep and I partnered to teach the first round of CPRP courses at my agency. At that time, I didn't realize how important IPRA would be to me and my organization. They have connected me with other professionals to solve a variety of issues, lent assistance with research, and helped to develop educational opportunities for our staff.

These stories tell how important IPRA, and events and education offered by IPRA, are to park and recreation professionals. To enhance your story and ours, take a look and sign up for some of the upcoming events and education listed for March and April.

Further, to celebrate our anniversary, I will be going out on a tour called, “75 Conversations”. I will be traveling statewide all year to meet with student recreation clubs, retirees, and members at small and large agencies. I want to see the parks you're proud of and meet the people who make them the best parts of your communities. I cannot wait to hear your stories, to listen to your ideas, and to see you in action. So, if you would like to be included in the tour, please contact Jean Kane at jean@ilipra.org to schedule a time to meeting. No agency is too small or too remote—I want to bring the celebration to you!

IPRA is celebrating Our 75th Anniversary this year, we hope you will join us in the celebration on the 75 Conversations Tour. See you at the tour stops!

Upcoming Events

April 5, 2019
CPRP Exam Prep Series A – Programming
Fosco Park, Chicago Park District
This is the third of four in a series of classes designed to prepare individuals for the National Recreation and Park Association's Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam.

April 12, 2019
Supervisor Symposium 2019
Bartlett Park District
Sponsored by IPRA's Recreation (REC) Section, Supervisor Symposium celebrates its 18th year in providing students and professionals in the recreation field a curriculum that builds a strong foundation of basic

skills needed to obtain and succeed at a supervisory position. New and partially-seasoned professionals (and students) will be provided with opportunities to learn skills and emerging trends that can be implemented immediately at his or her agency.

May 3, 2019
CPRP Exam Prep Series A – Operations
Fosco Park, Chicago Park District
This is the last of four in a series of classes designed to prepare individuals for the National Recreation and Park Association's Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP) exam.

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

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CONFERENCE AWARDS



IAPD LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR

Senator Linda Holmes

Since 2007, Senator Linda Holmes has been a leading voice for local government, park districts, forest preserves and special recreation agencies. She has sponsored numerous IAPD platform bills, including one in each of the past three general assemblies. This past year, she sponsored House Bill 4573 and, during the 98th General Assembly, she sponsored House Bill 1353. Both these IAPD platform initiatives provided park districts, forest preserves and all local governments with new investment tools under the Public Funds Investment Act to help improve investment returns.

Senator Holmes also sponsored IAPD platform initiative House Bill 1363 during the 99th General Assembly, which helped promote intergovernmental cooperation between park districts and other units of local government.



Representative Tim Butler

Representative Tim Butler has served in the General Assembly since 2015. During his first two terms, Representative Butler has demonstrated his understanding that locally elected park and forest preserve commissioners can be trusted as good stewards of local tax dollars. For example, when property tax freeze legislation was abruptly called for a vote during the 2017 fall veto session, Representative Butler was the lone vote against the bill in the revenue committee. More importantly, he set politics aside and courageously voted against the bill on the floor because he knew it was bad public policy.

Representative Butler serves on numerous committees that impact IAPD member agencies including the Museums, Arts & Cultural Enhancement, Environment and Tourism Committees and the Appropriations Committee. He also chairs the Outdoor Caucus. Not only does Representative Butler consistently attend IAPD legislative awareness events, but he has often traveled hundreds of miles to do so. His efforts to advance park and recreational opportunities for Illinois citizens have truly been exceptional.

IAPD RISING STAR AWARD

George Bridges, Jr., Commissioner, Waukegan Park District

George Bridges, Jr., the first elected African American commissioner in the Waukegan Park District, has served as board president for two terms and is currently the Waukegan Park District board treasurer. As an active, progressive member of the board, he is a team player, leader and role model to many. His goal is to provide access for all, now and into the future. He is driven by strong principles, and he ensures that the district meets the needs of the entire community while delivering excellence in all that it does.



IPRA YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lukas Wyss, Plainfield Park District

Lukas Wyss is a true young professional. In just three years, he made a significant impact on the Warrenville Park District. Lukas implemented a scanning check in system for group fitness classes, instituted a Silver Sneakers program, increased participation in both fitness classes and personal training, and gained his personal training certification. Lukas is the consummate professional and displays a hard-working positive attitude each day. In October, Lukas joined the Plainfield Park District as the fitness supervisor for the new 4,000 square foot PARC facility.



IAPD HONORED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

Carrie Fullerton, Executive Director, Bloomington Park District

For 10 years, Bloomington Park District Executive Director Carrie Fullerton has been an inspiration to those around her. Carrie routinely encourages board and staff involvement as citizen advocates by example and direct invitation. Carrie frequently travels to the state capitol to meet with representatives and keep them apprised of local initiatives. She also encouraged the Bloomington Park District board to actively participate in the referendum process by speaking to residents, a strategy that resulted in the overwhelming passage of a \$9.9 million-dollar referendum.



