

# FOCUS

The Official Publication of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association

Winter 2017



*Cooperative Purchasing, Page 8*  
*Choice Health & Fitness Member Loses 300 Pounds, Page 20*

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

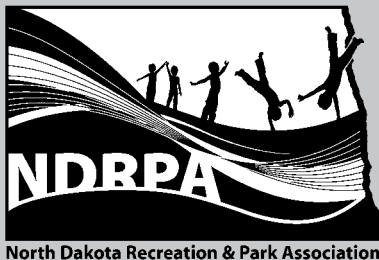
As I sit in my hotel room in Orlando, Fla., while attending the USA Hockey Winter Meetings, it is sunny and 77 degrees. When I left Minot, it was -9 degrees with 35 inches of snow on the ground. Safe to say I am absorbing as much warm weather as possible. Now with that disclaimer out of the way, I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I hope 2017 will be a good year both personally and professionally for all of you. With this being a legislative year, there will be a lot going on until the end of April. I want to thank our Executive Director Dana Schaar Jahner and our NDRPA Public Policy Chair James Kramer for all the work they have done and will be doing for the next few months.

The last legislative email update sent had a lot of good information on bills that will have some impact on our organization and many of your local park districts. The email listed hearing dates, times and locations of important bills that pertain to us. It also had a link for tracking bills. We ask that you try and keep an eye on some of these bills as they move forward through the process and contact your local legislators to help support our association.



Bob Gillen, NDRPA President

Finally, our spring NDRPA meeting will be held in Bismarck March 6-7. Parks Day at the Capitol will be held March 7, and this year we will have our own wing of booths that many park districts around the state will set up. We would love to see many of you in Bismarck as it will also coincide with the legislative session. James and Dana have a great agenda set for all of us. As we move into the New Year, keep up the great job all of you do for your community each and every day.



## Mission

Advancing parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota.

## Strategic Goals

1. Member Services: Provide training, information and networking for parks and recreation stakeholders.
2. Policy Advocacy: Represent parks and recreation interests on public policy issues.
3. Public Outreach: Promote the benefits of parks and recreation and the importance of conservation, health and wellness, and access.



- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>March 6-7</b>   | NDRPA Member Meeting & Parks Day at the Capitol, Bismarck |
| <b>March 14-16</b> | CPSI Course, Bismarck                                     |
| <b>April 15</b>    | FOCUS Deadline  |
| <b>April 23-25</b> | Midwest Conference, Lawrence, Kan.                        |
| <b>Aug. 1-2</b>    | ND Trails Conference, Bottineau                           |
| <b>Sept. 12-14</b> | NDRPA State Conference, Mandan                            |

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FOCUS is the official newsletter of the North Dakota Recreation & Park Association (NDRPA). It is distributed quarterly via mail to more than 600 parks and recreation professionals and posted on the NDRPA website. Submission of articles and photographs are encouraged in digital format to [clearfour@btinet.net](mailto:clearfour@btinet.net). Photographs should be high-resolution (300 dpi or greater). Advertising information is available online at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com).

**Next FOCUS deadline:** April 15, 2017

Cover photo: Sledding, Fargo Park District

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## Scholarships Available for Playground Safety Course

Learn how to ensure your community's playgrounds are safe for children by attending NDRPA's 15th annual Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) Course on March 14-16 in Bismarck. This first-class course is sponsored by the ND Parks & Recreation Department and the ND Insurance Reserve Fund (NDRF) and hosted by the Bismarck Parks & Recreation District.

Limited scholarships are still available to NDRF and NDRPA members (agency, professional and allied). Twenty-seven individuals will receive a full scholarship (\$400 value) to cover the course registration fee. This means members pay only the \$110 exam fee to attend. The final registration deadline for the course is Feb. 14.

The scholarship details, course brochure and registration form are available at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com) or by calling 701-355-4458.

## Student and Professional Scholarships Available

Reach out to North Dakota college students in the field of parks and recreation and let them know the deadline for applications for the Dr. Sandra Modisett Memorial Scholarship is April 1.

