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The Official Publication of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello NDRPA members! As I was preparing to write this letter, my phone beeped and gave me the alert of a "Blizzard Warning." I guess it is that time of year. Time to get the snowblower fired up again. The picture is from a half-marathon that my oldest daughter and I did this past fall. That was 10 pounds ago before all the large meals, cookies and pies during the holiday season!

In the upcoming months, there are several excellent conferences and educational opportunities with which NDRPA is involved. I encourage you to check them out if it relates to your specific field or area of interest: the Certified Playground Safety Inspector course in Bismarck March 13-15, HR Conference in Bismarck April 18-19 and the Midwest Conference to the south of us this year in Yankton, SD, April 22-24. Being a finance guy, I have been to the HR Conference several times. They always cover a nice variety of topics (in the past, topics have included open meetings/open records, exempt/non-exempt employees, etc.). It is nice to get a refresher on these items, and I always seem to come away learning a few new things.

This is a non-legislative year; however, there are various interim legislative studies of which to be aware.



North Dakota Recreation & Park Association

## 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.



Some examples of items being looked at are property tax incentives, legal notices, and city and local election dates. Please stay tuned for updates from Cole Higlin, public policy chair, and Dana Schaar Jahner, executive director.

The updated 2018 ND Park Board Manual is available to order through NDRPA. This is a great resource tool for commissioners as well as staff. It has everything from responsibilities of the board to sample agreements. Contact Dana if you are interested in ordering a manual.

A couple of save-the-date reminders are the ND Trails Conference in Fargo Aug. 7-8 and the annual NDRPA State Conference in Dickinson Sept. 11-13.

Stay warm, spring will be here sooner than you think!

*George Hellyer, CPA  
NDRPA President*



<b>March 13-15</b>	CPSI Course, Bismarck
<b>April 15</b>	FOCUS Deadline
<b>April 18-19</b>	HR Collaborative Conference, Bismarck
<b>April 22-24</b>	Midwest Conference, South Dakota



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**Next *FOCUS* deadline:** April 15, 2018

Cover photo: Starion Sports Complex-Midco Gymnasium, Mandan Park District

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Clearwater Communications

## WEBSITE

[www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com)

## Scholarships Available for Playground Safety Course

Learn how to ensure your community's playgrounds are safe for children by attending NDRPA's 16th annual Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) Course on March 13-15 in Bismarck. This first-class course is sponsored by the ND Parks & Recreation Department and the ND Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF) and hosted by the Bismarck Parks & Recreation District.

Limited scholarships are still available to NDIRF and NDRPA members (agency, professional and allied). Twenty-eight individuals will receive a full scholarship (\$410 value) to cover the course registration fee. This means members pay only the \$115 exam fee to attend. The final registration deadline for the course is Feb. 13.

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. 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 2018 are encouraged to apply. Selection of recipients will be based on demonstrated academic achievement and professional commitment.

*Continued on page 7*



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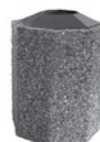
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# In Memoriam

Beulah Park District Director Bridgette Martens died peacefully Dec. 8, 2017, at her home surrounded by her family. Lucas Duncan, Beulah Park District recreation coordinator, shares memories of working for Bridgette:

I first met Bridgette when I accepted the job in Beulah as recreation coordinator for the park district. Bridgette was a very open and loud person, almost the complete opposite of myself. But she was always willing to help me with anything and, being new to a small town, she quickly became not just my boss but also a very good friend. We shared many of the same interests, so we always had lots to talk about even though she thought LeBron was better than MJ.

Bridgette had a very big vision for the park district in Beulah. She was always trying to raise money, write grants, plant trees and do whatever she could to make the parks and recreation programs improve the community. One of her biggest passions in life was fitness. Her passion will live on in the community with the new wellness center that is set to open in April. The new wellness center was her dream, and I wish she could have seen her dream become a reality. Bridgette was a fighter throughout her entire battle with cancer, and it never slowed her down. Bridgette's legacy will live on in the community for years to come.



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Continued from page 5

A professional development award, named after Dr. LaVernia Jorgensen who taught at the University of North Dakota from 1963-1988 as a professor of recreation, is available to professionals seeking to enhance their knowledge through certifications, conferences, advanced degrees, 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.