IPRA COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

Eric Lacher, Batavia Park District

Eric Lacher's giving spirit includes serving as a volunteer firefighter for the Batavia Fire Department and a soccer coach for the Strikers and Tri City Soccer Association. Eric was recently selected by the superintendent of schools to serve on the prestigious Hall of Honor committee; paying homage to Batavia's hometown heroes. Last summer, Eric was the main point of contact for the Bulldogs Unleashed campaign, a collaboration of three community foundations organized to provide financial assistance to support public parks, schools and the library. The project raised more than \$75,000 dollars.

IAPD MIKE CASSIDY COMMISSIONER COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Ian Linnabary, Board President, Rockford Park District



Ian Linnabary began his volunteer service with the Rockford Park District in 2011 when he was appointed to the board of commissioners. He has been president of the board for the last three years.

He has devoted countless hours on the collaborative Reclaiming First initiative to retain, regain, and grow amateur sports tourism in the region. He has been focused on the district's master plan process this year and has collected survey results, attended multiple community engagement sessions and met with various community members to discuss financial needs.

Ian's great passion for outdoor recreation combined with his and other local citizens' generous financial contributions, and a grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, allowed for the first phase of Atwood Silent Sports Trails to be fully-funded without tax dollars.

IPRA PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mike Adams, Executive Director, Woodridge Park District



Mike Adams, executive director of the Woodridge Park District, exemplifies the qualities of an ideal park and recreation professional and leader. He has more than 31 years of experience in the industry with 28 of those years at the Woodridge Park District as the superintendent of planning and development, deputy director and executive director. Mike led his district through the Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency process, currently serves as vice president of the South East Association of Special Parks and Recreation, assisting in their mission of providing recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. Not only does Mike Embody the characteristics of a great recreation professional, he also encourages his staff to be leaders in the industry. Many Woodridge Park District employees serve or have served as board or committee members for their sections.



IAPD COMMISSIONER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Lester Long Sr., Commissioner, Dolton Park District

Since 1997, Lester Long has been a commissioner of the Dolton Park District and has served as board president for 15 of his 21 years of service. During his tenure at the Dolton Park District, he worked with his fellow board members to obtain more than \$16 million in grants to improve all parks and facilities. He had a facility certified as LEED Gold, and received a \$2.8 million grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to improve the main field house. He has partnered with Operation Warm Coat to give coats to more than 700 of the community's youth and in 2018, he reached Master Board Member Status, the highest level in IAPD's Board Member Development Program.



IPRA ROBERT ARTZ LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Chuck Szoke, Executive Director, Channahon Park District

Chuck Szoke of the Channahon Park District is the consummate professional and champion of parks and recreation. His 40-year career is a litany of community and professional service. His legacy is not only leading and growing the Channahon Park District as the only director it has ever had, but in leading and developing young professionals. Under his leadership, the Channahon Park District has built a recreation center, swimming pool, golf course, fitness center, skate park, disc golf course, established a park foundation, created and updated a master plan, added and developed hundreds of acres of park land and assembled a comprehensive menu of recreation programs. He is a man of integrity, kindness, intelligence, humor and steadfast selflessness.

PASSING THE GAVEL

Distinguished Accredited Agencies



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Chicago Park District
Decatur Park District
Elmhurst Park District
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Recreation Association
Worth Park District

Notable Board Members

Anthony Del Preto, Carol Stream
Park District
Rebecca Hosford, Plainfield Township
Park District
Jason Rausch, Plainfield Township
Park District
William E. Thoman, Plainfield
Township Park District

Distinctive Board Members

Keith Evans, Hoffman Estates
Park District
Mike Meline, Vernon Hills Park District
Colin Wilkie, Warrenville Park District
Greg Stimpson, Wood Dale Park District

Master Board Members

John Jaszka, Carol Stream Park District
Cleo Jones, Dolton Park District
Robert Kaplan, Hoffman Estates
Park District
Michael Schyman, Northbrook
Park District
Roy Sansone, Park District of
Forest Park
Paul Aeschleman, Park District of
Oak Park
Victor Gaurino, Park District of Oak Park
Kassie Porreca, Park District of
Oak Park
Susan Aberman, Skokie Park District
Khemarey Khoeun, Skokie Park
District Recreation Association



IAPD CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Kevin Dolan, Mundelein Park & Recreation District

Kevin Dolan, president of the Mundelein Park & Recreation District, was recently elected chairman of the Illinois Association of Park Districts' (IAPD) Board of Trustees. Dolan joined the IAPD board in 2013 and served two years as vice-chairman and one year as chairman-elect. He 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. Dolan serves as chair of the IAPD Honors and Resolutions, Board Development and Executive Committees; and he serves on the IAPD Membership, Nominating and Constitutional Bylaws Committees. He is the IAPD vice-chair of the IAPD/IPRA Joint Coordinating Council, and he serves on the IAPD/IPRA Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation, Joint Editorial and Joint Legislative Committees. He also serves on the Friends of Illinois Parks Foundation. He served two prior terms on the IAPD Board of Trustees from 1999-2003.