Dr. "Sandy" Modisett was a professor of recreation at the University of North Dakota, president of NDRPA, and president and vice chairperson for the Grand Forks Park District. Student scholarships of \$1,000 and \$500 will be awarded this year. Full-time sophomores, juniors and seniors enrolled in a recreation, leisure, natural resource or tourism service curriculum as a major area of study at North Dakota colleges and universities in the fall of 2015 are encouraged to apply. Selection of recipients will be based on demonstrated academic achievement and professional commitment.

Professional development awards, named after Dr. LaVernia Jorgensen who taught at the University of North Dakota from 1963-1988 as a professor of recreation, are available to professionals seeking to enhance their knowledge through advanced degrees, conferences or other learning opportunities. Selection



of recipients will be based on demonstrated professional achievement, commitment to the field and educational pursuit. The deadline is April 1.

Visit the NDRPA website at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com) to download an application or call 701-355-4458 for more information.

## State Legislative Session Underway

During the state legislative session, NDRPA tracks bills that may be of interest to members and provides weekly reports via email. If you or other members of your agency are interested in receiving the weekly updates, send an email request to [clearfour@btinet.net](mailto:clearfour@btinet.net).

If you are aware of any issues the NDRPA Public Policy Committee should know about or if you have any questions or comments, contact James Kramer, public policy chair, at 701-456-2074 or Dana Schaar Jahner, executive director, at 701-355-4458.



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# Roger Gress

By Wayne Beyer

Roger Gress, Fargo Park District director, retired after a stellar 36-year career. Fargo truly stands out nationwide as a model park district.

North Dakota, being a small state, only has a handful of full-time parks and recreation departments so one gets to know their peers quite well. Gress is a fellow early riser, and it was best to communicate with him about 5-6 a.m.

It is easy to like Gress. He grew up in North Fargo and stayed to professionally benefit all their citizens and visitors. Gress is a passionate Vietnam War veteran and for that we should all be most grateful.

He was mentored like a gosling under Bob 'Goose' Johnson's wings. Gress integrated his architectural background into the parks and recreation profession that not only changed his life but countless other fortunate parks and recreation users. Most likely he scribbled some of those burgeoning dreams on a napkin over a cup of coffee with Goose at Mom's Kitchen.

At Gress's retirement event at the Air Museum, he took no credit for Fargo's success and deflected it all to his staff. It was very impressive and a learning opportunity to observe how he credited the team.

Gress's heart is as big as his body, and he could pass as a Minnesota Viking football player. Maybe he could still play left tackle?

Gress comes to tears quite easily when it comes to his family, and he admits to welling up every time he has to say goodbye to his children. He does not hide the love he has for his family and is mindful of his life priorities. Each child spoke at his reception, and it was evident they observed and learned the value of pouring passion into your profession.

The public often gets caught up with physical facilities, and the park district's involvement with Trollwood, Rheault Farm, trails, golf courses, skate parks, ball fields and the Red River is highly commendable.

Fargo parks are uniquely designed and are often full of beds of annual and perennial flowers at entrances to greet visitors. They seem to have the wavy fingerprints of a parks and recreation director who has blessed public spaces with landscape architecture.

However, parks mean nothing if people are not using them. Gress's thought-provoking reasoning created inviting areas and quality of place. It was always interesting to hear about the "why's" of Fargo projects.

Long ago Gress invited this writer to a monthly meeting he had with city, school and park officials. It makes real sense to coordinate public services, and Fargo enjoys incredible success developing parks on school grounds, which is a win-win for both. They did not need an ordinance to convince developers that parks green space and trails had considerable value to residential areas

Gress is a skilled, funny storyteller and to hear how he relentlessly sought out the parks and recreation profession under Goose Johnson, reconnected with high school sweetheart and future wife Nancy, and passed on every parks and recreation accomplishment to admiring staff was a great way to remember and celebrate his career.

In a way, these stories told another story, that of a humble, grateful professional who acknowledged his fortune. Well done, Roger, well done!

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Did you know your park district can use state contracts to purchase goods and services that you need? Cooperative purchasing is an effective tool government entities can use to leverage time and cost efficiencies. Partnering with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) State Procurement Office can reduce administrative time and save money while leveraging the experience and expertise of those with specialized procurement knowledge. With state and local government budgets being stretched to the limit, it is essential that government leaders look for innovative ways to utilize taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively.

