



2011-2012 Annual Report

A Message From The Board of Commissioners

To quote Warren Buffet, “Price is what you pay....Value is what you get”. Each of us as consumers are looking for the best that money can buy. I hope that you will agree that the 5% portion of your property tax bill that goes to fund your 54 park sites, hundreds of recreation programs, outstanding athletic facilities and special events is a tremendous value.

The benefits of Parks and Recreation are endless and help to make Des Plaines a more desirable place to live and raise a family. Your Des Plaines Park District completed several key initiatives during this past fiscal year (May 1, 2011 thru April 30, 2012).

Lake Park Expansion: With the assistance of a grant for \$286,000 from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the northeast end of Lake Park was developed. (IDNR provided a grant of \$750,000 in 2007 for the land acquisition from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church).

Accreditation: The Park District achieved Agency Accreditation from the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association in January 2012. Agency Accreditation requires Park Districts to develop and maintain measurable standards of excellence related to legal requirements, general management, personnel, finance, recreation programs and park maintenance/long range planning. Only 8 Illinois Agencies qualified as accredited this year out of 400 eligible agencies.

Chippewa Pool Project: The replacement of Chippewa Pool continues to move forward. During the past year, the Board and staff have worked with our pool consultants to develop a design and cost estimates. The project was competitively bid on April 24. A contract for the pool construction will be approved in the Spring, with planned demolition of the old pool after the 2012 swim season and a planned opening of the new facility in June 2013. We are pleased to report that the \$3,255,000 project will be paid for with fund reserves from Corporate, Recreation and Capital Project Funds.

The Board of Commissioners invite you to peruse through this annual report for more specific information related to what has occurred in the past year. We are committed to enhancing our community and take great pride in making sure that the professional staff is responding to your needs for park services. We will continue to provide services to you based on our efforts to be the agency in Des Plaines that says “Lets Start With Yes”

Sincerely,

Jana Bishop Haas, President

FY May 1, 2011-April 30, 2012

Our Mission

Enhancing our community by providing quality opportunities, facilities, parks, and open space.



District Named A Distinguished Accredited Agency:

The Des Plaines Park District was named as a 2012-2017 IAPD Distinguished Accredited Agency. This is the highest accreditation possible for a park and recreation organization to achieve and is reserved for those agencies reflecting exemplary achievements and/or special facilities. With over 400 park districts in the state, only 39 have achieved this status since the program began in 1993. This is the fourth time the District has been honored with the accreditation.

"The Des Plaines Park District's Board of Park Commissioners and staff are very proud of this achievement," said John Hecker, Executive Director. "Our goal is to improve the lives of our residents by providing high quality recreational opportunities and facilities, and by being good stewards of our natural resources and open spaces." Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation is the culmination of a voluntary comprehensive evaluation that reviews adherence to best practices within the profession, and compliance to Illinois laws governing park district administration. The review sets professional standards by which a district can increase operational efficiency and effectiveness. It provides an opportunity to update and clarify policies and procedures, and educate and evaluate staff performance. Operational categories examined include general management effectiveness, finance and business operations, facilities and parks, staff, recreation services, and Board elected officials. The Des Plaines Park District's scores exceeded the required scores in all categories for passing the standards review. The Park District excelled in five areas of operation including: Having outstanding agreements with neighboring agencies; A thorough revenue policy; Clean and well maintained parks; Exemplary information packets for new Park Board members and candidates; and Having a "Manual of Manuals" for easy staff reference. "This accreditation acknowledges our staff's professionalism and the district's efficient and effective use of financial resources," said Hecker. "Our continued focus is on both internal and external customer service to provide innovative and diverse recreational opportunities." The district's commitment to providing the highest quality recreation programming and facilities to the residents of Des Plaines is second to none.



Park District Awarded for Safety

The Des Plaines Park District received accredited status for the annual Loss Control Review by the Park District Risk Management Agency, PDRMA. This accreditation signifies excellence in risk management programs and their implementation. The review covers all aspects of the District's operation including Administration, Aquatics, Golf, Park Maintenance, Recreation, Loss Experience, and Prevention. The Des Plaines Park District scored above 95% in all six categories, garnering a Level-A Accreditation. The district also received a plaque and a \$1500 cash award which will be used to purchase additional automated external defibrillators.

