

illinois

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PARKS AND RECREATION

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



New Trends in Marketing Your Agency

Using Social Media and New Technology

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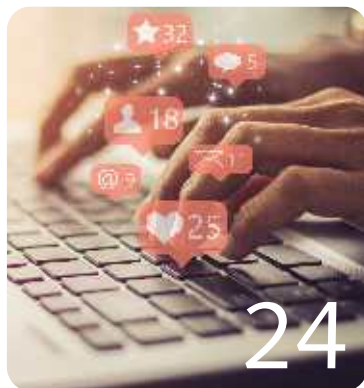
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IN THIS ISSUE



- 4 **From the Editor**
12 Seconds of Fame
- 6 **Get on Board**
Life Long Learning is the Key to Great Governance
- 8 **Eye on the Profession**
IPRA Looks Back on 2018
- 10 **Statehouse Insider**
Use IAPD Resources to Help Make the Case for Capital Funding
- 12 **2019 Legal Calendar**
- 16 **Lessons from Gullible Trout: How the Plainfield Park District Uses Video to Tell its Story on Social Media**
- 18 **WebXtra**
5 Ways to Use Video to Get and Keep New Visitors
- 20 **2018 IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala**
Congratulations to all of our winners!
- 24 **Designing Your Agency's Martech Landscape Using Technology to Tell Your Agency's Story**
Growing a Resilient Online Reputation
- 28 **Park Districts Can No Longer Ignore Social Media**
- 32 **People and Places**
Updates and tributes in the park, recreation and conservation family

FROM THE EDITOR

It was a 12-second video tweeted by my oldest son, Layne, with the question: "Can we just take a moment of silence for whoever had to guard my little brother last night?" #ankles

The video showed my 9-year-old son, Sawyer, dribbling a basketball down the court, encountering a defender and completely faking him out with his signature spin move. The defender lost his balance and fell to the ground, caught off guard by Sawyer's sudden change of direction. This move is affectionately known in the basketball world as 'breaking the ankles,' and the fans love it.

Sawyer was the smallest guy out there, so Layne got a kick out of the video, and so did a few other people ... 3,266 to be exact. It was 'loved' 327 times and retweeted 32 times.

Social media is a powerful thing, and in the marketing world, it's a game changer for park, recreation and conservation agencies. Recent studies show that about two-thirds of U.S. adults get their news on social media sites. The most commonly named positive thing about getting news on social media is convenience – 21% say this is what they like most, with responses such as "It's very accessible," "It's available at the touch of a button" and "I don't have to go looking for it."

Survey respondents also say that they like the interpersonal element: 8% of social media news consumers say they enjoy interacting with others – whether through discussing the news, sharing news with friends and family, or seeing what others' opinions are.

Imagine the possibilities of successfully harnessing social media marketing techniques and new technology to promote your agency's programs, services and facilities to the literal masses! Many of our member park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies have already established best practices for social media marketing, and they are seeing remarkable results.

Page 16's Lessons from Gullible Trout: How the Plainfield Park District uses Video to Tell its Story on Social Media reveals how the park district's first 'viral video,' which featured a seemingly mundane aspect of the park district's story, captured the interest of thousands. Designing Your Agency's Martech Landscape Using Technology to Tell Your Agency's Story on page 24 outlines the Oak Brook Park District's successful strategies for establishing content that effectively and continuously engages diverse audiences. And, in Park Districts Can No Longer Ignore Social Media on page 28, Barton Event Management provides tips from technological experts on avoiding pitfalls of using Facebook and Twitter, increasing user engagement and co-branding social media with local businesses.

The unmatched reach and incredible influence of social media are treasures in this industry. They provide endless opportunities for you to share stories about how your programs, services, facilities, parks, trails and natural areas enrich lives and make your communities better places in which to live, work and play.

The best part?

Most social media sites are available at no cost, so you can share all of those 'ankle-breaking moments' that your fans love, without breaking the bank!

— Bobbie Jo Hill, Interim Editor



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

Life Long Learning is the Key to Great Governance

At this time of the season with the holidays upon us, it is a perfect opportunity to reflect on the past year with gratitude. 2018 marked IAPD's 90th anniversary and year of service to its membership.

Starting as a fledgling organization based on a letter writing campaign, it has certainly taken flight. I am proud and grateful to be a part of the association's great history of accomplishments.

We celebrated this anniversary in a variety of meaningful ways and the capstone of IAPD's year is our newest publication on the history of the association and the many dedicated board members who made it possible. Year by year, we have chronicled our leaders and featured the highlights of each decade. It is a wonderful tribute to those selfless volunteers who not only served at the local level, but had the vision to understand that collectively the voice of Illinois park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts was a force for good that could make an undeniable impact on the state of Illinois and the rest, as they say, is history.

While we take time at IAPD to celebrate success, we also look to the future and seek out the trends and issues that well-informed board members should be cognizant of to be their best.

A commitment to learning and innovating is what makes your agency great, and I can think of no better way to 'up your game' than by attending the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, January 24-26, 2019 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. With over 185 educational sessions, it is a content-rich opportunity for learning. It is also an investment in yourself, your community, and your agency.

The conference is designed for commissioners and professional staff to attend together. Sessions are focused on the needs of each audience, and there is literally something for everyone. Some elected officials think it is the greatest learning opportunity on leadership of the year. It is also the greatest opportunity of the year to network with like-minded, publicly-elected officials from across the state of Illinois, see an exhibit hall brimming with the latest park and recreational equipment and take home some great ideas on best practices to be shared with your communities.

The following is a brief sampling of these outstanding opportunities:

#107 When the "%#*@" Hits the Fan, Will You Be Ready? Handling Crisis Issues with the Press, Public and Employees

Friday, 1/25/2019, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

Presenter(s): Michael Bersani, Attorney, Hervas, Condon & Bersani, P.C.; Ray McGury, Executive Director, Naperville Park District; Natalie Bauer Luce, Senior Consultant, Culloton Strategies

What will you do when a crisis occurs? Will you be ready? Hear from a veteran park district director and media consultant as they take you through recommended practices and strategies (and a few war stories) about handling crisis issues.

#110 Legal/Legislative Part I

Friday 1/25/2019, 8:15 AM - 9:30 AM

Presenter(s): Jason Anselment, Legal/Legislative Counsel, Illinois Association of Park Districts; Derke Price, Equity Partner, Ancel Glink

Legal experts will discuss new laws and recent court decisions. Stay current on a wide variety of changes in the law and how those changes will affect the operation of your agency.

#111 Legal/Legislative Part II

Friday, 1/25/2019, 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Presenter(s): Andrew Paine, Attorney, Tressler LLP
Emphasis will be placed on decisions involving the Open Meetings Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and other areas of interest arising out of decisions made by the Illinois Department of Human Rights, Illinois Department of Labor, and other state agencies.

#218 Public Meetings: Energize and Innovate Your Input Process

Friday, 1/25/2019, 9:45 AM - 11:00 AM

Presenter(s): Michelle Kelly, Principal Landscape Architect, Upland Design Ltd.

Make your public meetings engaging with these ideas, tools and tips to bring innovation to your community input process.

#123 Commissioners and Social Media--New Rules and New Challenges

Friday, 1/25/2019, 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Presenter(s): Steven Adams, Partner, Robbins Schwartz
Social media is becoming the new public square and everyone is using it. But new cases suggest there are real risks for elected officials and the government. What you allow on your page, how and when you remove comments, who visits your page and what you link to your page have become critical questions and sources of personal liability for commissioners and your agency. This session will cover the fundamental rules that every elected official must know. We will discuss specific scenarios, policy dos and don'ts and the practices that will minimize your risk.

#141 Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth: What Local Government Leadership Must Know About Ethics Laws and More

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Presenter(s): John O'Driscoll, Attorney, Tressler LLP; Kevin Kearney, Attorney, Tressler LLP

This session will provide elected officials, officers, and employees with critical information on the Gift Ban Act, prohibited political activities, conflicts of interest, official misconduct, and executive session confidentiality.

#103 Creating An Effective Executive Director Evaluation Tool

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Presenter(s): David Wick, Commissioner of Parks - Treasurer, Park District of Oak Park

Do you as board members struggle to find an effective way to create and disseminate constructive feedback for your Executive Director (ED)? If you wish to strengthen your current review process, then plan to attend this session. You will be introduced to the most successful styles of writing and delivering the board's evaluation to your ED, as well as the importance of providing timely and useful feedback. Various models of assessment forms will be presented.