## State Contract #002 – Paper

This is a contract for cut paper, delivered statewide, and offers volume purchase discounts because of the large purchase volume for the state and the ND University System. Cole Papers is the contractor; view contract pricing on the OMB website by clicking contract #002. Contact Chad Keech at ckeech@nd.gov or 701-328-2767 with questions.

## State Contract #200 – Office Supplies

Office Depot is the contractor for the office supplies contract, which offers discounts on a core product list including file folders, notepads, binders, pens, highlighters and other supplies. There is also a percent off catalog discount for all other items. Learn more on the OMB website by clicking contract #200. Contact Rebecca Pollert at rpollert@nd.gov or 701-328-2690 with questions.

## State Contract #151 – Envelopes

This is a contract for bulk orders of several different types of envelopes including clasp, catalog and basic white envelopes with or without a window. There are also options for custom envelopes. Contractors including Brown & Saenger, Cole Papers and ND Envelope Company. Find out more on the OMB website or contact Keech with questions.

You can find more information about all state contracts at [www.nd.gov/omb/statecontracts](http://www.nd.gov/omb/statecontracts). Contact the State Procurement Office at 701-328-2740 or [infospo@nd.gov](mailto:infospo@nd.gov) with any questions.

## Cooperative Purchasing Will Help Get What You Need!

With budgets being stretched to the limit, it is essential that government leaders look for innovative ways to utilize taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively.



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*Did you know ...* You can use state contracts to purchase goods and services? The Office of Management and Budget establishes cooperative purchasing contracts that are available to other government entities. This service is FREE and easy to use.

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You can find more information about State Contracts at [www.nd.gov/omb/agency/procurement/state-contracts](http://www.nd.gov/omb/agency/procurement/state-contracts).

If you have any questions, please contact the State Procurement Office at 701-328-2740 or [infospo@nd.gov](mailto:infospo@nd.gov).



# Need \$\$\$\$\$ To Grow Your Tennis Programs?

Apply now for a United States Tennis Association (USTA) Northern Adopt-A-Court or Community Tennis Grant. The deadline for both grants is Feb. 15. This is the only time in 2017 communities can apply for Adopt-A-Court grants. For more information, contact Christine Nickels at nickels@northern.usta.com or at 952-358-3290.

## 2017 Community Tennis Grant:

For starting or expanding community-based tennis programs and activities, two grant types are available in 2017: Project/Program Support and Organizational Capacity Building. Funding amounts range from \$250–\$3,000, depending on size of the organization and scope of the project. Grant review typically takes about one month, and awards will be given until funds are depleted. Additional funding cycles may be added. Deadlines to apply are Feb. 15, May 1 and Sept. 1.

## USTA Northern Adopt-a-Court Grant:

As a nonprofit organization whose mission is to “promote and develop the growth of tennis,” USTA Northern recognizes the importance of making financial investments in the infrastructure of tennis facilities to foster the sport’s continued growth. All tennis facilities that are open to the public and meet additional requirements as outlined in the application are invited to apply for the USTA Northern Adopt-A-Court Grant.

Category I: For basic facility improvements and fixed court amenities (e.g. windscreens, backboards, fencing, lighting), matching grants up to \$2,500.

Category II: For reconstruction/renovation of facilities with less than four courts, up to 10 percent of project cost with cap of \$5,000.

Category III: For new construction and reconstruction of facilities with four courts or more, up to 10 percent of project cost with cap of \$15,000.

## Set Up A Tennis Trainings Today

USTA Northern offers many low-cost tennis training opportunities for teachers, coaches, parents and others interested in growing the game. For more information about bringing a tennis training opportunity to your school or community, contact Tony Stingley at Stingley@northern.usta.com or 952-358-3289.

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# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Cliff Hovda, current Minot Park Board president, has been serving on the board for nine years, two of which he has held the role of president. Hovda explains the Minot Park Board as a “public agency used and appreciated by all.” He got involved with the board years ago because he felt he could help give back to the community through the interesting and rewarding work that they do.

Hovda has three main goals as a park board member: maintaining current facilities, retaining staff and looking ahead to build new and improved facilities in the future. But, as with any job, there are some challenges. Like many park boards, funding is always a challenge, but Hovda is thankful the park board is well supported by the community of Minot. Another hurdle is a majority of park board facilities are located in the flood plains of Minot, making them very vulnerable properties.