The goal of the Loss Control Review is to keep employees, patrons, and property safe. The review includes a minimum of three visits to the District over the course of a year to help the District evaluate, maintain, and enhance risk-management best practices. The Review is designed to educate the District about common risks that arise and suggest ways to reduce or eliminate them.

Accreditation is the highest level of achievement earned by a PDRMA member through exceptional performance on the Loss Control Review. To achieve or maintain accreditation, the agency must have completed two formal Loss Control Reviews. The average of the percentage scores of the two most recently completed reviews must be at least 95%. The district must also meet certain loss-related criteria.

We were exceptionally pleased to receive such a high rating, said John Hecker, Executive Director. We take fun seriously, and are proud of our efforts to provide the community with a well-trained staff and safe facilities. Achieving this 2012 Loss Control Review Accreditation is a direct reflection on the Des Plaines Park District Board of Commissioners and their continued support and understanding related to the importance of risk management."

Accomplishments:

Capital Projects & Improvements

The District is continuously making improvements at various facilities and parks. Listed below are projects which have been completed throughout the past fiscal year:

- Lake Park north side redevelopment project includes a new fishing pier, gazebo, picnic shelter, sensory garden, and a walking path. Grand opening was June 2nd. The redevelopment was made possible with the award of an Illinois Department of Natural Resources Grant.
- A new playground, basketball court, gazebo and walking path were installed at Kylemore Greens Park.
- A new digital message board was installed at the main entrance to the Prairie Lakes Community Center.
- Installed new room dividers in the Prairie Lakes Mountain View Mine Rooms at Prairie Lakes.
- The Oakwood Maintenance Center roof was replaced.
- A New rubber gymnasium floor was installed at the Administrative & Leisure Center.
- Chippewa Pool project and park renovations are under way and include a new walkway to the concession stand and restrooms to meet ADA requirements.

Upcoming projects include the renovation of Apache Park which began mid April with an anticipated completion date of June 15th. This is a cooperative project and is utilizing grant monies provided through H.U.D. and the City of Des Plaines. Kids Around the World removed the existing playground equipment and installed it in an economically depressed country. The playground at Chippewa Park is being renovated with anticipated completion at the end of May. The Chippewa Pool Project will begin late August after the pool closes and will include a new pool and bath house. Lastly, the playground at Sesquicentennial Park is going to be renovated and will begin in late August with a finish date of November.



Parks & Facilities

The Parks Department has gone through some reorganization of staff. Doug Dohlen was promoted to Asst. Supt. Of Parks, Ken Rochau was hired to fill the position of Building Services Supervisor and Don Prellberg is now Special Projects Supervisor. Susan Chiakas is now the new Parks Department Part Time Office Clerk.

The custodial contractors were released at the Administrative & Leisure Center and Golf Center saving the District thousands of dollars and increased the quality of cleaning utilizing District staff. Below are some highlights of projects which were completed:

- A Memorial to Flight 191 was developed on the southeast end of Lake Park.
- Renovations completed at the Administrative and Leisure Center include the front desk and reception area, several rooms were painted and new counter tops installed in the Teen Center.
- New natural gas generator installed at Administrative and Leisure Center.
- Renovations completed at Prairie Lakes Community Center include painting of the theatre, box office, fitness center, Prairie room and Mountain View rooms, installation of new counter tops and faucets in the locker rooms & public restrooms and new pads installed on the gymnasium walls.
- Offices were rehabilitated at Oakwood Maintenance Center.
- Numerous repairs have been made to the driving range; turf and painting of decks, stairwells, doors, and refurbishing of ball boxes were completed at the Golf Center in addition to golf course cart path renovations and tree removals due to storm damage.
- Numerous aesthetic repairs to Mountain View Adventure Golf Course were completed which included signage, theme items, railings, stairs and replacement of artificial turf.
- Replaced the netting at the Mountain View batting cages
- Completed several repairs and renovations at Mystic Waters Aquatic Center including installation of new pool heaters and a fiberglass liner was installed in one of the broken supply lines.
- Ball field and fencing upgrades at various parks throughout the District.
- Parking lot repairs throughout the District.
- Built four new snow plow attachments which saved time and money.