#135 Complying With the Illinois Open Meetings Act

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 10:15 AM - 11:30 AM

Presenter(s): Andrew Keyt, Attorney, Heyl Royster; Syed Ahmad, Attorney, Heyl Royster

This presentation will discuss the basic requirements of the act including: when is there a meeting; the pitfalls of the use of electronic communication; when is there a quorum; what should be on the agenda; what can or should be discussed in closed session; and the mechanics of closed session. Participants will have a greater awareness of the pitfalls of the use of electronic communication and gain an understanding of when and how to go into closed session.

#105 Board Member to Board Leader

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Presenter(s): Dannielle Wilson, Consultant, DW Recreation Consulting

This session will help individual board members ensure that they are being impactful in a positive way, towards the goal of becoming board leaders. If you're looking for a session that goes beyond the nuts and bolts and digs into real, meaningful, and applicable board topics, then look no further! This is just what you need to acquire new skills and energize yourself for a successful board tenure!

#113 Not in my Park: Regulating Controversial Park Activities

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Presenter(s): Daniel Bolin, Partner, Ancel Glink; Erin Pell, Attorney, Ancel Glink, P.C.; Kurt Asprooth, Attorney, Ancel Glink
Park districts manage acres of public space where the public at times pursue controversial uses. This session will open your eyes to the legal and process hoops that must be dealt with for these uses. Get ahead of this issue before a real problem starts.

#115 The Culture Code: Creating a Healthy Relationship Between Executive Directors and the Elected Officials

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Presenter(s): Derke Price, Equity Partner, Ancel Glink

This session will deal with building a working relationship between the director and the board of elected officials. Participants will learn tips for setting expectations for success and understand strategies for performance review and compensation.

#121 Park District Finance 101

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Presenter(s): Adam Simon, Partner, Ancel Glink

This session is a must if you want to understand park district finances A-Z with simple, understanding terms. If you want to maximize your tax dollars for the park district, then you need to attend this session. Participants will learn the budget & appropriation process and best practices for your funds and levy.

#128 Commissioner Ethical Problems and Best Practices

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Presenter(s): Kathleen Elliott, Of Counsel, Robbins Schwartz; Nicholas Petrovski, Associate, Robbins Schwartz

A presentation of state and federal ethics laws and requirements applicable to park commissioners, real world examples, and an interactive discussion of how to handle these examples. Participation is encouraged!

#138 Ask The Commissioner

Saturday, 1/26/2019, 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

Presenter(s): Robert Kaplan, President, Hoffman Estates Park District; Chris Gentes, Commissioner, Round Lake Area Park District; Jeff Rigoni, President, Lockport Township Park District

What issues are you facing as a commissioner? Are you encountering speed bumps dealing with one of your fellow board members? Is there a commissioner who has tunnel vision? Are there micro-managers? Do you have a "know it all" or "it is my way or the highway" or one that doesn't say anything? Attend this session and hear from a panel of commissioners who combined have years of experience.

The Staff and Board of Trustees of the Illinois Association of Park Districts wish you and your family peace, joy and happiness during the holiday season and throughout the new year!

I am truly grateful for your involvement as a board member or park professional in this great field of parks and recreation. You make a difference!

I hope you enjoy the holidays with family and friends and I look forward to seeing you at the 2019 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, January 24-26, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

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 Looks Back on 2018

As we begin to wrap up 2018 and move on to 2019, I want to take this opportunity to reflect on what IPRA has accomplished this year.

In 2018, one of the biggest things we achieved was a collaboration with the Park District of La Grange to redecorate the IPRA office to make it our long-term home.

We increased our office space and fixed it up to make it feel like a separate space for IPRA. When you come into our office now it looks more like a place where people will want to work- no more cardboard boxes and folding tables as part of our permanent décor. I know those of you who work in facility management can appreciate how important it is to have a space that is in keeping with the welcoming feeling you want to convey to your guests.

In other achievements, we rolled out just last fall and through this year the new part of the membership structure which allows part-time professionals to join at the discounted "Advocate" rate so that we can better serve part-time professionals.

In terms of education, we provided three Road Shows this year. Road Shows are where the same speaker and topic of education are hosted in multiple cities across the state to help us better bring education locally statewide. This year, events were held in Alton, Pontiac, Schaumburg, Tinley Park, Oregon, Galesburg, Springfield, Romeoville, Hoffman Estates, and La Grange.

Additionally, our webinar series continues to be successful and through that program, we serve our members and others across the country. We also continue to build relationships with Illinois Afterschool Network and American Camp Association-IL. We held a joint activity with both groups May 21. Plus, we worked with outside speakers to create and design a CPRE prep course and hosted it this fall, while also creating some momentum to encourage our members towards this certification.

We continue to work with the Illinois Park and Recreation Foundation to support their strategic plan and development. Examples of their success include the IPRF/Joint Section Golf Outing in the fall and the Silent Auction at conference in January. Throughout the year, the foundation worked to raise funds for the scholarship fund and gives back to the field through student and professional scholarships. Of note, professional scholarships don't just support those who wish to attend IPRA events, but they can be used for a variety of professional development opportunities. Additionally, both IPRA

and IPRF have worked together on our ongoing partnership with Playcore/Gametime/Cunningham Recreation to provide five statewide educational events this fall as well as playground matching grants.

Also, about foundations, I recently joined the board of the National Association of Park Foundations (NAPF) and I look forward to this excellent opportunity to network with park and recreation foundations across the country. I hope to learn some ideas that I can bring back to our foundation too.

We have also partnered this year with marketing firm A5, who, along with our Unplug Illinois Advisory Committee, are helping us to spread this public education campaign about the value of parks and recreation. Through their help, we were able to show our public service announcement on Comcast cable channels in the Chicagoland area throughout this summer. This will be part of our ongoing relationship with A5 and our Unplug Illinois campaign.

Through our partnership with HR Source (formerly known as the Management Association) we are in the second year of our new salary study for park and recreation positions. Through the leadership of our Salary Survey Task Force, we were able to make some important changes to the program, following member feedback, to ensure this new product meets your needs.

Financially, we continue to be strong and stable. A year ago, we met the cap the reserves we allow ourselves to keep on hand, per our financial reserve policy. So, the board set aside the overage into a board designated fund. Where reserves are truly meant as a safety net for emergencies, like an insurance policy, the board designated fund is meant for special projects, to allow us to invest in programs which give back to our mission and our members, all while ensuring our safety net is secured.

We also finished a year ago with a 97% member satisfaction rating for the second year in a row. We will soon be sending out the year-end survey to find out how we did this year in meeting your expectations.

About governance, we hosted board meetings in Downers Grove, Rolling Meadows, Roxana, and Huntley.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our meeting scheduled for Decatur and look forward to getting back there in 2019. The board had outside speakers come in to advance the professional

development of our board at two of our five meetings, plus we had a presentation from A5 about how our Unplug IL campaign is going at another meeting. We restructured the relationship between the Membership Council and the Foundation to ensure the sections are well represented on scholarship decisions. IPRA staff completed a strategic planning retreat with Jarrod Scheunemann to identify some new innovations for the strategic plan.

While you may not be aware of it, one of the things we do is represent IPRA with other associations and share the work that we do with other outside groups. Towards that end, on your behalf, I presented at the American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) at their annual conference about IPRA's incredible "Turn Around Story" focusing not so much on the early stabilization efforts, but on our growth phase these last several years. This session was ranked in evaluations the top 6th session at this conference. As a result of our story, we were featured in their national magazine over the summer. We were also featured in ASAE's daily newsletter twice this summer about our ProConnect program. Additionally, I am now serving as the chair of the ASAE Ethics Committee. I was able to publish an article in their newsletter about how associations should apply ethical positions on social issues to better represent their membership. ASAE has 42,000 members in over 50 countries, so all this positive press is a sign that we stand out among other associations.

I also work on your behalf with the Association Forum, a group of association professionals primarily in the Chicago area. I presented for them twice this year, first on IPRA's ProConnect mentoring program and later on public speaking- the same session I did at NRPA this fall. Earlier this spring, I also spoke for the Women in Leisure-Illinois group in an interview presentation about IPRA and leadership.