“NDRPA is great resource to help park boards grow,” says Hovda. “We are able to connect with other park



Cliff Hovda

boards to see what is going on in their areas, learn about funding resources and stay informed legislatively.” As for Hovda’s favorite recreation activities in Minot, he enjoys the zoo, walking trails and the golf course.

Minot recently completed an expansion of the Maysa Arena, which brought a third ice rink into the existing facility. This project cost around \$10 million but is a facility that is extensively used by the community. The park district has also completed half of the Woodlands Trail on the edge of Minot. The three-mile trail that winds through the woods near the golf course will be completed next summer. Recently, the city of Minot bought 240 acres from the state located about a mile outside of Minot. The park board is currently in the planning phase of creating an outdoor family recreation area. “We are excited; this project would be a great addition for the city of Minot,” says Hovda.

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# SWEAT EQUITY



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- Cole Higlin, Executive Director



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## Fargo Park District to Host State Dodgeball Tournament

The Fargo Park District is excited to host the first ND State Dodgeball Tournament. The date is set for March 11. Three different divisions (Open 18+, Co-ed 18+ and High School 14-17) will all compete on the same day and location to create a very fun atmosphere. The teams that win at the ND State Tournament will have a chance to move to a regional event if they so choose.



## USS Kiska Anchor Installed at Veteran's Memorial Park

After hanging alongside the USS Kiska for about 38 years, a roughly 18-ton, 18-foot anchor made another drop, marking the first installment at the future Veterans Memorial Park in Grand Forks. Given to the park by the Navy, the anchor is one of many donations that have helped kick start construction of the park.

The proposed Veterans Memorial Park will be large enough to allow people to celebrate, recognize, remember and honor lives. It will also project the



appropriate patriotic atmosphere and allow families to feel a degree of privacy in which to meditate and reflect on their loved ones who have served or are currently serving.

Through community philanthropy, members of the Veterans Memorial Park Committee will design, execute and conduct a fundraising campaign to raise the necessary dollars to create and build the park. Veterans Memorial Park will feature five obelisks representing the five branches of military service, an educational memorial granite wall and an anchor from the USS Kiska. The park also features memorial stones to honor loved ones who have served or are currently serving, park shelters and benches for meditation and reflection, and future development incorporating additional military equipment.

The Grand Forks community has a rich military tradition from the ND National Guard's 164th Infantry dating back to 1885, the Grand Forks Air Force Base dating back to the 1950s and the thousands of community members who have served or are serving honorably in the military service branches throughout the world. With that being said, Grand Forks is one of the few cities in the state that does not have a Veterans Memorial Park, an outdoor gathering place large enough for veterans, military members and their families and friends to celebrate, recognize, remember and honor the lives of those who are serving or have served in the U.S. military.

While there are a couple of small statues around the city that recognize fallen heroes, there is not a formal place where veterans can gather to conduct Memorial Day and Veterans Day services or to celebrate Independence Day or the birthdays of our military service branches. The addition of Veterans Memorial Park will give veterans, military members, their families and friends a sense of pride in knowing the community cares, honors and respects the veterans' sacrifices.

## Indoor Archery Facility Expansion

The Nishu Bowmen Club, along with Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD), is very close to opening an expanded indoor archery facility.

The current archery complex sits on 34 acres of BPRD property next to Riverwood Golf Course and has both indoor and outdoor shooting ranges. The indoor facility includes a 30-yard range on the ground floor, a 20-yard range on the second floor, an office, lobby, restrooms and lockers. The outdoor range includes a

*Continued on page 14*



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# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 12

practice range, two animal ranges, restrooms and a facility for club socials and other events.

The club members' commitment and passion resulted in the new indoor archery facility in 2008, which was made possible through donations of time, materials and finances. The community responded positively to the new indoor facility with club membership more than doubling since 2008. Competitive events draw hundreds of archers from all over North Dakota and surrounding states. Youth archery interest and programs have skyrocketed, and the old facility wasn't able to meet the demand.

In 2016, the club approached BPRD and the board of park commissioners for approval to expand the indoor facility to include an education room, additional storage spaces for targets and equipment, additional lockers and storage for youth program equipment, and an additional 20-yard range.

With the support of BPRD, funds from the ND Game and Fish Department, club members and material donations, the expansion is scheduled to open and be ready for archers in early February.