Recreation Programming and Events

The Des Plaines Park District has added several new classes and programs to its' already extensive array of year-round programming in the core areas of fitness, cultural and performing arts, athletics, martial arts, continuing education, trips, birthday parties, aquatics, day camps and self-help/social skills. Piloxing, Bar None Body Bar Class, Kids Fitness classes, Lunch & Learn Cooking series, Book Cooks, Alphabet Stars, Ukulele and Violin Lessons just to name a few. These programs and events take place in our facilities which include the Administrative & Leisure Center, Prairie Lakes Community Center, Golf Center Des Plaines, Mountain View Adventure Center, Lake Park and the Lake Park Golf Course & Marina, Mystic Waters Family Aquatic Center, the Iroquois and Chippewa Pools, Arndt, Cumberland Terrace and West fieldhouses.

Because the District is mindful of the residents physical fitness needs, it has expanded the Prairie Lakes Community Fitness Center hours to open at 5:30am on weekdays and 7am weekends. For customer convenience, Prairie Lakes is a wireless hotspot. Some of the changes that were made to existing equipment include the purchase of new treadmills and cross trainer, new free weights in the aerobics room, new ovens in the Mountain View Kitchen, sound system renovated in the theater, and a room devoted to cycling. The District has added equipment to the Teen Center located at the Administrative & Leisure Center which includes Jumpin' Jackpot Game, Makoto Arena 2, Nintendo Wii, Portable I-Dance and updated the computer station.

The District also implemented the Healthy Snack vending machine initiative which meet the standards of no more than 35% of calories from total fat; no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat; no more than 35% sugar by weight.

A new recreation van was purchased replacing an existing van. The District utilizes these vans for the many youth and adult trips offered throughout the year including ski & skate board trips, school day off trips, overnight trips, Family & Adult trips in addition to summer camp outings.

Participation Numbers

- Mystic Waters, Iroquois Pool, and Chippewa Pool combined attracted over 98,500 visitors.
- 1,808 recreation programs were offered serving 17,711 participants.
- Summer camps had 3,808 youths signed up in 2011
- Artistry In Motion performed 4 shows with an audience of over 650
- Des Plaines School of dance has over 500 registered participants with a total of 220 families and over 300 students
- The Teen Center/Game Room played host to more than 5,973 visitors.
- 12,284 rounds were played on the Golf Center 9-hole course; (does not include leagues & school play) 4,059 golfers practiced on the short game and grass tee areas; 10,363,790 golf balls were hit on the driving range.
- 7, 010 rounds of golf were played on the 18-hole course at Lake Park



Business & Golf Operations

The Districts' Business Department has gone through a reorganization and is now the Business and Golf Department focusing on improvement in revenues and customer service at the Administrative & Leisure Center, Golf Center and Lake Park. In addition, there have been a couple of changes with Staff. In October 2011, Debbie Hermanson assumed the role of Administrative Assistant for the District. Debbie, a veteran of the District, has been the Parks Department Secretary for the last 17 years and brings with her a wealth of knowledge. In January, the District welcomed Trish Romza into her new position as Receptionist. Trish has been with the District for five years working in various departments and can be found manning the front desk at the Administrative & Leisure Center.