We continue to focus on serving students in parks and recreation and related fields. Towards that end, Matt Fairbanks, Duane Smith, and I from the IPRA staff team have visited University of Illinois twice, plus visits to Eastern Illinois University, Moraine Valley Community College, and Southern Illinois University. We also hosted an event at University of St Francis. We formed a relationship with Western Illinois University, moving our partnership for the Leadership Academy from U of I to WIU, and creating a new program with WIU for our new career toolkit which will be published in the spring.

Now, as we look to 2019, we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary. Heather Weishaar, IPRA's Outreach Director, has set the tone that as we celebrate our anniversary it will be with the focus on the individual people who got us here. Heather has spearheaded the "75 Stories" project which features stories from 75 people from our past and present and this publication will come out this winter as a digital copy for all members and a hardcopy for those featured in the book. This will be the first step in our year long celebration, featuring members from our past, present, and future. You will be hearing more soon about our "75 Conversations" campaign in 2019.

Thank you for all your work as volunteers and fully engaged members in yet another successful year with IPRA. Thank you! See you next year.

SAVE THE DATE!



**APRIL 12, 2019 | 8:30 A.M. - 4 P.M.
BARTLETT PARK DISTRICT**

Providing professionals in the recreation field a curriculum that builds a strong foundation of basic skills needed to succeed in a supervisory position.

Sessions provide opportunities to increase knowledge, which can be implemented immediately and expose participants to emerging trends that can help advance their career in the recreation field.

We've come a long way since 1944.

Renew your membership today & help us celebrate our 75th anniversary throughout 2019!

ILipra.org

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The graphic is a vertical rectangle. At the top, it says "We've come a long way since 1944." in white text on a blue background. Below this is a black and white photograph of three children playing on a playground structure. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "Renew your membership today & help us celebrate our 75th anniversary throughout 2019!" followed by "ILipra.org". The IPRA logo is at the bottom left, with "ipra" in a circle and "ILLINOIS" above it, and "BUILDING BETTER COMMUNITIES" in small text below.



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Use IAPD Resources to Help Make the Case for Capital Funding

Last month, all IAPD member agencies received IAPD's latest research report, *Statewide Results of Agency Facility and Program Usage*, which builds on the series of IAPD research studies during the past five years.

These IAPD research studies, which are based on data provided by participating IAPD member agencies, contain dozens of key findings and other vital information that help demonstrate the benefits and value that park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies provide to their communities.

Of course, we do not perform this important research to simply publish a report that sits on a shelf gathering dust.

IAPD uses the research findings in a variety of ways, including our advocacy efforts at the Capitol. For example:

- The 2016 *Statewide Results of Agency W-2 & Revenue Data* found that park districts, forest preserves, and other member agencies employed nearly 33,000 youth throughout Illinois. This data has been instrumental in our advocacy efforts to demonstrate the way in which the minimum wage impacts teen employment at these agencies.
- Other findings from that *W-2 & Revenue Data* report and the 2013 *Statewide Citizen Satisfaction Survey* have been used frequently to help demonstrate the ways in which a statewide property tax freeze would specifically affect park districts, forest preserves and other agencies.
- The 2014 *Illinois Needs Assessment and Return on Investment in Land Conservation* that IAPD conducted in partnership with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) has been used time and again to demonstrate the unmet capital construction and land acquisition needs of local agencies, including in our advocacy efforts this year to nearly double the state appropriation of dedicated funding for new OSLAD grants.

These are just a few of many examples illustrating the ways IAPD uses its research. But, as critical as this research is to

our statewide advocacy program, the research can be used just as effectively by individual agencies at the local level for benchmarking, developing best practices and grassroots advocacy.



All of IAPD's recent research studies and materials are available through the IAPD website at ILparks.org under "Research."

Widespread Program and Facility Usage Demonstrates Citizen Demand

In fact, your agency can utilize the newly released *Statewide Results of Agency Facility and Program Usage* right now to help advocate for much needed funding for capital projects and land acquisitions.

It has been nearly ten years since the last major statewide capital plan, the *Illinois Jobs Now!* program, which included a total of \$200 million for the Park and Recreational Facility Capital Construction (PARC) grant program and the Public Museum Capital Grants program,

along with millions of dollars in member initiative capital projects for individual local park and recreation agencies. There is widespread recognition among lawmakers that a new statewide capital plan is long overdue, and discussions continue to take place behind the scenes regarding a new comprehensive plan next year.

Because local park and recreation facilities and open space are such a vital part of the state's infrastructure, it is critical that funding be included in the next statewide capital plan. Consequently, local park and recreation agencies should make sure their legislators are aware of their agency's local capital needs and shovel-ready projects.

As you meet with legislators about these local projects, the *Statewide Results of Agency Facility and Program Usage* findings can be utilized to demonstrate citizen demand and facility needs, including a request for new funding for the PARC grant program.

For instance,

- Nearly **29 million visits** were made to agencies' fitness, aquatics, golf, and other recreational facilities last year; **hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans are members of these facilities**, which demonstrates the commitment of Illinois residents to these agencies and reflects their strong sense of value.
- The results also confirm that IAPD agencies serve the entire community through a wide variety of programs that are provided to all age groups, from the youngest child to the oldest adult. Last year alone, nearly **2 million residents participated in more than 70,000 programs that were offered to their communities**, demonstrating the high demand that is placed on existing resources.
- **Nearly 400 square miles of open space and over 3,000 miles of multi-use trails** are provided by these agencies throughout the state. Additional funding is needed to connect these existing trails and maintain them.

Anecdotally, we have known that the demands on local park and recreation facilities were exacerbated in recent years by the State budget impasse that resulted in steep cuts to non-profits that provide before/after school care or services to people with disabilities. The *Statewide Results of Agency Facility and Program Usage* confirmed the stories we heard from the field during the impasse.

For example,

- Program registration increases have been on the rise in the past three years with **youth non-athletic program registration up 15% since 2015**, while **preschool and before/after school programs were up 12% since 2015**.
- Special recreation agencies **provided over 4,300 unique programs to people with disabilities last year**.

Obviously, with the increased demand on local park and recreation agencies to provide these critical services comes a greater need for funding for facility upgrades and expansion. The widespread usage among Illinois residents is further evidence of just how vital these facilities are to the State's overall infrastructure.



In addition to research studies, IAPD's website contains a wealth of information such as referendum results since 2000. National referendum results on land conservation, parks, and restoration measures are also available under the Advocacy Resources section at ILparks.org.

Additional Research Confirms Unmet Need

To further demonstrate the high demand for capital funding of local park and recreation projects, IAPD is currently partnering with the TPL and TNC to update our 2014 *Illinois Needs Assessment and Return on Investment in Land Conservation* report.

The 2014 study found nearly \$2.6 billion in unmet needs for capital construction and land acquisitions in Illinois, but because neither the state nor federal government has made any meaningful investment of capital dollars since the study in 2014, it is reasonable to anticipate that these numbers are higher today. The updated figures are expected early next year.

Use of Legislator Site Visits Still Critical

IAPD's research findings will help validate your agency's needs and support your local advocacy, but obviously, written reports are not a substitute for face-to-face interaction with your local legislators. The most effective way to make the case for capital funding is to invite legislators to your facilities for a site visit to discuss your agency's specific needs. A tour of specific sites can help legislators visualize the need and potential of capital projects or land acquisitions.

In addition to IAPD research, you can find information about hosting a legislator site visit and other advocacy tools on the IAPD website at ILparks.org. Legislators will be in their legislative districts during most of December and January, so schedule a visit and use IAPD resources to help make the case for capital funding.

Legal calendar 2019

Prepared by Peter M. Murphy, IAPD President/CEO & Jason Anselment, IAPD Legal/Legislative Counsel

The following park district calendar includes key dates based on a fiscal year that begins on May 1 and ends on April 30. For those park districts that have adopted another date for the commencement of the fiscal year (70 ILCS 1205/4-4), this calendar must be adjusted for those duties that must be performed at times related to the fiscal year. The calendar is also established around regular park board meetings held on the third Thursday of each month. Selected election dates are based on the Consolidated Primary Election to be held on February 26, 2019, and the Consolidated Election to take place on April 2, 2019. For additional election dates, consult IAPD's election calendar published in the September/October issue of Illinois Park and Recreation magazine and the Legal Tools section of the IAPD website, ILparks.org.