## Getting Out and Enjoying Winter Weather

Sure, winter weather can create challenges and make us bundle up to fight colder temperatures, but it also creates opportunities for great outdoor recreation. Bismarck Parks and Recreation District staff worked hard to open trails, clear parking lots, make ice for skating and groom cross country ski trails. Getting out and into winter also gives outdoor enthusiasts the opportunity to greet visitors like this one along the ski trails at Riverwood Golf Course.



## Williston Area Recreation Center Celebrates Millionth Visitor

The Williston Area Recreation Center (WARC) welcomed its millionth visitor on Jan. 1! Since its opening in March 2014, more than a million visitors have passed the WARC's front desk to use the facility's amenities, participate in recreation programs and attend events. To reach this landmark number, the WARC has welcomed an average of 1,000 guests each day.

To celebrate this exciting milestone, the WARC held a Countdown to 1 Million and the lucky 1,000,000th visitor won a free year of membership to the WARC. To thank its members and patrons, the WARC also held a "Bring a Guest" promotion for WARC members to bring friends and family to use the facility for free. With the many new opportunities the WARC has provided, the Williston Parks & Recreation District (WPRD) has been able to offer expanded programming in fitness, recreation, aquatics and more. WPRD and WARC staff thank members of the Williston community for their outstanding support.

## Northwest Contracting Gives Back During Holiday Season

Northwest Contracting, which is currently constructing the Starion Sports Complex for Mandan Parks and Recreation, wanted to give back to the Mandan and Bismarck communities through their Christmas Charity Challenge.

Basin Electric and the Mandan Park District were the two organizations chosen to delegate where the charity funds went. Northwest Contracting placed two decorated trees "high in the sky" on cranes, one at Basin Electric and the other at the Starion Sports Complex. The Mandan and Bismarck communities were asked to vote and, with every vote cast, Northwest Contracting donated \$1 to one of the two charities that were chosen by Mandan Park District and Basin Electric, with a total of up to \$25,000 per charity!

Park board commissioners and staff agreed the Mandan charity donations should go to a fund for Elianna Vazquez, which will help offset hospital bills from a recent house fire. Vazquez received many votes and was awarded \$25,000 from the Christmas Charity Challenge.

Along with many other Mandan and Bismarck citizens and organizations, Mandan Park District is grateful to have the opportunity to support Vazquez. We are proud to live in a community where we can help make a difference. We are happy to hear Vazquez is doing better and hopes to return to school soon.

Pictured left to right are Cole Higlin, Eric Benden, Tom Todd, Reed Ruggles and Gerald Vetter.



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# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Jackson Agather

**Jackson Agather** was hired by the West Fargo Park District (WFPD) as an ice technician and maintenance specialist for the Veterans Memorial Arena in October. He is from Detroit Lakes, Minn., and worked for the Fargo Park District as a Zamboni driver and rink staff for four years. In his free time, Agather enjoys cheering for the Minnesota Vikings and spending time with his family.



Reily Altenburg

**Reily Altenburg** started as a full-time park maintenance staff member at Fargo Park District (FPD) on Dec. 1. Altenburg has served for eight years in the Army National Guard as a carpenter. She enjoys spending time with family, working out, reading and playing video games.



Joe Curry

**Joe Curry** was hired full-time for forestry maintenance at FPD starting Oct. 1. Curry is originally from Cascadia, Wash., and currently lives in Moorhead where Island Park is his favorite park.



Kassie Emanuel

**Kassie Emanuel** started as a full-time resource specialist with FPD's Valley Senior Services (VSS) in Fargo on Dec. 1. Kassie graduated from Minnesota State University-Moorhead (MSUM) with a bachelor's degree in social work. She was previously the VSS resource intern.



Cindy Girdner

**Cindy Girdner** has been hired as the operations supervisor for Metro Senior Ride Services at VSS. Her start date was Oct. 28. Girdner lives in Fargo and is married with two children. She has been in the Fargo-Moorhead area for many years and has worked in customer service in all of her jobs.



Cody Kirkeide

**Cody Kirkeide** started as a full-time park maintenance staff member at FPD on Dec. 1. Kirkeide graduated from St. John's University in 2015 and enjoys camping, canoeing and riding his bike.