Kevin succeeds Forest Preserve District of Kane County Commissioner, John Hoscheit.



2019 CHAIRMAN OF THE IPRA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jeff Fougousse, Vernon Hills Park District

The Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) has installed Jeff Fougousse, executive director of the Vernon Hills Park District, as its 2019 Chairman of the Board at the association's annual conference, held January 24-26 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Fougousse has over 35 years of full-time experience in the parks and recreation field. He is currently the executive director of the award-winning Vernon Hills

Park District, and has served in this role since 2009. Prior to Vernon Hills, he served as executive director of the Morton Grove Park District from 2000-2009 and superintendent of recreation & facilities from 1987-2000. He has served the Illinois Park and Recreation Association as a board member, an affiliate chair (North Shore Round Table), Joint Conference Committee member and Co-Chair (1992-2000), and is a Professional Development School (PDS) and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Sports Management School graduate. Jeff has presented several sessions at the state conference and state universities, and has authored several articles for the *Illinois Parks and Recreation* magazine. He has also been heavily involved in the communities where he works and resides, including his local YMCA, Rotary Club, Lions Club, Special Recreation District, High School Advisory Board, American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), American Cancer Society (Relay for Life Captain) and he currently serves as Past Chairman of the American Brain Tumor Association Board of Directors.

Jeff succeeds South East Association for Special Parks and Recreation Executive Director, Matt Corso.



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Golf & Water

HOW THE GAME IS WORKING FOR COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

By **Todd Quitno**, Vice President and Senior Architect, ASGCA

Water issues in the Midwest are often on the opposite end of the spectrum from those we see in other parts of the country, like the arid mountain and southwest regions. Rather than lacking water, our communities are often desperate to identify places to gather, hold and clean it up before gradually releasing it to the local streams and rivers. With changes in our climate causing more severe and frequent storms, and the continual expansion of pavement in our urban areas, the management of water has become a serious issue.

Golf courses are vital, vibrant members of the community that also happen to be vast in terms of acreage, making them ideal for storing and cleaning large volumes of water. The natural filtration qualities of turf grass, wetlands and golf course ponds are helping to serve our communities' water quality goals while returning that reclaimed resource to the local water table. By assuming this responsibility, golf course operators are actively improving public relations in their immediate community while enabling upgrades to their own products, often at prices that are reduced or even mitigated by the very water management issues those communities are obliged to address.



With a central creek and several ponds situated throughout the course, water was always a part of Poplar Creek's identity, but decades of development dramatically increased the volume of water within the course's watershed, threatening both adjacent landowners and the long-term viability of the golf operations.

It's a fact, the game of golf is working for our communities and the environment. Here are a few great examples, both public and private, of how:

The Bridges of Poplar Creek, owned by the Hoffman Estates Park District, is an upscale municipal golf facility built in the late 1970s on what was then rural farmland. With a central creek and several ponds situated throughout the course, water was always a part of Poplar Creek's identity, but decades of development dramatically increased the volume of water within the course's watershed, threatening both adjacent landowners and the long-term viability of the golf operations.

Compounding the growing storm water problems, the course became known locally as a “flooder,” closed as many as ten days a year with annual losses reaching as high as \$135,000 (10% of annual revenue). A reputation for closing sparked remarks like “I never book there when rain is in the forecast; there's too good a chance it will flood.” The tangible revenue losses, and the more damaging impacts of a bad image, were killing the bottom line.

The park district realized long-term sustainability, a grand mission of the district, would require some significant change and thus committed the necessary funding to pursue a redevelopment strategy focused on expanding on-course water storage capabilities. To accommodate the runoff that routinely flooded the golf holes and upstream properties, ponds were expanded or added and all 18 holes were improved in some capacity — including drainage additions, elevated fairways (above flood levels), and integration of these new waterways into the golf course routing.

Just two months after re-opening, the area received a record rainfall equivalent to a 100-year storm. The renovated golf

course was the only course open for play the following morning, a story that has been repeated several times since! The course has also seen increases in play and elevated rates since the renovation and has reduced storm cleanup costs by over 90% (from \$35K to \$3K annually).

A course renovation project like this would never have been considered if the larger district and community goals were not served by the project. Over time, adjacent properties also reported less severity in flood levels and much decreased high water durations. Since maturing, the acres of filtering wetlands have improved water quality ten-fold at the creek's outlet. Today, The Bridges at Poplar Creek is once again a source of community pride and a vital environmental resource in the region.

Bridges of Poplar Creek by the Numbers

- 2:1 increase in water holding capacity (2-square mile watershed)
- Over 10,000 linear ft. of creek shoreline repair
- Over 18% reduction (27 of 150 acres) of maintained turf:
 - 5.5 acres of emergent wetland and mesic plantings to enhance aquatic habitat and water filtering capacity
 - 6.8 acres of native area for further water infiltration
 - 15+ acre conversion of maintained turf to low-maintenance fescue plantings
- 5 fairways raised out of floodplain
- 2 new greens
- 35 new tees, providing overall yardages from 4,600 to 6,500
- 9 new timber bridges incorporated into course branding and name change



Golf is one of the only sports whose playing surfaces are not restricted in shape or design, which makes golf courses malleable and highly adaptable to this potential change.