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

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

ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS

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

- Post the date, time and place of park district regular meetings for the year. Mail copies to the news media. (5 ILCS 120/2.02)
- Review the requirement that all closed sessions are to be recorded verbatim by audio or video. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review requirement that open meeting minutes must be approved within 30 days after the meeting or at the public body's second subsequent regular meeting, whichever is later, and made available for public inspection within 10 days after approval. (5 ILCS 120/2.06)
- Review the requirements that all Open Meetings Act and Freedom of Information Act officers must complete the Attorney General's annual training requirements. Newly appointed officers must complete the training within 30 days after designation or assuming the position. (5 ILCS 120/1.05; 5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- Review requirement that newly elected or appointed members of a public body must successfully complete a course on the Open Meetings Act offered by the Illinois Association of Park Districts or the electronic training curriculum on the Open Meetings Act developed by the Illinois Attorney General's Public Access Counselor within 90 days of their oath of office or otherwise assuming their responsibilities if no oath is required. (5 ILCS 140/1.05)
- Review requirement that all local governments with Internet websites are required to post on that website an email address for their elected officials for the public's use in contacting those officials and to post a hyperlink on the local government's homepage to allow the public easy access to the contact information. (50 ILCS 205/20)
- Review with the park district treasurer the requirement that all funds of the district not immediately needed for disbursement must be invested within two working days at prevailing interest rates or better. (30 ILCS 225/1)

- Review the requirement that every person, other than the treasurer, receiving money for the district must keep a triplicate record of the money, and deliver the money to the treasurer not later than the middle of the month following the month of receipt. (30 ILCS 20/1)
- The American flag must be displayed and flown each day of the week from each City Hall or Village Hall and Village Square and at the principal entrance to all supervised public parks. (5 ILCS 465/3b)
- Contributions to the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) must be deducted each pay period from covered employees' pay and remitted to the IMRF along with the contribution from the local government. This requirement is mandatory for municipalities over 5,000 population where Social Security is not provided, and elective for others. (40 ILCS 5/7-132, 7-172, 7-173)
- Districts that have employees under Social Security must send their FICA contributions at such times as may be designated by the Internal Revenue Service. (40 ILCS 5/21-105.2, 21-109)
- Review the requirements that all newly hired employees must be reported to the Illinois Department of Employment Security. (820 ILCS 405/1801.1)
- Review the requirement that while participating in a public works project, each contractor and subcontractor must submit a certified payroll to the public body in charge of the project every month. The public body must maintain these records submitted prior to January 1, 2014 for at least 3 years. Pursuant to Public Act 98-0328, the public body must maintain these records submitted on or after January 1, 2014, for at least 5 years, but can do so in paper or electronic format. (820 ILCS 130/5)
- For persons or entities required to report under the Lobbyist Registration Act, review reporting requirements for expenditures. (25 ILCS 170/6, 170/6.5)
- Beginning January 1, 2015, all employers must post a notice developed by the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) and include information concerning an employee's rights in any employee handbook. Samples of these required notices are available on the IDHR's website. (Public Act 98-1050)

EVERY SIX MONTHS

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

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

NOVEMBER 2018

NOVEMBER 1

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

NOVEMBER 26

Last day for filing of petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referendum for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Primary Election. [EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referendum held under the provisions of Article IX of the Liquor Control Act and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.] (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)

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

DECEMBER 2018

DECEMBER 3

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

DECEMBER 3

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

DECEMBER 3

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

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

NOTE: If initial officers are to be elected at the election for creation of a new unit of government, candidates for such offices shall file nomination papers 113-106 days before such election (December 10-17, 2018). (10 ILCS 5/10-6)

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

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

DECEMBER 10

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

DECEMBER 10

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

DECEMBER 10

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

DECEMBER 10

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

NOTE: Filing is between 113-106 days prior to the Consolidated Election. December 10, 2018 is the 113th day prior to that election and is the first day of filing in those offices which are open.

DECEMBER 17

Last day for candidates to file in the office of the local election official or board of election commissioners, original nomination papers (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for nonpartisan candidates for park district boards, forest preserve district boards, township and road district boards, fire protection district, library district and municipal library boards, and school and community college boards for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-6(2))

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

DECEMBER 20

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

DECEMBER 24

Last day for filing objections to nomination papers for nonpartisan candidates (whose nomination papers were filed during the period December 10–17, 2018) in the office of the election authority or the local election official with whom the nomination papers are on file for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/10-8)

NOTE: The objection period consists of five business days. If the office of the local election official is closed for days that would normally be business days prior to Tuesday, December 25, 2018, they must extend the deadline for filing objections in their office.

DECEMBER 31

Last day for filing petitions (must contain original sheets signed by voters and circulators) for referenda for the submission of questions of public policy (local) for the Consolidated Election. [EXCEPTION: Proposition to create a political subdivision, referenda held under the provisions of Article IX of the Liquor Control Act, and Section 18-120 of the Property Tax Code.] (10 ILCS 5/28-2, 28-6, 28-7)

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

JANUARY 2019

JANUARY 8

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

JANUARY 14

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

JANUARY 14

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

JANUARY 17

Regular January board meeting.

JANUARY 24

Last day for local election official to certify candidates and the offices they are filing for to the election authority for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/7-13.1, 10-15; 60 ILCS 1/45-20)

JANUARY 24

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

JANUARY 25-27

Attend the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference, Chicago Hyatt.

JANUARY 31

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

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

FEBRUARY 2019

FEBRUARY 1

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

FEBRUARY 19

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

FEBRUARY 21

Regular February board meeting.

FEBRUARY 26

Consolidated Primary Election

MARCH 2019

MARCH 21

Regular March board meeting

MARCH 25

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

MARCH 25

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

APRIL 2019

APRIL 1

Last day by which the county clerk of each county shall notify all persons whose names have been certified to him, other than candidates for office who have filed their statements with their nominating petitions, of the requirements for filing statements of economic interests. The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A-101, requires the following persons to file verified written statements of economic interests: (g) Persons who are elected to office in a unit of local government, and candidates for nomination or election to that office; (h) Persons appointed to the governing board of a unit of local government and persons appointed to a board or commission of a unit of local government who have the authority to authorize the expenditure of public funds but not members of boards or commissions who function in an advisory capacity; (i) Persons who are employed by a unit of local government and are compensated for services as employees and not as independent contractors and who:

1. are, or function as, the head of a department, division, bureau, authority or other administrative unit within the unit of local government, or who exercise similar authority within the unit of local government;

2. have direct supervisory authority over, or direct responsibility for the formulation, negotiation, issuance or execution of contracts entered into by the unit of local government in the amount of \$1,000 or greater;

3. have authority to approve licenses and permits by the unit of local government (this item does not include employees who function in a ministerial capacity);

4. adjudicate, arbitrate, or decide any judicial or administrative proceeding, or review the adjudication, arbitration or decision of any judicial or administrative proceeding within the authority of the unit of local government;

5. have authority to issue or promulgate rules and regulations within areas under the authority of the unit of local government; or

6. have supervisory responsibility for 20 or more employees of the unit of local government. (5 ILCS 420/4A-106; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101)

APRIL 1

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

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

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

APRIL 2

Consolidated Election

APRIL 18

Regular April board meeting.

APRIL 23

Last day for the county clerk or board of election commissioners to canvass the election results for the Consolidated Election. (10 ILCS 5/22-17)

APRIL 24

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

APRIL 30-MAY 1

Attend the IAPD Legislative Conference in Springfield. The Legislative Reception is held the evening of April 30 with the conference starting the next morning on May 1. April 30 is Parks Day at the Capitol with park district, forest preserve, conservation district and special recreation displays lining the Capitol Rotunda.

MAY 2019

MAY 1

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

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

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

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

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

MAY 1

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

MAY 1

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

MAY 1

The date to start the annual audit. Every governmental unit receiving revenues of \$850,000 or more is required to make an annual audit to cover the immediately preceding fiscal year. The audit must be completed and the audit report filed with the Comptroller within 180 days after the close of the fiscal year. All governmental units are also required to file a copy of the completed report with the county clerk. (50 ILCS 310/2 and 310/3)

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

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

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

MAY 1

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

MAY 1

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

MAY 3

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

MAY 16

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

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

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

MAY 31

General Assembly scheduled to adjourn.

JUNE 2019

JUNE 14

The last day for filing a copy of the district's budget and appropriation ordinance with the county clerk, as well as a certified estimate of revenue by source anticipated to be received in the following fiscal year (assuming a passage adoption date of May 16).

JUNE 20

Regular June board meeting.