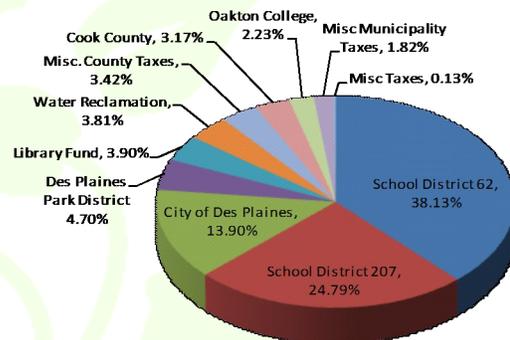
At both the Golf Center and Lake Park new initiatives such as membership passes, promotional opportunities, Youth Golf Initiative, SNAG Golf Program for youth and league play have been implemented. The Chili Open was moved from Lake Park to the Golf Center with noticeable increase in participation. New golf instructors were hired for both the Golf Center and Lake Park. The District has reduced the advertising budget at the Golf Center and was still able to increase revenues and attendance. To improve customer play and comfort, spraying for mosquitos and heat lamps were added to the driving range. In addition, new signage has been installed at the Golf Center both on the interior and exterior of the facility and grounds.

Within the Business Department, several upgrades were completed to the Recreation and Accounting Software, Windows Server and Window operating systems. New visualization servers were installed District wide. In an effort to cut cost and be "green" the District implemented new thin client computers which have a longer useful life and low energy consumption. To safeguard for the most secure network infrastructure a new firewall/gateway was installed.

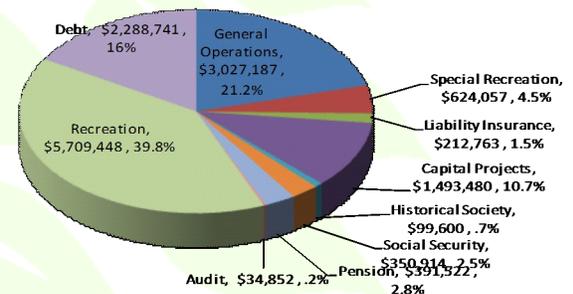
The District is always seeking ways to reduce costs and save the residents of Des Plaines money. A budget was approved to incorporate financing of Chippewa Pool project without need to go out for Referendum and the District plans on utilizing Casino property tax revenues for future financing of the Iroquois Pool replacement. The District was able to maintain Health Care for employees at under 1% increase to the Park District. The District continually reviews all banking fees and has changed the credit card processor to reduce costs of processing credit card transactions. The annual audit was performed and the District Board of Commissioners approved a District Policy regarding the new requirements for the GASB 54 (Government Accounting Standards Board). The District is working with the Frisbie Senior Center and Historical Society to improve the financial position of each organization.

Lastly, the District is proud to announce it received the "Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting" from the Government Finance Officers Association. This is an award which recognizes innovative programs-contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance. Eight criteria are examined: local significance and value, technical significance, transferability, documentation, the cost/benefit analysis, efficiency, originality, and durability.

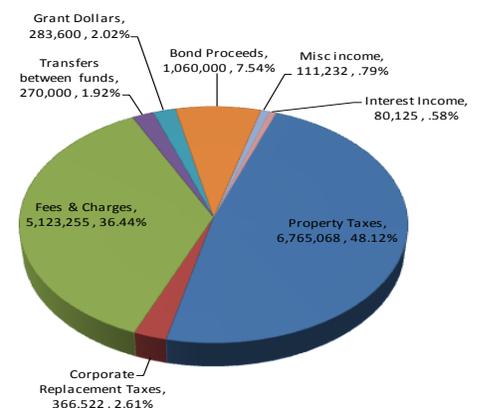
Where Do Your Property Tax Dollars Go?



Park District Expenditures



Park District Revenues



Marketing and Communications

The Spectrum continues to be the publication of choice for how residents receive recreation program information. Design and art production continues to be handled in house with over 100,000 copies printed and distributed annually as well as, design and production of a wide variety of marketing and promotional materials including brochures, fliers, posters, stationary, business cards, logos, signage, banners, and apparel for programs, special events, facilities and departments. The Districts' website has been upgraded with a new look and is updated daily, weekly, and seasonally. One can access the Spectrum via the website in addition to registering for programs. The District can also be found on both Facebook and Twitter.

For more information about programs, classes, and events at the Des Plaines Park District visit www.DPParks.org.