Some golf properties take on storm water by obligation and not choice, thus leaving them to deal with the impacts of excess water. City-owned **Deerpath Golf Course** in Lake Forest, Illinois, was built in the early 1920s along a branch of the Skokie River. Acres of watershed from the north flow into the golf course during major storms, covering up to 90% of the property in the severest of events. To boot, a hospital campus — basically a giant slab of concrete and hardtop — sits directly to the west and feeds additional runoff across the course, compounding soil saturation problems.

Historically, even when flood waters receded at Deerpath, it could take days or weeks for the course to dewater, making it difficult to maintain and operate the facility. Meanwhile, golfers stayed away, cart usage stopped, turf died and the course's reputation suffered. In 2017 alone, the facility reported 41 days of direct revenue impact from closures due to flooding, resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in losses.

Searching for answers, the city commissioned a comprehensive master plan to target immediate “revenue driven solutions” and foster long-term course health. The first phase of that effort, implemented in the fall of 2017, included a \$1.1 million cart path and drainage enhancement project aimed at getting golfers and maintenance equipment back on the course quicker. A full asphalt path system was installed on all 18 holes and underground turf drains fitted in the worst of the saturated areas to aid in moving excess water out of play when the main flood waters recede. The spoils created from digging were used to build several forward tees or piled in containment mounds in upland areas.

The project's effectiveness was proven right away. Despite recording three major flood events in 2018, the golf course reportedly lost only six total days to closure and experienced no extended shutdown of carts. Projected greens fees and cart revenues saw substantial gains from the year prior as well, upwards of \$70,000, and turf recovery following the floods was greatly enhanced. Bolstered by these positive gains, golf course management expects to continue with more upgrades over the next several years to continue the pursuit of long-term sustainability.

Could these sorts of projects work on any course, public or private, where the surrounding community is battling water-retention and water-quality issues?

The answer is a resounding yes! With new directives garnering attention across the country, communities will continue to be on the lookout for places to store and clean their water. Golf is one of the only sports whose playing surfaces are not restricted in shape or design, which makes golf courses malleable and highly adaptable to this potential change. If golf courses have the room and are located in the right spot in the watershed, it just makes sense that we employ them in the betterment of our communities and the environment.

Todd Quitno has been a practicing golf course architect for the past 23 years. He is a regular member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and Vice President of Design for Lohmann Quitno Golf Course Architects, Inc, based in the greater Chicago-land area. Todd's nationally acclaimed renovation work continues to improve the quality and viability of existing golf courses while embracing community and environmental connections and the growth of the game.

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EXAMINING THE
CHALLENGES
& OPPORTUNITIES
FACING THE FUTURE OF GOLF

By Matt McIntee, CEO, Principal, Green Golf Partners

So much has changed in the business of golf over the last 30 years. I'm old enough to have worked and survived the most volatile period in the history of golf. In the late 1980s, golf industry analysts poured over every shred of demographic data and prophesized that the 1990s would experience an unprecedented period of growth. An industry report was written and widely distributed that relied in large part upon the demographic analysis. This report, considered to be credible, made two predictions which will forever haunt the golf business:

Today, the business of golf is a bit like the 'Bermuda Triangle'. There are still too many courses for the available supply, the number of participants has declined since 2010, and the number of rounds played annually in the United States has also declined over the same period.

1. From 1990 to 2010, the total population of golfers in the United States would increase from 25 million to 50 million.

2. The industry could open a course a day and still not meet the demand for golf.

What actually occurred changed the golf business landscape forever. The industry did essentially open a course a day for a decade and the demand never exceeded 30 million participants. A 'perfect storm' as it were, that led to a supply/demand imbalance that still exists to this day.

CHALLENGES

Today, the business of golf is a bit like the 'Bermuda Triangle'. There are still too many courses for the available supply, the number of participants has declined since 2010, and the number of rounds played annually in the United States has also declined over the same period. That's a tough proposition for even the brightest of the bright, the best-located golf course, and the most highly rated course. I've often said that back before the 'boom' an operator could be not all that smart and look brilliant. Today, an operator can be

really smart and look like a knucklehead. Make no mistake about it, the business is hard:

- The competition is fierce, and while not all that 'smart', it's getting smarter every day.
- There are more choices for recreational time than ever before.
- Operating expenses increase year in, year out.
- Never-ending capital investment requirements.
- Public non-golfer support is waning.

BEGIN WITH THE END

We all accept and understand that the golf business environment is challenging. Taking a page out of those early industry reports, let's start with what we want to accomplish:

- To preserve the golf industry for generations to come.
- To increase demand and eliminate the supply/demand imbalance.
- To create a sustainable business model.

We all agree that we LOVE the game of golf. A passion for golf is what drives many of our patrons. Yet, we all know that the baby boomers did not take the golf business to the promised land. So, how do we pivot from what we have always known?