## ND Park Board Manuals Available for Order

The newly updated 2018 ND Park Board Manual is available for order. With support from the ND Insurance Reserve Fund (NDRF), NDRPA has revised the ND Park Board Manual last printed in 2008. The manual equips both new and experienced park board commissioners and staff with the information necessary to effectively carry out their authorities, roles and responsibilities. The manual includes sample documents, such as a joint use agreement and board member job description. The price per manual for NDRPA members is \$15 (plus shipping). Order forms can be found on the NDRPA website at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com).

## Renew Your NDRPA Membership

Don't forget to renew your membership so NDRPA is able to continue its work to advance parks, recreation and conservation for an enhanced quality of life in North Dakota. NDRPA membership investments cover a calendar year. The renewal deadline is Jan. 31. Call 701-355-4458 or email Danielle at [dhauck@clearwatercommunications.net](mailto:dhauck@clearwatercommunications.net) with questions.

## NDRPA Annual Report Available

The 2017 NDRPA Annual Report provides a review of NDRPA's activities for the year and highlights award and scholarship winners. The report can be viewed on the NDRPA website at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com).



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# Register Today for 2018 HR Conference

The fifth annual Human Resource Conference for Local Governments is scheduled for April 18-19 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The conference will feature:

- A motivational session presented by Lynn Beiswanger called "Build Your Team," a fun, interactive program designed to inspire attendees to nurture and support an organization's most important resource – people.
- A session on how to implement the human resource specific policies related to medical marijuana, including a panel of experts who will review the interface of various laws such as drug free work-place, safety sensitive positions and the ADA.
- Fifteen breakout sessions that address key emerging human resource issues, as well as sessions on improving work place culture and leadership.



- "The Keeping It Legal" presentation focused on the various human resource law changes that have happened over the past two years, with an overview provided by Troy Siebel from the ND Attorney General's Office.

Register via the new HR Collaborative website at [www.hrndgov.org](http://www.hrndgov.org). You can also join the HR Collaborative Group on the website to receive regular human resource updates.

## Scholarships Available

Through support from the ND Insurance Reserve Fund (NDRF), NDRPA is pleased to offer 15 scholarships for members to attend the conference. NDRPA agency members are eligible for one scholarship each to cover the conference registration fee (\$200 per person) through March 1 on a first-come, first-served basis. After that date, any remaining funds will be available to members who have already received a scholarship but wish to send more than one staff or board member to the conference. All scholarship requests and registration forms/confirmations must be received at the NDRPA office by 5 p.m. CT on April 2.

## Scholarship Requests

Because NDACo is managing conference registrations and only NDRPA members are eligible for the scholarship, there is no scholarship check box on the registration form. To apply for a scholarship, you must:

1. Register online at [www.hrndgov.org](http://www.hrndgov.org).
2. When you receive the confirmation email from NDACo, forward the email to Sam at the NDRPA office at [sgegelman@clearwatercommunications.net](mailto:sgegelman@clearwatercommunications.net) and note "scholarship request."

## Scholarship Notification

You will be notified when your scholarship request has been received and awarded. If you are awarded a scholarship, NDRPA will pay your registration fee directly to the HR Collaborative. If your agency submits more than one scholarship request, the requests will be placed on a waiting list to be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis after March 1.

Please contact Shannon at 701-355-4458 with questions.

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# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

## Minot Upgrades Historic Corbett Field

Corbett Field has been the home to America's favorite pastime in the Magic City for more than 80 years. The field has battled flood waters, droughts and renovations. And it has given the community so many memorable moments and stories that only seem to get better by the year.

As the community grows, so do the needs of area user groups such as Minot Area Youth Baseball. Some of these needs include getting on the fields earlier in the season and more time spent on the field during the long summer days. After meeting with baseball user groups, the Minot Park Board decided to move forward with replacing the natural grass field at Corbett with synthetic turf. With funding from the City of Minot Community Facilities Fund, the park district broke ground on the project in August after the summer baseball season had concluded. The total cost of the project is just over \$1.1 million.

"We are excited for the next chapter at our historic Corbett Field," says Ron Merritt, executive director of

Minot Park District. "It is an exciting time for baseball in the Magic City. We can't wait for the summer ahead."