Corporate Partnerships

The Park District has a long history of working with the business community. Many area businesses or developers provide sponsor support, in-kind contributions, land donations or cash donations for special events or special projects.

In 2011/2012 the District received support from:

- Premier Event Sponsors included: First Midwest, The Chase 5K Run/Walk

Community Partnerships

In an effort to maximize the leisure services provided while keeping costs affordable the District works closely with other units of local government, service clubs, and community based organizations. In 2011/2012 the District partnered with:

- City of Des Plaines: Park Patrol Services, National Night Out, Spring Fun Fair, The Chase 5K Run/Walk
- School District #62: Use of District Ball Fields and Gymnasium
- Maine West High School #207: Use of Athletic Fields
- Des Plaines Veteran's: Upgrades to Lake Park Memorial Pavilion
- Optimist Club: Fishing Derby, Golf Outing, Movies in the Park, Christmas Trees
- Des Plaines Public Library: Halloween Hoopla, Spring Fun Fair, Fall Fest
- Special Events Commission: Spring Fun Fair
- American Red Cross: Prairie Lakes Community Center served as Shelter during snow storm.
- Baseball/Softball Organizations: Fields provided and maintained.
- History Center Interlocal Agreement & joint events including Winter Wonderland, Fall Fest, Halloween Hoopla
- Senior Center Interlocal Agreement & joint event including Winter Wonderland
- DP Chamber of Commerce: Spring Fun Fair, Winter Wonderland & Fall Fest

The CHASE
5k Run-Walk
Come run with us
Saturday, July 14, 2012



Friends of the Parks

Dedicated to supporting the mission of the Des Plaines Park District and expanding recreational opportunities/facilities for all Park District residents, the Friends of the Parks was formed approximately 2 years ago with Mike Lake leading the charge as President. The Friends have been responsible for hosting the Fishing Derby at the Fall Fest and the Halloween House Decorating Contest. Under the direction of 2012 President Noreen Newton, the group will also take on the task of organizing Park Improvement Dedication events as well as an annual Park Clean up Day in conjunction with Earth Day. The Friends meet at 6 pm on the last Monday of every other month at the ALC. For additional information please call 847-391-5700.

DES PLAINES PARK DISTRICT
FRIENDS
of the **PARKS**
SUPPORT • VOLUNTEER • PROMOTE

Agreements

- In efforts to maximize our services to the residents of Des Plaines, the District has entered into cooperative agreements with other adjacent Park Districts in the local area. The scope of the agreements include resident rates only for services and facility usage. These include:
 - Coop program with River Trails for Boxing
 - ComEd - Garden Plots
 - Frisbie Center - Funding & Program Services/Seniors
 - Glenview Park District - Exchange of Services for Golf Course
 - Golf Maine Park District - Pool, Golf, Soccer
 - Mt. Prospect Park District - Pool
 - Park Ridge - Lake Park amenities/Ice Skate Lessons
 - Rosemont-Pools, Lake Park Golf, and Programs at Resident Rates

Grants

The District is elated to announce they are in receipt of funding by way of grants. The first is a Power Play Beyond School Grant and was awarded by Illinois Association of Park Districts in the amount of \$1,000. Funding and materials for this program are provided through the sale and subsequent renewals of the Park District Youth License Plate and through Friends of Illinois Parks. The Power Play grant program involves implementing a model program focusing on health, nutrition and wellness. This healthy education program will be intertwined with some of the summer camps.

The City of Des Plaines wrote a grant to the Model Communities Program, as part of the Alliance for Healthy and Active Communities that provided the Des Plaines Park-District with \$9,425 to purchase an interactive physical fitness electronic Light Arena, by Makoto. The Light

Arena is located in the Teen Center at the Administrative & Leisure Center and is designed to challenge participants to match up colors and sounds by having to strike the lights with a baton within a short time span. It has been shown to raise fitness levels, reduce body fat and stimulate creative thinking.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture awarded an Illinois Technical Assistant Grant in the amount of \$10,312 for the GPS/GIS mapping of all trees throughout the District which will aid in the management of the Emerald Ash Borer. The management program involves mapping out all trees located in the Districts' parks which includes the variety, size, condition and exact location. With this information it will allow the District to manage the Emerald Ash Borer by either removing or preferably treating the trees infected.