FIERCE COMPETITION

In some ways, acknowledging that courses are fiercely competing for the same golfers is the first step in answering the proverbial 'bell' and looking to the opportunities. The herd effect is true in the golf business – when something is new or hot or looks like it works, many of the golf operators rush to follow each other down the same path. In reality, much of the new has been recycled elements of the past. More concerning is the never-ending quest for the *magic dust*. Sprinkle it on your property and *voila!* all is well. Sadly, it doesn't work that way. There is no magic dust. There is no substitute for elbow grease, common sense, and basic common courtesy. So, where do we start?

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Forever the demographics of golf were relatively homogenous. This led to the perception of golf being a male-dominated elitist sport. With the support and input of the golf associations, this has changed significantly over the last 30 years. Despite those efforts, the baby boomers still represent the most substantial participant segment. As they have aged and the world has changed, the demographics of golf have truly started to change.

It may seem obvious that the changing demographics present a challenge and an opportunity at the same time. Unfortunately, not everyone is taking the time or making the effort to understand the changes. Many operators want things to stay the same and go back to the good old days, but neither of those approaches is based in reality. Today's golf world is ever-changing, and much of that is driven by the diverse demographics. To survive and thrive, operators must be prepared to offer programming that appeals to juniors, seniors, beginners, women, millennials, Gen Z, Gen X, baby boomers, and traditionalists. They all think differently, communicate differently and have differing expectations. If you don't get to know and understand them and adjust accordingly, it's not likely they will give you their loyalty.

WHAT BUSINESS ARE WE IN?

Bricks and mortar? Furniture, fixtures, and equipment? Greens, tees, and fairways? All of those are part in parcel of our business. Maintaining a golf course and all associated facilities are part of our DNA. Sure, Mother Nature can throw some curveballs at us, but let's face facts, we should all be fluent in the physical elements of maintaining a golf facility.

The business we are really in is the people business. Hospitality. Including employees, vendors, and clients. On a regular in-season day, the employees at a golf course will have a multitude of opportunities to interact with the

guests. Assuming most everyone is fluent in the bricks and mortar part of the business, then it's not much of a leap to believe that the human side is the difference maker. How we treat our guests, employees and vendors has a great deal to do with our success rate.

CHAMPIONSHIP SERVICE

The objective of championship service is to create a service culture that focuses on developing positive behaviors. Every employee! Every guest! Every time! Operators need to embrace a service culture and realize that championship service is crucial to developing a successful hospitality culture. Championship service is the platform that ties together an entire operation – from attraction to experience to retention.

THE STRATEGY OF ATTRACTION

There is an old saying that will ring true forever. Bad service is bad marketing. Too often operators focus all of their efforts on attraction and ignore the customer experience. In doing so, this causes a disconnect between expectations and reality, leading to issues with perceived value. As our marketing director reminds everyone constantly, "make sure your house is in order before you invite people over for dinner."

Once *your house* is in order, focusing on the strategy of attraction is of paramount importance. Today's world offers a multitude of opportunities to attract, communicate, and retain customers. So many, in fact, that the process of determining *how*, *where*, and *when* can be completely overwhelming. Many have been slow to embrace new technology, and we're not just talking about social media, but other basics like a good website. Comprehensive structures need to be in place to quantify and measure success. The epicenter of the structure is a quality point-of-sale system and is supported by the integration of a website and other analytical platforms.



Social media is crucial to helping a facility stay top of mind with their patrons. This can be accomplished through boosted/paid posts, events, promotions, event listings, etc. And in today's world, it's all pay-to-play. Without setting aside money to promote, your messaging won't hit anybody.

BALANCED BUSINESS STRUCTURE

We are in the business of golf, and often that fact is overlooked or underestimated. The 'build it and they will come' mentality that was pervasive through the 1990s and up until 2005 was based more in hope than sound businesses practices. Today, a balanced business structure is one of the keys to financial sustainability. As an example, payroll, expenses, and equipment repair costs are often times abnormally high as a result of poor business practices. With some of these line items out of balance, operators are often forced to reduce or eliminate spending in areas that matter, like course detail work and marketing. In most cases, payroll as a percentage of gross spending should not exceed 40% and marketing should exceed 1.5%. It's crucial that operators analyze and understand their own financial structure, the norms within the marketplace, and seek a balanced spending model.

OPPORTUNITIES EXIST

Overall, there is good news! Junior golf levels are at historical highs. Unlike the old days when the parent introduced the child to golf, the roles are now often reversed. Junior golfers are fluent in social media and often follow their golf role models like Ricky Fowler and Lexi

Thompson. Demand is on the increase and more new players are flooding into the game. Non-traditional golf facilities like TopGolf are doing a great job of appealing to and attracting non-golfers.

The industry is getting smarter every day. Embracing technology and the changing demographics are leading to significant changes in programming. Socialization is becoming a bigger and bigger part of the strategy of attraction and retention than is competition. This approach is intended to address the 3 biggest impediments to progress in one way or the other:

- The Cost
- The Time
- The Difficulty

Course closures now far outpace openings every year. The industry is going through an organic right-sizing as part of balancing supply and demand again.