Leah Kelm

**Leah Kelm** was hired in October as a recreation assistant and creative arts coordinator for WFPD. Kelm is originally from Bemidji, Minn., and is currently pursuing further education in parks and recreation management and administrative assisting with the University of Northern Arizona. She had been working in recreation since 2012 with the FPD. In her free time, Kelm enjoys watching hockey and taking care of her rescue dog, Bart.



Jessica Korynta

**Jessica Korynta** was hired as a program coordinator with the FPD Cultural Activities Department starting Oct. 17. Korynta and her family recently moved back to the Fargo area after living in Seattle for 10 years. She worked for the Concordia Language Villages for 15 years, spending her summers teaching hundreds of kids Norwegian. Korynta and her family enjoy spending time outside.



Elli Minette

**Elli Minette** has been hired as the human resources assistant at FPD. Her start date was Nov. 15. Minette lives in Fargo. She is an animal lover with three dogs and two cats and enjoys spending time with friends and family.



Christine Nelson

**Christine Nelson** has been hired as a full-time office and administrative specialist for VSS. Her start date was Jan. 9. She was born and raised in Fargo and attended NDSU. Christine is married with one daughter, Hayden.



Gail Petersen

**Gail Petersen** has been hired as a part-time administrative assistant at FPD. Her start date was Jan. 1. She loves Fargo's small town atmosphere with big city activities. Her guilty pleasure is a "fancy" coffee.



Aaron Putz

**Aaron Putz** has been hired as a full-time mechanic at FPD. His start date was Jan. 15. Aaron is married with two young children. He likes to play disc golf.

*Continued on page 18*



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# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Continued from page 16



Jessica Sabo

**Jessica Sabo** was hired as full-time dispatcher I at VSS starting Nov. 21. Sabo was born and raised in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Her hobbies include playing pool, going to movies, playing piano and spending time with family and friends.



Sharon Sondreal

**Sharon Sondreal** has been hired as a part-time benefited dispatcher I at VSS. Her start date was Nov. 15. Sondreal enjoys traveling, the outdoors and spending time with her family.



Jacob Trowbridge

**Jacob Trowbridge** started as a full-time park maintenance staff member at FPD on Dec. 1. Trowbridge graduated from South Dakota State University and enjoys fishing and watching football and movies.



Paul Suckstorff

**Paul Suckstorff** was hired full-time in the FPD Maintenance Department starting Nov. 15. He and his wife recently moved back to Fargo after being away for a few years. Suckstorff will be performing general maintenance of parks and facilities. He has extensive education and experience in the grounds maintenance industry.



Andie Wagemann

**Andie Wagemann** was hired full-time by WFPD in October in the park maintenance department. She has been employed part-time with the park district since 2013 working in various positions, including summer maintenance staff and Zamboni driver for the Veterans Memorial Arena. Wagemann is a 2015 graduate from West Fargo High School and enjoys spending time with her dog, Nike, in her spare time.



Danielle Wentz

**Danielle Wentz** has been hired as a full-time digital marketing assistant FPD. Her start date was Jan. 1. She graduated from MSUM. Danielle has a passion for writing and photography.

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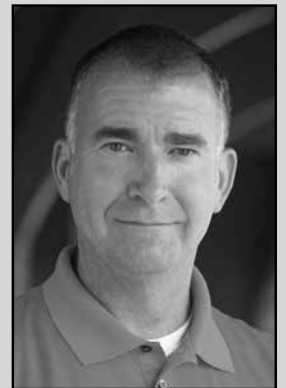
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## Leker Promoted to Fargo Park District Deputy Director

Dave Leker, a dedicated staff member of the Fargo Park District (FPD) since 1999, has been promoted to deputy director. With 30 years of parks experience in the state of North Dakota, Leker brings a wealth of park and recreation knowledge to the new deputy director position. He has been active in his new role since Jan. 1.

FPD is currently undergoing the hiring process for the parks director position from a pool of internal candidates.



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# Choice Health & Fitness Member Loses 300 Pounds in Two Years

It is often said the smallest step in the right direction can end up being the biggest step in someone's life. Not knowing where it would lead, Jacob Wesoloski took his 'small step' in July 2014 when he joined the weight management program at Altru, which is run through the Center of Prevention at Choice Health & Fitness in Grand Forks. "It was simply time to make a change," Wesoloski reflects. "I had gotten bigger and bigger, and while I didn't have any health problems yet, I knew it was coming."