JUNE 30

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

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

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

NOTE: Pursuant to Public Act 100-0154 a public body is no longer required to publish its determination if the agency provides electronic access to this notice on its website with a hyperlink to Illinois Department of Labor's uniform prevailing wage schedule for that locality.

JULY 2019

JULY 15

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

JULY 18

Regular July board meeting.

AUGUST 2019

AUGUST 14

If filed with Illinois Department of Labor on the last possible date (July 15), the last date to: (i) mail copies of prevailing rate of wages to requesting parties, and (ii) publish determination of rates unless the public body has provided electronic access to this notice on its website with a hyperlink to the Illinois Department of Labor's uniform prevailing wage schedule for that locality. (Public Act 100-0154). (Publication must be within 30 days of date of filing with Department of Labor.) (820 ILCS 130/9)

AUGUST 15

Regular August board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 2019

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

SEPTEMBER 19

Regular September board meeting.

SEPTEMBER 24-26

Attend the NRPA Congress in Baltimore, Maryland

OCTOBER 2019

OCTOBER 1

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

OCTOBER 17

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

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

OCTOBER 17

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

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

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

OCTOBER 27

The last day to file annual audit report (or financial report if district received revenue of less than \$850,000) with the Comptroller of the State of Illinois and county clerk (within 180 days of close of fiscal year) and make a copy open to public inspection. Pursuant to Public Act 98-1019, beginning with fiscal year 2016 those governmental units receiving revenue less than \$850,000 for any fiscal year must also provide copies of this annual financial report to each member of that governmental unit's governing board of elected officials and present it either in person or by a live phone or web connection during a public meeting and have the financial report approved by a 3/5 majority vote. Otherwise, that unit must cause an audit of the account to be made once every four years in addition to filing the annual financial report with the Comptroller. Any governmental unit receiving revenue of \$850,000 or more shall, in addition to complying with the audit requirements, file a financial report on forms required by the Comptroller. (50 ILCS 310/2; 310/3; 310/6)

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

OCTOBER 31

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

OCTOBER 31

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

NOVEMBER 2019

NOVEMBER 11

The suggested date to publish notice of hearing (Truth in Taxation Law) if the district's proposed levy is greater than 105 percent of last year's extension or estimated extension. Must publish not more than 14 days, nor less than 7 days prior to the date of the public hearing. Publication date assumes a hearing date of November 18-22, 2019. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (35 ILCS 200/18-70; 200/18-75)

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

NOVEMBER 14

Attend the IAPD Legal Symposium McDonald's University, Oak Brook

NOVEMBER 21

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

NOVEMBER 21

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

DECEMBER 2019

DECEMBER 1

The suggested date to verify that, for real estate acquired in 2019, appropriate applications have been filed to exempt the real estate from real estate taxes. (35 ILCS 200/15-5)

DECEMBER 3

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

DECEMBER 6

(If levy ordinance was enacted on November 21, 2019) the last day to publish Truth in Taxation notice if levy amounts as enacted exceed prior published figures, or if levy exceeds 105 percent of last year's extension and there was not prior publication. Pursuant to Public Act 99-367, the notice must also be posted on the taxing district's website if the taxing district has a website that is maintained by the full-time staff of the taxing district. (Notice must be given within 15 days of the date the levy ordinance was enacted.) (35 ILCS 200/18-85)

DECEMBER 19

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

DECEMBER 20

The suggested date to prepare and file with the Supervisor of Assessments the annual affidavit/certificate of exempt status stating whether there has been a change in the ownership or use of the district's exempt real estate and the nature of any such change to continue the exemption of park property from real estate taxes. (Last day for filing is January 31, 2020.) (35 ILCS 200/15-10)

DECEMBER 20

The suggested day by which bond ordinances should be filed with county clerk in order to receive extensions of taxes for the payment of principal and interest on general obligation bonds or limited bonds for 2019 taxes collected in 2020. The filing must actually take place prior to March 1, 2020. (30 ILCS 350/16)

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

DECEMBER 30

Because some offices are closed on Tuesday, December 31, in those counties the last day to: (a) file certified copy of tax levy ordinance with county clerk (70 ILCS 1205/5-1; 35 ILCS 200/18-15), and (b) file board president's certificate of compliance with county clerk. (35 ILCS 200/18-90)

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

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

BY BROCK A. STEIN
Plainfield Park District Communications Coordinator

LESSONS FROM GULLIBLE TROUT: HOW THE PLAINFIELD PARK DISTRICT USES VIDEO TO TELL ITS STORY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It was colder than it looked for a sunny October morning.

It also wasn't what I was expecting to be doing on a Monday, as I worked my frozen fingers to steady an iPad that was live streaming two technicians from the State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources Fishery division who were delivering 1,500 rainbow trout to one of our fishing ponds.





For all of the efforts to plan, figure out social media and harness the best way to approach it, the simple truth is you don't know what will truly catch people's attention.

As they shooed them from their containers, I learned that the new park residents get fattened to a hefty $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds before they're corralled on to the truck in some oxygenated and slightly salted water to keep them calm as they prepare to make the 2+ hour drive from their home at the hatchery south of Peoria to their new one at Van Horn Woods Park.

Having been fed a steady diet of trout pellets at the hatchery makes them “catchable” said the tech—a nice way of saying that the gullible fish won't think anything is “fishy” when they see the first lure dangled in front of them.

When the process was done, I managed to tap out the name of the pond location, posted the saved video to the park district's Facebook page, and headed back to the office; making a mental note to throw a pair of gloves in my car for the next time I'm sent to film the arrival of catchable fish.

I was just hoping that my frozen fingers and chattering teeth weren't shaking the camera too much as I wondered who in their right mind could possibly be watching such a thing in the morning at the tail end of the work week.

Capturing Spontaneous Moments with Live Video

Turns out quite a few people.

A few hundred of them during the initial broadcast, and another thousand in the first hour after it posted to Facebook. It racked up views rapidly with about 2,500 by the end of the week and just over 2,700 total views by October 26. While not Carpool Karaoke numbers, its viewership still eclipsed our best-performing video by a wide margin.

Our marketing manager called it our first “viral video”—and it was—but in spite of all of our collective expertise, master's degrees, and general can-do-attitude, it wasn't the response we expected.

That's a lesson that I've learned during my first six months as a communications coordinator with the Plainfield Park District: for all of the efforts to plan, figure out social media

and harness the best way to approach it, the simple truth is you don't know what will truly catch people's attention.

Without a Net: Telling Our Story with Live Video

The direction I'd received when I started with the agency in April was to help tell the park district's story, and do it with more video whenever possible.

Video makes sense, too, since it helps our posts stand out and stops people who are busy thumbing through their various social media feeds with moving pictures and sound, giving them a reason to at least pause and consider spending a few extra seconds with our content.

All of the major social media platforms support live video now. In addition to Facebook Live, Twitter also includes a live stream option as does Instagram, which also has a unique feature for hour-long video content called IGTV.

Even YouTube, which once garnered most of the eyeballs on the internet looking for video content has a live video streaming option. YouTube defines the two approaches to video—live vs. curated—in a section on their site.

“You can use live streaming to share experiences and unscripted responses to events, news, and even unboxings,” YouTube's website notes.

There were more than a few times in the 1990s when I would stop on my local cable access channel to marvel at the home-made, rough-hewn qualities of the programs being broadcast on my T.V. If I had to speculate on the appeal of watching live footage streamed over social media, it could be that same live-without-a-net spectacle that was once formerly found on cable access.

In the case of our trout video, it was a seemingly mundane task that's probably been completed dozens of times during the course of the park district's 50+ year history, but an element that's never had a spotlight shined on it before.

It wasn't just fish shooting out of a tube, churning the silt near the shore, and generally looking bewildered. It was a part of the district's story that we were telling for the first time, and that, for many people, was interesting and worth taking a look at.

Animoto

When live video isn't the right approach, we've also discovered another instrument to add to our tool kit this year.

Animoto came to our attention through a partnership with a neighboring agency, and we've found that the video tool provides a simpler, quicker way to create curated videos.

My initial foray into creating and editing a video to promote the opening of our Ottawa Street Pool in the spring involved shooting images and short video clips documenting the cleaning, maintenance, and other behind the scenes work completed by the dedicated maintenance crew ahead of the summer season.

But stitching all of the footage together into a usable video was an arduous process using the Premier Pro editing software.