While the *magic bullet* may not exist, opportunities do abound. The ability to realize a return on investment is predicated on a functional knowledge of the business structure inside a willingness to think outside the box, a commitment to working hard, and listening to your customers. For years golf course operators were unwilling to work together. Today, following the lead of the associations, we should all be working together to restore the roar of golf.



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The 2018 IP&R Magazine Photo Contest Awards

Congratulations to all our 2018 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest Winners!

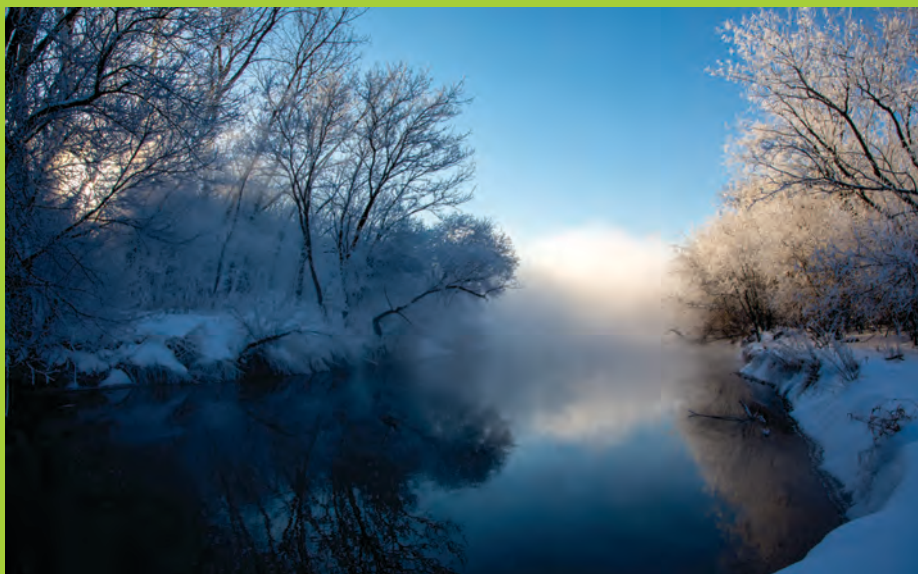
The IAPD has officially selected the winners for the 2018 Give Us Your Best Shot Photo Contest. This year, we had nearly 300 submissions in our four categories: Nature/Landscapes, Recreation/People at Play, Wildlife, and Sports. This year, we also added a third-place award to honor more of the talented photographers who represent the best of our member agencies. Award winners were given framed copies of their photographs at the Soaring to New Heights Conference.

NATURE/LANDSCAPES

1st Place - Kris DaPra, Forest Preserves of Cook County | *"Winter Reflection"*

2nd Place - Suzy Lyttle, Forest Preserve District of Will County | *"Sunset at Monee Reservoir"*

3rd Place - Adam Bergman, Park District of Highland Park | *"A Storm Brewing"*



RECREATION/PEOPLE AT PLAY

1st Place - Mike Frankowski, St. Charles Park District | *"Wet & Wild at Otter Cove Aquatic Park"*

2nd Place - LoriAnne Nelson, Palatine Park District | *"My Gentle Giant"*

3rd Place - Tom Norquist, West Chicago Park District | *"Inspired by Nature"*



SPORTS

1st Place - Jeff Cohen, Park District of Highland Park | *"A Perfect Start to the Day"*
2nd Place - Paula Marr, South West Special Recreation Association | *"Handcycle Hero"*
3rd Place - Mike Terson, Buffalo Grove Park District | *"Out"*



WILDLIFE

1st Place - Justin Sienkiewicz, Schaumburg Park District | *"Froggy 101"*
2nd Place - Beth Rodriguez, Itasca Park District | *"Red Tailed Hawk"*
3rd Place - Steve Dunham, Peoria Park District | *"Camo Deer on the Robinson Park Trails"*



A heartfelt thanks to everyone who submitted a photo in 2018.





DECATUR PARK DISTRICT

Transforms Shuttered Golf Courses into Community Gems

By **Bill Clevenger** | Executive Director, Decatur Park District and
Lisa Gillen | Retired Marketing Director, Decatur Park District

With a golf system that dates back to the 1930s and a long-term affiliation with organizations representing various perspectives related to the game of golf (i.e., PGA, GCSAA, NGF & CDGA), the Decatur Park District is no stranger to the nationwide challenges facing the golf industry. Decatur's once-booming, 5-course public system has been reduced to two over the past 15 years because of waning interest, declining rounds, changing demographics, and increased operational



costs. A record high of 190,000 rounds over five courses has now diminished to 50,000 at the remaining two. Given this challenging state of the game, the district pursued creative planning options with firms such as JJR, AECOM, Edgewater Resources, Market & Feasibility Advisors, and Economic Research Associates. These plans, combined with timely partnership opportunities, have enabled the district to transition course closures into progressive, forward-thinking community assets.