Wesoloski's original goal was to lose 100 pounds, thinking it would have been enough to make him more comfortable, healthier and happier. Although at first he questioned whether or not the goal was reachable, he impressively shed the 100 pounds. What's even more impressive is the fact that he didn't stop there. Wesoloski moved his weight loss goal to 150, 200, 250 and finally 300 pounds! "Once I started, it was the progress I was seeing that kept me going and now on tough days when I am not as motivated to go work out as I should be, I just think of all the hard work I've done and refuse to let myself have all that be for nothing."

Wesoloski achieved his goals through diet and exercise, visiting Choice Health & Fitness at least five or six times a week over the past two years, with most of his workouts being cardio in nature. He started by walking on the track and focused on adding laps and pushing further. Eventually, Wesoloski was able to work up to biking and going to classes. His favorite class has been spin. He notes, "The music and motivation help me to push harder, and the instructors are great!" Wesoloski's diet includes a lot of fruits and lean meats, and he makes an effort to grill as much as possible during the summer. "I continually Google healthy recipes," states Wesoloski.



"One of my favorite go-to meals is Biggest Loser Pancakes."

Two years and 300 lost pounds later, Wesoloski states he feels great, better than he ever thought he could feel. Physically he feels stronger and healthier, and mentally he feels happier and more confident. "Working out and losing weight has provided me with so many new opportunities, and I want to keep experiencing these things," states Wesoloski.

Wesoloski has tons of great advice for those who are also thinking about taking their 'small step' toward a healthier and happier life. "Find the right resources and people to give you the knowledge and skills you need to get healthy. I promise they are there, use them!" he urges. He also suggests surrounding yourself with a great support system and rewarding yourself with things that will keep you motivated, such as a concert, trip or simply new clothes. "Overall, you have to be willing to do the work every day. There are lots of days where getting healthy, losing weight and going on this journey are just plain hard. You have to grind it out and keep working!" Wesoloski concludes.

Wesoloski, originally from Williston, came to Grand Forks in 2004 to attend the University of North Dakota (UND) and has been in the community ever since. He works as a special education teacher at Central Middle School in East Grand Forks. Now that he has reached

his goals, Wesoloski plans on shifting his focus from actively trying to lose weight to maintaining his current weight while pushing himself physically to get stronger. "I feel like I have a job to do to maintain my weight loss and healthy lifestyle, to continue to become better at everything I do and to help others on their journey if I can!"

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# Kringlie Family Named USTA Northern Family of the Year

The Kringlie family of Valley City has been selected as the 2016 United States Tennis Association (USTA) Northern Section Family of the Year. The award is given to the family that has been outstanding in promoting tennis both on and off the court.

Susan is a member of the Valley City Tennis Association (VCTA), ND Tennis Association and USTA Northern Board of Directors. She assists in running local tournaments and coordinates efforts of the ND Tennis Hall of Fame. She and Erik also organize all Junior Team Tennis (JTT) efforts in the area, while Erik serves as the head coach of the Valley City State Tennis on Campus program. Both are active with the high school program in Valley City and work tirelessly in raising money to grow the game. Erik also maintains website and social media platforms and produces a newsletter for VCTA.

Hale is a sophomore and has been on the tennis team for three years. He has played JTT for two years and serves as a volunteer assistant for the 10U Spring Park and Recreation program. He plays junior tournaments and has volunteered for VCTA programs,

Tennis on Campus, Junior Tournaments and parades.

Kai is a sixth grader and has played junior tournament in both 10U and 12U. He has played JTT for two years and was a member of the 12U team that qualified for the USTA Northern Section Championships in 2016. He was the winner of the 12U Boys Sportsmanship Award at the JTT Area Championships and volunteers for VCTA programs, Rally the Family, Tennis on Campus, Junior Tournaments and parades.

“Quite simply, the Kringlie family is tennis in Valley City,” nominators Kevin Allan of Bismarck and Oliver Summers of Fargo said. “They are very passionate about tennis and seek to get and keep the community involved with tennis at all levels from summer tournaments, Junior Team Tennis, Tennis on Campus to adult summer leagues. The Kringlies are givers and share their passion of tennis with others. They are true servant leaders and ambassadors for the sport.”



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