It wasn't until we partnered with the local library on a social media cross promotion for our mascots that we learned what the library was using to create its videos, an online tool called Animoto.

It turns out that Animoto is an ideal tool for a department like ours, which requires us to wear many hats, video director being one of them. It also excels at turning still photos and video clips in to bright, fast-paced videos.

The process is as simple as selecting your files, choosing from a menu of public domain music, and picking a pre-packaged layout to fit your theme.

There is a more straight forward plug and play interface dubbed *Animoto Memories* as well as an *Animoto Marketing* side of the platform that provides more tools that allow clips to be trimmed and sound to be adjusted depending on how detailed you want to get with your production. Using Animoto also has the added benefit of increasing our department's productivity because it cuts in half the time it takes to create a video.

A good example is a recent Saturday morning we spent this fall with our executive director leading a video tour of our soon-to-open Prairie Activity & Recreation Center. We spent about an hour shooting stills and some video footage of the new rec center and then assembled the footage on Monday and had a video ready for upload to our various platforms by Tuesday afternoon.

Whichever approach you choose, live stream or a planned video shoot, both have their pros and cons. With a live-streamed video you get a less polished presentation. However, at the end of the broadcast you have produced an immediate artifact that can be saved to your social media feed for your residents to discover later that day, month, or anytime they're perusing through your social media. With a pre-planned and shot video, you can control your presentation, the length of a particular clip, and even can add music, graphics and titles but lose the spontaneous appeal.

The end result with both is a finished video that tells your park district's story in an engaging and eye-catching way.

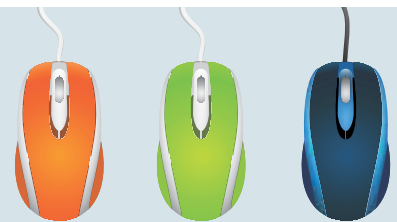
WebXtra

5 Ways to Use Video to Get and Keep New Visitors

By Beth Ziesenis, Your Nerdy Best Friend

Eight in 10 consumers have been convinced to make a purchase after watching a brand's video according to a study by Wyzowl.

Parks and Recreation organizations can benefit from upping their video game... and it doesn't have to cost a fortune. Here are some quick and budget-friendly video tools to enhance your website, email communications and more. These tools are sure to have new visitors knocking at your door!



Read the Full Story Online

Go to ILparks.org and select Publications/IP&R Magazine/WebXtras from the left column.



IPARKS Members Receive iGrant Funds

The IPARKS iGrant Program permits IPARKS Members to apply for up to \$500 in grant money to fund, or partially fund, safety items that will aid the Member in loss control or risk management efforts.

Any safety item whose purpose is the prevention or reduction of liability claims or property losses will be considered. Examples of items that would qualify for the \$500 in iGrant funds include (but are not limited to):

- Playground surface material
- Safety signage
- Safety cones or other hazard warning items
- Automated External Defibrillators
- Fire extinguishers
- Life jackets

Don't miss out on this benefit! If you would like more information about the iGrant Program or are interested in learning about IPARKS Membership, please contact an IPARKS Representative at 800.748.0554. We look forward to speaking with you!

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Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette
Champaign Park District / Illini Radio Group



Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Small Business

Butterfield Park District for The Conservation Foundation
Decatur Park District for DCC Marketing
Waukegan Park District for Kiefer Swim Products
Wheeling Park District for Liquor Barn



Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Mid-Sized Business

Mundelein Park & Recreation District / Knauz Automotive Group
Winnetka Park District / First Bank & Trust



Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Large Business

Hoffman Estates Park District / AMITA Health
Wheaton Park District / First Trust Portfolios



Intergovernmental Cooperation

Blue Island Park District and the City of Blue Island, **McHenry County Conservation District** with Nunda Township, City of Woodstock, McHenry County College, City of Crystal Lake, Crystal Lake Park District, McHenry County Department of Transportation, Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources (IDNR), Illinois Dept. of Transportation (IDOT), Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning – CMA, ComEd, the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission, and the Union Pacific Railroad Company, **Wheeling Park District** and the Village of Wheeling



Partnership

Champaign Park District with Rainer and Julie S. Martens Foundation

Deerfield Park District with Chicago Sky Professional Women's Basketball Team

Forest Preserves of Cook County with The Field Museum

Palatine Park District with Partners for Our Communities - ICompete Program



Best Green Practices

Naperville Park District
Palatine Park District
Park District of Oak Park
Urbana Park District



Good Sportsmanship

Mundelein Park & Recreation District / Paul Lohr



Outstanding Citizen Volunteer of the Year



L-R: Champaign County Forest Preserve District for Robert Espeseth, Forest Preserve District of Kane County for Mary Ochsenchlager, Oak Brook Park District for Lara Suleiman, Rockford Park District for Rick and Lana Engen

Helen Doria Arts in the Park



Waukegan Park District – First Place, Decatur Park District – Second Place, Glenview Park District – Third Place

Board Member Service Anniversaries

10 Years

Big Rock Park District
Cindy Nehring

Gurnee Park District
Jim Goshorn

Mokena Community Park District
Lana Graser

Mokena Community Park District
Robert Lindbloom

Sycamore Park District
Daryl Graves

Vernon Hills Park District
James Ballowe

Forest Preserve District of Will County
Herbert Brooks

Forest Preserve District of Will County
Jacqueline Traynere

15 Years

Alsip Park District
Joseph Schmitt

Alsip Park District
Robert Schneider

Big Rock Park District
Bill Yoder

Byron Park District
Bruce Boyle

Carol Stream Park District
Dan Bird

Champaign Park District
Barbara J. Kuhl

Glenview Park District
William Casey

Gurnee Park District
Libby Baker

Marion Park District
Hayden Gardiner

Memorial Park District
Gwendolyn Evans

Mokena Community Park District
Dennis Bagdon

Olympia Fields Park District
Lori Carlton-Jordan

Park District of Forest Park
Roy Sansone

River Trails Park District
Lois B. Hauge

Schaumburg Park District
Bob Schmidt

Vernon Hills Park District
Michael Meline

Veterans Park District
Thomas D. Olson

20 Years

Big Rock Park District
Gene Nehring

Big Rock Park District
Bonnie Warchol

Bloomington Park District
Mike Vogl

Forest Preserve District of Kane County
Barbara Wojnicki

Lisle Park District
Donald R. Cook

Rosemont Park District
Patrick R. Nagle

Washington Park District
Lorelei Cox

Woodridge Park District
Brian Coleman

25 Years

Decatur Park District
Jack Kenny

Gurnee Park District
Vicki Paddock

Mundelein Park & Recreation District
Wally Frasier

Palatine Park District
Susan Gould

Wheeling Park District
Cheri Klumpp

35 Years

St. Charles Park District
James F. Cooke

Urbana Park District
Michael W. Walker

45 Years

Schaumburg Park District
David Johnson

Agency Anniversaries

25 Years

Wheeling Park District

50 Years

Gurnee Park District
Washington Park District

75 Years

Rantoul Park District

90 Years

Illinois Association of Park Districts

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Designing Your Agency's
Martech Landscape
Using Technology to
Tell Your Agency's Story

Growing a Resilient Online Reputation

Do you use technology to impactfully communicate the value of your agency? From the registration software that manages and delivers our ecommerce platforms to the email and social media marketing vehicles used to communicate our messages, agencies across the nation have access to a wealth of data and information that can help us be more efficient in all aspects of our operations, including marketing.

By Jessica Cannaday, CPRP, Oak Brook Park District



For years now, we've heard "parks and recreation is late to the tech game," and it's a fair statement. We've also battled small budgets and limited staff, which makes it easy to get overwhelmed by the daily emergence of new tools, derailed by the hottest trend, or unnerved by the latest algorithm change. However, it's important for us to recognize that our agencies operate within hyper-local, captive markets that already value and invest in the programs, products, and services we offer. This gives park and recreation professionals the unique advantage of foregoing expensive investments in acquisition technologies so we can focus on cultivating a strategy that improves customer experience and loyalty.

The easiest way to accomplish this? Stick to telling your agency's story, and use technology to do it well.

Create Self-Seeding Content

Earlier this year, the Oak Brook Park District restructured its marketing efforts to be more content driven. Weekly blog posts are crafted that feature a clear registration link or a call to action and provide dynamic and engaging content on our homepage. The stories are written to translate easily into press releases and multiple social posts that point back to the story's landing page. This allows us to track conversions, traffic, and referrals via Google Analytics.