A collaboration with Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) in the early 2000s brought about a landmark public/private exchange of property. Following an overwhelmingly positive referendum vote (70/30), the Decatur Park District sold 290 acres, including Faries Park Golf Course on the city's north-east side, to ADM. This transaction enabled the district to purchase and develop land owned by ADM on the southern edge of town. The new property, located adjacent to the park district's Rotary Park softball complex, provided a welcome opportunity for operation and maintenance

efficiencies. Another community benefit of the transaction was a "Parks 2010" initiative, designed to provide much-needed funding and attention for neighborhood parks and recreation programs. Finally, and most importantly, for the park district, a dwindling 9-hole Wildwood Golf Course was transformed into a section of a new Prairie-style signature course, Red Tail Run Golf Club by Raymond Floyd. Designed by the legendary PGA Hall of Famer and unveiled in 2006, the course makes the most of the rolling topography, with multiple tees, undulating greens, wide fairways, and feathering native grasses. Red Tail Run now hosts the IHSA Class A Girls' State Tournament each year and has also welcomed the Illinois Women's Golf Association State Amateur, Plantation Tour Junior Series, Signature Cup, and Optimist Junior State Championship. The course has won eight Herald & Review Readers' Choice Awards for "Best Golf Course in Central Illinois." Women's clinics, junior tournaments, long-drive events, and Stay & Play specials keep golfers of all abilities engaged and excited to return.



the impact on Lake Decatur during drought conditions. Finally, a new transformer station and high-voltage transmission lines have helped improve the electric distribution system.

Partnerships and an eye toward economic development and community enhancement continue to drive the park district's repurposing/redevelopment efforts. Closure of the dated, underperforming Nelson Park Golf Course followed in 2009, sparking intense reaction from the golf community. A comprehensive golf system analysis confirmed that the park district overall would suffer a significant financial burden unless long-term strategic actions were taken, however. Out of this difficult decision grew an innovative, multi-phase "Lakeshore Landing" plan. Well-attended community meetings and social media interaction allowed residents to share their thoughts, and the blueprint redeveloping the golf course property, along with Nelson Park in its entirety, emerged. In a prized location overlooking Lake Decatur, the former golf course is now the site of Overlook Adventure Park, an ADA accessible, family-friendly, outdoor recreation space, with a mini golf course themed after the park district's Scovill Zoo, a Sky Trail high ropes course, and batting cages for individual and team practices. The newest addition to Overlook Adventure Park is Splash Cove, an aquatics facility/water park that will feature an extensive leisure pool, kiddie splash pad, 8-lane competitive pool, climbing wall, tot pool, zip line, and thrilling, electronic water slides, currently seen in just a few U.S. locations. Summer 2019 will mark its unveiling. In nearby Nelson Park, a new disc golf course, mountain bike trail, renovated WPA-era pavilions, outdoor fitness station, boat docks, and "entertainment district" promenade will be joined this summer by a \$5 million state-of-the-art, open-air amphitheater nestled into the hillside overlooking the lake. The Devon G. Buffett Amphitheater will offer arts and entertainment performances to delight all in Central Illinois.



The public-private partnership with ADM has allowed the former Faries Golf Course to serve several important purposes that include housing for a portion of ADM's biogas program, where the company removes contaminants and transfers renewable fuel to the utility. Bill Manley, vice president of operations at the ADM Decatur complex, added that the company has also installed horizontal collector wells to provide a supplemental water source for the Decatur complex, easing

While the park district's 2010 Nelson Park Redevelopment Plan set the stage for Lakeshore Landing, the implementation of this important community economic driver would not have been possible without the closure and redevelopment of Nelson Park Golf Course – and local organizations are cheering the bold move. For Ryan McCrady, president of the Economic Development Corporation of Decatur & Macon County, strong economic development relies on having a vibrant community and strong quality of life for businesses and their employees. Redevelopment of Decatur's lakefront is a big step forward to sell the community to current and prospective businesses. He said projects like this one demonstrate Decatur's vibrancy and vitality.

"It also allows prospective residents to picture themselves enjoying these recreational opportunities with their families and friends," McCrady said.

In contrast to the exciting bustle of Overlook Adventure Park, the park district has focused on preserving nature and creating a quieter venue at the former Scovill Golf Course, which closed in 2017. The tree-lined, hilly fairways of the Audubon-sanctioned course have become a beautiful, passive recreation area, which now hosts walkers, runners, a fall cyclocross biking group, and middle school/high school cross country athletes. The grounds require minimal maintenance, providing a significant cost savings on mowing, trimming, and upkeep. The pro shop and park district food service facility await a tenant for a restaurant, yoga studio, wellness center, or other recreational operation that will make the most of the tranquil surroundings. Possibilities exist for the park district, as well, which may consider scheduling outdoor nature camps, installing another high ropes course and zip line, or collaborating with local agencies to host classes such as painting and bird-watching, to mention a few.