Corbett Field is home to Minot Legion Vistas, Metros, Minot High School Magicians, Bishop Ryan High School Lions and the Minot State University Beavers, as well as home to the Sabre Dogs from the newly founded Expedition League.



*Continued on page 12*

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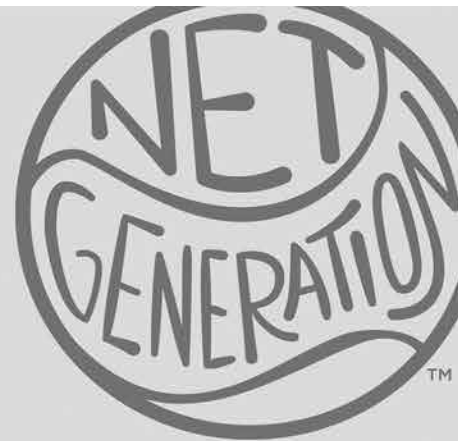
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# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 10

## Fargo Completes Staff Re-Alignment

Throughout 2017, the Fargo Park District (FPD) staff has been participating in a re-alignment process. The organization has elected to complete the re-alignment for greater efficiency and effectiveness of the organization; maximization of human resources full potential; greater opportunities for team members to work with a wider variety of divisions; and future growth as the organization looks to position FPD for the next 20 years.

The re-alignment process has reorganized three departments' responsibilities and titles as follows:

**Enterprise Operations** – Comprises revenue generating operations including golf courses, Courts Plus Community Fitness, concessions, campground and rentals. This department will be led by Carolyn Boutain, FPD's former cultural activities director.


**Programming and Facilities** – Encompasses all adult

and youth programs including recreation and cultural activities, facility reservations and scheduling. The director leading this department is Kevin Boe, FPD's former Courts Plus director.

**Events** – Includes producing athletic and cultural special events that are significant locally, as well as hosting regional/national events. This department will be led by Clay Whittlesey, FPD's former recreation and facilities director.

In addition to these three newly reorganized departments, the FPD divisions still include Finance, Human Resources, Operations and Valley Senior Services. The re-alignment also gave the organization the opportunity to establish the FPD Foundation. The newly established foundation is currently being led by Brian Arett, who also serves as the director of Valley Senior Services.

The re-alignment was implemented beginning in January. The new departments have created some restructuring of staff duties. Due to this restructuring,




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you may have contact with additional members of the FPD team. FPD's staff is excited about the possibilities of this restructuring and is working to make the transition as seamless as possible to ensure continued success with NDRPA and its members.

## Minot Commits \$1 Million to Zoo Campaign

Roosevelt Park Zoo received \$1 million toward the Centennial Capital Campaign in a unanimous vote by park board commissioners representing the Minot Park District. The decision brings the current total to nearly \$3.1 million, over half way to the \$5 million goal. Two new large cat habitats will be constructed simultaneously, followed by a renovation of the existing large cat habitat. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held in spring of 2018, and the project is expected to be complete in 2021, Roosevelt Park Zoo's centennial year.

*Continued on page 14*



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# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

*Continued from page 13*

## Fargo Remodels Coliseum

In November, the Fargo Park District (FPD) celebrated the reopening of the John E. Carlson Coliseum after the 49-year-old facility underwent an extensive remodel. The indoor ice arena is used by local clubs and schools during hockey season, in addition to FPD programs.

The new Coliseum now boasts a regulation rink (85 feet by 200 feet), seven locker rooms, training room, referees room, seating for 500 and full Wi-Fi access. FPD is proud of the old, now new, state-of-the-art facility and is excited for what the future holds for hockey in Fargo.



## Train Car Artwork Becomes Fargo's Newest Landmark

Fargo Park District (FPD), together with Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau (FMCVB), unveiled the newest public art piece in Fargo in October. The piece was commissioned by North Dakota artist Steve Knutson, who painted a 40 inch by 4 inch watercolor that was then scanned and recreated on vinyl panels. The vinyl panels were installed on one of the stationary train cars located at the FPD main office building in downtown Fargo. The installation was similar to that of a vehicle wrap. The stationary train car is one of two passenger cars and caboose brought to the Depot by former FPD Executive Director Bob "Goose" Johnson.