This strategy required a dramatic shift from delivering information about Oak Brook Park District to focusing on the impact of parks and recreation in our community. Each year, the more than 10,000 people participate in our recreational programming and more than 4,000 members take advantage of our health and



Despite Facebook's ever-changing newsfeed algorithm, stories that focus on individuals in the community reach and engage more people than most paid content.

wellness facilities. This means that there are more than 14,000 potential stories to tell. At a story a week, we should have no problem finding a subject to write about for the next 269.2 years.

Generating this type of content helps effectively and continuously engage diverse audiences. Analyzing and exploring who engages with specific content helps develop programming that better meets the needs of your population and effectively defines audiences for digital advertising campaigns.

Impact content also has a broad reach. Despite Facebook's ever-changing newsfeed algorithm, stories that focus on individuals in the community reach and engage more people than most paid content. Moreover, this content serves as a valuable SEO tool that significantly influences search engine rankings.

Develop Evergreen Messages

As park and recreation professionals, we are no strangers to recycling. Recycling marketing content is not just okay, it's a must. Your audience isn't on every social platform every minute of the day, and today's statistics show that we're lucky if even 10% of our audience sees what we post.

Developing messages that can be reposted with a different image, modified slightly and served again, reused next year, or used continuously throughout the year are very effective. If you're concerned about your audience becoming fatigued with the same message, just keep an eye on reach and engagement insights. If they start to drop, shelf the story for a while.

The best way to determine what type of content may have the longest shelf-life is to refer to web and social analytics. If aquatic programming records the highest number of unique visits all year long, consider developing a story about the benefits of learning how to swim as an adult, highlight the professional accomplishments of your swim instructors, or feature bios of your swim team coaching staff.

Weed Your Lists

Email marketing is still one of the most powerful tools in our industry. Most agencies have opt-in lists managed by email marketing clients such as Constant Contact or Mailchimp. It's important to continuously engage opt-in lists with relevant content, as they contain people that have legitimately requested marketing communication.

We work to keep our opt-in email lists tiny, but mighty. While we're intrigued with how many people subscribe to our email lists, we're more interested in who is actually consuming the content we deliver. With ten defined interest lists and eight special event remarketing lists, we make a conscientious effort to deliver the information the subscribers have specifically asked for. We pay more attention to growing our open, clickthrough, and conversion rates than capturing new subscribers.

Program rosters also offer incredibly valuable information. Oak Brook Park District uses ActiveNet registration software and SurveyMonkey.com to administer nearly all of our program evaluations. Participants receive an email evaluation during the last session of each program that includes a custom registration link to either the next session of the activity or a similar program. This small effort improves our customer experience by allowing participants to provide timely feedback and easily register for programming they are already interested in. People that click these links have a conversion rate that is 400 times higher than any other user on our site, and their average transaction is \$124, which translates to tens of thousands of dollars in online revenue each year. Moreover, marketing staff now has access to incredibly targeted micro lists for direct mail or targeted digital campaigns.

Choose the Right Location

After you've poured hours (and probably some blood, sweat and tears) into developing an incredible story or beautiful piece of visual content, make sure it has the opportunity to thrive. There are a wide range of factors that will determine the success of content delivery. From deciding when to publish the story to determining where to invest your agency's digital marketing dollars, use data, not your gut.

Google Analytics provides a beautifully simple graph that illustrates when people are on your site, and Facebook generates peak user times. It's important to use both to ensure your fresh content is in front of as many eyes as possible. Content management systems and social media management tools like Buffer and Hootsuite make it easy to schedule posts to publish when you're off the clock.

Just like email marketing, knowing your audience and segmenting your information for social media consumption is key. If you're boosting a post on Facebook, the ad manager allows you to create a custom audience by uploading customer information from your registration data. This is a great way to stretch your budget and ensure your ads generate more conversions because they are being served to a relevant audience.

For platforms like Twitter and Instagram, make sure you have taken the time to get to know your followers and amplifiers. Invest the time to cultivate these relationships by tagging them in posts that are relevant to them and their audience. Incorporate their hashtags with yours, and make sure you take the time to actively engage with their content when you can.

Monitor Your Climate

When was the last time you conducted an online reputation audit? Even if you don't have a strong social media presence, it's essential to study as many platforms as possible to get a real understanding of what people are saying about your agency, what content and experiences resonate with your community, and where you can start building a stronger presence. Perform a quick Google search then move on to Instagram (hashtags and location tags), Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest. Incorporate repetitive keywords and terms into your web content, the filenames for your web images, social media posts, and press releases and start building a consistent hashtag library that you use everywhere.

It's very likely that someone out there has a negative opinion of what you do. The downside of operating with a captive audience in a hyper-local market is a negative online reputation can be disastrous. Bad reviews have a harsher and longer lasting impact, keyboard warriors can be unpredictable, and customers expect instant responses to their questions. However, developing positive impact content featuring members of the community will help cultivate powerful advocates ready and willing to defend your reputation and promote your agency.



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PARK DISTRICTS CAN NO LONGER IGNORE

social media

By Alexander J. Barton,
President, IAPD Corporate Member,
Barton Event Management

How do your core audiences like to communicate with your park district? Do they send a fax? Of course not. Do you require them to go to a website and fill out a form just to ask a question? Hopefully not.

Maybe people can send an email to info@yourparkdistrict.org? Still not good enough.



There is a wide variety of social media platforms these days but only a few make good sense for park districts to consider. Facebook and YouTube are musts.

Modern park districts are using social media as an effective way with which to communicate with core audiences such as moms, kids, public officials, and residents of all types. It's fast and it works.

"At the Des Plaines Park District (DPPD), we have come to see that our core customers want to communicate with us mostly through Facebook," said Gene Haring, marketing and communications manager at DPPD. "For the past 5+ years, we have dedicated resources to engage with our residents and park facility users via Facebook. For some, it's the primary way they want to use to communicate and get quick, accurate answers."

"We can no longer expect people to visit a website to dig out information about programs, events and activities," Haring adds. "They generally don't want to call a front desk either."

There is a wide variety of social media platforms these days, but only a few make good sense for park districts to consider. Facebook and YouTube are musts.

In addition to Facebook, park districts such as Rockford also use YouTube as an effective way to reach users of their facilities. Using video makes good sense in most social media, but certainly YouTube should be part of your social media outreach. For a good example visit:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/RockfordParkDistrict>

The Niles (IL) Park District promotes the whole district in a nice video posted at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHhdRz7jqyQ>

"If you aren't using video more to attract attention to your facilities, programs and events, you are missing out. Not only is it beneficial to create a YouTube Channel showcasing videos of your facilities, past events, and teasers for upcoming events, it is also beneficial to create short 15-20 second videos that stand out on Facebook and other social media feeds. With easy-to-use video producing software programs, there is no excuse not to be creating

more videos," said Sue Kirchner, president, Brand Strong Marketing, Inc. "These days most people want to learn and gather information by watching a video. So you have to offer them to be effective."

Do you want your park district to come up in online searches? Kirchner notes that YouTube is second only to Google as a search engine. She says there are plenty of software programs available to assist in the do-it-yourself approach to videos. She warns that cheap looking videos are no longer acceptable so be careful about keeping quality in your production.

I suggest checking out these software applications for your use:

Ripl - <https://www.ripl.com/>

Lumen 5 - <https://lumen5.com/>

Animoto - <https://animoto.com/>

You may also find it helpful to check out the step-by-step process in Orbit Media Studios' How to Make Social Media Videos in 9 Steps at <https://www.orbitmedia.com/blog/how-to-make-social-media-videos/>.

Andy Crestodina is co-founder and chief marketing officer for Orbit Media Studios, Inc. Many consider Andy one of the real gurus of social media. He advises, if there is someone specific that you'd like to connect with - a prominent member of the community, a government official, a commissioner at a neighboring park district - social media is almost certainly the first step in the conversation. Even if you call and leave a message, they're going to look you up before calling back. So why not start the conversation on social media?

Crestodina likes to say this isn't really social media *marketing*. It's social media *networking*, and it's very effective. Engage with almost anyone on a social platform and you'll get their attention. Start by liking and

commenting, then connect, and send a short, friendly message. You're on your way to a collaborative relationship and possibly a friendship. This type of friendly conversational exchange works wonders with park users.