Closing a golf course is never easy. Golfers love the uniqueness of each site, its idiosyncrasies, challenges, and memories. Alternatives and repurposing aren't always well-received by those who wish to return – as we all might – to the good old days. While many cities struggle to repurpose, revitalize, and make relevant their shuttered facilities, the Decatur Park Board and staff have continuously reviewed golf rounds, expenses, potential for growth/decline, and effect on the entire park system over the years, deciding that adjustments and right-sizing were the best options. In doing so, unique partnerships have led to exciting, win-win initiatives that are spurring economic growth, improving quality of life, and transforming the Decatur community.

Decatur Park District Golf Course Repositioning Actions

• 2004 WILDWOOD GOLF COURSE

This small 9-hole course has been transformed into a section of Red Tail Run by Raymond Floyd signature course following the 2005 sale of Faries acreage to ADM.

• 2005 FARIES GOLF COURSE

This property is now owned by ADM. Numerous neighborhood park improvements were made, thanks to this landmark transaction.

• 2009 NELSON PARK GOLF COURSE

Repurposed and redeveloped, becoming Overlook Adventure Park at Lakeshore Landing.

• 2017 SCOVILL GOLF COURSE

Passive recreation area. The park district is actively pursuing strategic ventures that are anticipated to emerge in the next couple of years.

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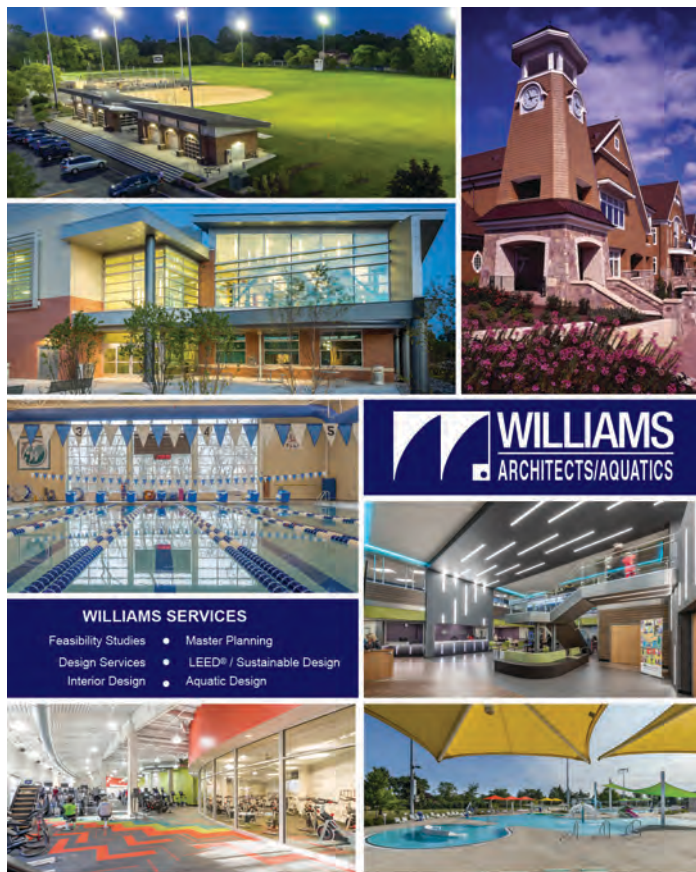
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PEOPLE & PLACES

Stanish re-elected as Executive Trustee of Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund



This fall, via a mail-in, paper ballot system, employers of the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) re-elected **Sue Stanish** as an executive trustee. IMRF's full Board of Trustees.

Stanish, the director of finance for the Naperville Park District, is an active member of the board, serving for the past five years. Trustees are responsible for the prudent management of IMRF's retirement assets, and for making sure the money is there to pay the benefits earned by every IMRF member and beneficiary, now and for years to come.

Her new term will run from January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2023. Stanish began her board service in 2014.

WebXtra



Visit https://www.ilparks.org/page/people_places to read about more news from our park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies! Currently on our website, you can read about the following new employees around the state:

Anne Popek, Butterfield Park District
Katrina Hanna, Crystal Lake Park District
Claire Naughton, Crystal Lake Park District
Ben White, Leyden Township
Angie Sakellaris, Skokie Park District
Breanne Labus, Skokie Park District
Joseph Zimmermann, Vernon Hills Park District
Emily Guynn, Wilmette Park District

...and much more!

Chicago Wilderness Alliance Executive Council names Steering Committee members and officers



The Chicago Wilderness Alliance Executive Council is excited to name its new Steering Committee Members and Officers for 2019. **Elizabeth S. Kessler**, executive director of McHenry County Conservation District, was sworn in as Chair of the Alliance for a three-year term, replacing Arnold Randall, general

superintendent of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, who is rotating off after serving in this capacity since 2012.



Cathy Geraghty, director of strategic initiatives of the Forest Preserves of Cook County, was elected to fill the vacant At-Large Steering Committee member position for the next two years. She joins Alison Paul of the Field Museum, Daniel Suarez of Audubon Great Lakes, Kris Krouse of Shirley

Heinze Land Trust and Jo-Elle Mogerman of Shedd Aquarium.

Want to submit news from your agency for People & Places?

E-mail information and jpegs to wutterback@ilparks.org. Images should be 300 dpi at about 2 inches tall.

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