Staff Involvement

Park District staff are involved in many capacities throughout the community as members of organizations, clubs, commissions, committees, and boards, including:

- City Holiday Lighting Committee
- Chamber of Commerce Winter Garden Ball, Golf Outing
- City of Des Plaines Youth Commission
- Des Plaines Arts Council
- Des Plaines Crimestoppers
- Des Plaines History Center Board
- Des Plaines Kiwanis Club
- Des Plaines Rotary Club
- Des Plaines Senior Center Board
- Friends of the Parks
- MCYAF (Maine Comm. Youth Asst. Foundation)
- Healthy Community Partnership
- IPRA Administrative & Finance Section 2012
- Maine West High School Athletic Boosters
- Maine West High School Community Relations
- MNASR (Maine-Niles Assc. Special Recreation)
- PDRMA Finance Committee

Staff Initiatives

The Park District Board of Commissioners recognizes the importance of a highly trained and motivated work force. Our 42 full-time employees attend training sessions, workshops, and conferences pertaining to their area of expertise. Many of our employees hold college degrees and/or certifications, including:

- CPR/First Aid Instructor
- Food Service Sanitation Certification
- Lifeguard Instructor
- MNASR CPI (Crisis Prevention Instruction)
- PDRMA Help Training
- Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP)
- Provisional Park and Recreation Professional (PPRP)
- Aquatic Facility Operator
- Certified Pool Operator
- National Certified Playground Safety Inspector
- Automotive Service Technician
- Pesticide Operator/Applicator
- Bachelor/Masters Degree in Recreation and Park Management or Leisure Services
- Bachelor of Science Degree in: Finance/Accounting; Computer Science; Management

New Employees

We welcome four new employees to our District. Desiree von Thorre is our new Aquatics & Youth Program Supervisor. Desiree is responsible for the Mystic Waters Aquatic Facility, Chippewa and Iroquois Pools in addition to overseeing all the aquatic programs and school day off activities. Tom Hejnowski started out as a deck attendant at the Golf Center at age 16. Tom pursued an education and returned to the Golf Center in the capacity of Assistant Golf Supervisor. Cindy Yelich is our newly created Special Events & Social Media Coordinator. Cindy is responsible for events such as Easter Egg Hunt, Tea for Two, Daddy Daughter Dance, Spring Fun Fair and Birthday Parties to name a few. Cindy is also responsible for updating the District's Facebook Page and Twitter. Lastly, Susan Chiakas can be found at the Oakwood Maintenance Center in the capacity of Part Time Office Clerk. Susan is support to the Assistant Superintendent of Parks and four Supervisors.



Desiree von Thorre



Susan Chiakas



Tom Hejnowski



Cindy Yelich



John Hecker



Spencer Reed



Jim Poloniak

Dedicated to Excellence Award Winners

Three times a year the Employee Relations Committee receives nominations of staff members from their peers which are then directed to the Executive Director and Department Heads for review and selection. Nominees must be in good standing with the District, demonstrate a good work ethic, and typically go above and beyond. This years winners were Executive Director John Hecker, IT Manager Spencer Reed and Mechanical Maintenance Jim Poloniak.

Thank You Part Time Employees

The District would like to give a great big thank you to all the Part Time Employees. Part time staff is responsible for over 75% of the Districts workforce while during the summer season it peaks out at about 95% and over 600 employees. Part time summer employment includes staff at the Districts three pools, two golf courses, day/sport/dance camps, Mountain View Adventure Center and maintenance staff. The District is very proud to be the number one employer of youth here in the City of Des Plaines.

Park District Board of Commissioners, 2012-2013

James F. Grady, President
Joseph Weber, Vice President
Donald J. Rosedale, Treasurer
Jana Bishop Haas
William J. Yates

ADMINISTRATIVE & LEISURE CENTER
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Our Vision
Enriching lives everyday