The Des Plaines Park District has found that many of its 3,000 followers on Facebook will also engage with each other and help answer questions. "These followers also help create awareness among themselves and boost attendance at events and participation in programs," Haring said. "For example, a mom may say that she is taking her kids to an activity. Others see this and decide to join in. It's great!"

Not all social media platforms make sense for all park districts. Some park districts don't engage with residents via Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn for a variety of reasons. Mostly it has to do with the ease of having a conversation. However, Facebook has a good messaging template and just about any post by the district or a resident can get "Likes" and comments which lead to others joining in.

One of the primary objections most managers have to getting started on social media is the time commitment. Time is money because someone has to develop the posts, monitor activity, plan for launches of new programs or events, and generally stay engaged. In the case of DPPD, they have hired a part-time social media coordinator who spends about 15 hours a week on this most valuable pursuit.

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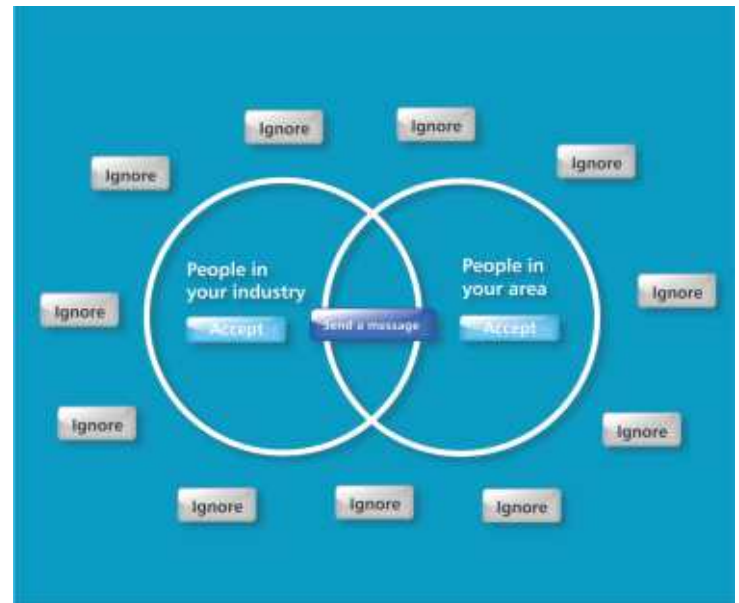
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Here is a simple graph by Andy Crestodina that illustrates with whom you should engage with when it comes to accepting Friend Requests, Invitations to Connect.

So how do you get started or choose which social media to pursue? I advise our clients that when considering which social media channels to use you must research your intended target audience. For example, SnapChat targets those under 20 years old. Pinterest is good when looking to reach women, especially moms. Note: Pinterest is the #3 most used search engine. Pinterest is good to use when promoting cooking classes, child care options or pre-school programs. On Pinterest, you can create a category "Fun Things to Do with Kids" and promote park district birthday parties, swim lessons, martial arts classes, etc.

Another facet of social media is a hashtag. The use of hashtags (**#yourparkdistrict**) has been around for a while. Hashtags are good to use to help people find your district information but use caution because they can be overused and become ineffective. The use of hashtags is still valid but limit the use to five or less per posting. I advise clients that the best practice is to use 2-3 branded hashtags such as **#ABCparkdistrict** and then one or two related to the event or program such as **#fallfestival**.

Are you already using social media but want more user engagement? Here's a tip for improved user engagement: try asking district residents to submit photos of themselves using your park district facilities. They submit the photos to a website page or via social media using a standard hashtag. Then, select the best each week or month as "Highlighted Post of the Week/Month". The highlighted winner can be provided with a prize such as a free daily swim pass or gift certificate. The Des Plaines Park District runs an online quiz using five questions. A winner is selected via a drawing from all those who submitted correct answers to the quiz. The prizes can be tickets to an event or gift certificates from local merchants or restaurants.

Tip: A park district's social media can be co-branded with a local business such as a bank or restaurant. For example, have a business sponsor the "Post of the Week" contest or other online activity.

As I mentioned, using LinkedIn isn't for every park district. It does have an enormous audience in the millions, but is generally considered to be more business focused. Crestodina does say that park management should take a few minutes every day to grow your LinkedIn network, and you'll eventually have access to a much wider network. Of course, you don't need to accept every random invitation you get. I recommend connecting with anyone in your industry and anyone in your geographic area. Why not? When you do have something to say, you'll be able to say it to a larger audience. LinkedIn postings do get plenty of attention!

So, what are the pitfalls of a park district using Facebook or Twitter?

Problem #1: Government agencies such as park districts tend to delegate social media to an intern... Intern posts something inaccurate... Constituents get confused or even angry... News media picks up the mistake... Government agency/park district is embarrassed.

No filter. This is less common than it used to be, but it still happens. The fix is training, documentation and

technology. There are low cost tools that will let the social media manager write informational posts far in advance, letting the marketing manager review them before they are posted (i.e. Buffer, Hootsuite, etc.)

Problem #2: Government agency/park district is afraid to make a mistake on social media... so they post nothing and don't engage with their audience.

This is the opposite problem: too much filter. The agency is stifled by fear and misses the chance to tell their story, share the best of what they do, answer questions and engage with the audience. The fix is to remember that social media is a bit like a party line phone. Say hello, chat with people, and let them know what's going on in a friendly, considerate way. It's just another way to communicate.

So what is the bottom line in all this? I suggest that if your park district isn't already actively engaged in social media to make plans soon to do so. It makes good sense to take advantage of social media, enjoy the benefits for your district, and have some fun!

About the Author: Alexander J. Barton is president of Barton Event Management which also consults with park districts, other governmental units, companies and non-profits about marketing, publicity, social media and all types of events, large and small. He can be reached at 847.720.4495 or abarton@bartonchicago.com to address any reader questions.

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PEOPLE & PLACES



McHenry County Conservation Foundation Announces New Executive Director

McHenry County Conservation Foundation (MCCF) formally welcomes **Shawna Flavell** as its executive director. McHenry County Conservation Foundation was established by McHenry

Conservation District in 1999 and has been governed by a volunteer board of directors. As MCCF strives to create and foster conservation partnerships, a new full-time executive director on board will help drive and further promote the foundation's strategic initiatives.

Flavell spent the past 13 years building a career in philanthropy through various roles at a number of not-for-profits. In her most recent role as the development communications specialist for The Nature Conservancy - Illinois Chapter, she assisted in projects that raised over \$12 million in support of local and global conservation efforts.

In addition, Flavell's experience includes working in the development department of Trilogy Behavioral Healthcare, which serves people living with mental illness in the city of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. While at Trilogy, she planned, developed, and implemented the agency's marketing strategies, communications, and fundraising efforts.

Park District of Forest Park Executive Director Retires

Larry Piekarz, executive director for the Park District of Forest Park, retired October 5, 2018. He began his career in parks and recreation in 1979. Almost 30 of those years were spent with the Park District of Forest Park. He was active in IPRA and IAPD, and the recipient of the 2015 IAPD Honored Professional Award. He was an integral part of the Forest Park Community Education Council and the Chamber of Commerce. He served as the state director of the National Youth Sport Coaches Association. He also served on the Streamwood Park District Board of Commissioners from 1991 to 2001. Larry was a WSSRA board member for 29 years. During his time at Forest Park, Larry oversaw the construction of a new Aquatic Center, renovation of the administrative building, the construction and re-surfacing of a state-of-the-art turf multi-purpose field. Most recently, he led the grant funded construction of the Roos Recreation Center. Larry also helped bring the Chicago 16" Softball Hall of Fame Museum to Forest Park. Larry's presence in the 16" softball community awarded him two Hall of Fame Awards. Larry is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Mary, their four kids and four grandkids.

2019 IAPD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 24-26, 2019
2019 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hyatt Regency Chicago
Board Meeting follows the Annual Business Meeting,
January 26, 2019, 4:30 p.m.

April 30-May 1, 2019
IAPD Legislative Conference
Crowne Plaza, Springfield
Board meeting is in the afternoon on May 1, 2019, 1:30 p.m.

July 11, 2019
IAPD Leadership Classic
Lake County Forest Preserves
Thunderhawk Golf Club
39700 N. Lewis Ave.
Beach Park, IL 60099

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

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

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

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

January 23-25, 2020
2020 IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference
Hyatt Regency Chicago
Board Meeting follows the Annual Business Meeting,
January 25, 2020, 4:30 p.m.

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

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