"The Fargo Park District, together with the Fargo-Moorhead Convention and Visitors Bureau, is excited to offer this unique opportunity to introduce a public art piece in highly visible location in Fargo," shared Carolyn Boutain, FPD director of cultural activities. "Our hope is to display a piece that showcases the spirit of our community, the Fargo people and the downtown area in a setting that is truly 'North of Normal.'"

The artwork will be exhibited for at least three years. After that time, FPD and FMCVB will evaluate the program and make a determination as to the next plan for use of the trains. The piece has been incredibly well received. In fact, discussions are in the works with a local partner to install a second public art piece on the remaining passenger car. Plans are currently underway to create a landscaped viewing area for the piece. The public is invited to stop by, view the piece and share their selfies using #GreetingsFromFargo.



## Naming Rights for Mandan Playing Field Approved

On Dec. 13, the Mandan Baseball Club approved the naming rights for the playing field within the Mandan Veterans Memorial Ballpark, which is now officially named BNC National Bank Field. The agreement includes official naming rights of the field in exchange for \$225,000.

BNC National Bank has always been a big supporter of Mandan. They provide local leadership and community loyalty. Mandan Park District and Mandan Baseball Club are confident in the partnership.

The BNC brand will be dominant on the field, both behind home plate and on the backside of the main grandstand facing southwest. Other sponsorship opportunities, including dugouts, press box, locker rooms, umpire room, seating, storage and grandstands, are available throughout the ballpark.

Earlier this year, the Mandan Park Board of Commissioners approved spending \$1.25 million to address the synthetic turf as the ballpark's immediate need and the two dugouts as the secondary need,

*Continued on page 16*



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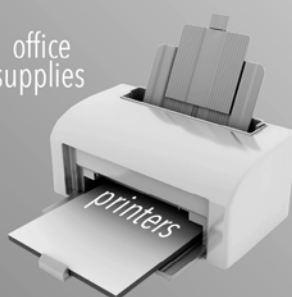
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You can find more information about State Contracts at [www.nd.gov/omb/statecontracts](http://www.nd.gov/omb/statecontracts).

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

# PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 14

if funding allows. Mandan Park District has donated \$750,000 and Mandan Baseball Club \$500,000. The organizations strive to provide Mandan youth with athletic success and the opportunity to learn valuable life lessons through baseball.

Mandan Park District will advertise bids starting in the spring of 2018. The estimated project completion is prior to winter 2018.



## More Than \$100,000 Raised for Grand Forks' New Skatepark

In Grand Forks, Rydell Cars has raised more than \$100,000 at the Rydell 12th Annual Car and Bike Show, an amount that surpassed previous years. The funds raised featured all proceeds from the event, combined with a \$40,000 corporate match from Rydell Cars. Rydell is donating the funds to Grand Forks' new skatepark project. "Through the generous pledged donations of our community, a relocated, updated skatepark will provide skaters of all ages and their families a safe place to gather," stated Executive Director Bill Palmiscno. The Grand Forks Park District and Grand Forks Parks and Recreation Foundation (Foundation) are honored to be the recipient of the event's charitable donation. Because of this generous contribution, the project is nearing the financial finish line, getting the project one step closer to bringing benefits to the Grand Forks community.

Seeing a need to provide skaters of all ages with a safe place to gather, the Skatepark Committee and the Foundation created a vision for change many years ago. Phase 1 of the project has been underway, involving the relocation of features of the old skatepark, located downtown next to the police station, to the new location at Kannowski Park.



## Bismarck Opens Capital Ice Complex

On Nov. 29, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District's (BPRD) new Capital Ice Complex opened its doors to the public for its grand opening. The Capital Ice Complex features the familiar but renovated Schaumburg Arena and the all new Wachter Arena.

Schaumburg Arena has six new locker rooms and an expanded lobby on the south end of the building for improved indoor traffic flow. A new mezzanine addition



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provides a view of both ice rinks. Also new in the complex are three community rooms, a dryland training area, puck shooting area, storage spaces, concessions, a new lobby with ticket sales and skate rentals, and offices for the local ice skating and hockey clubs.

Wachter Arena has six new locker rooms, officials' locker rooms, stadium seating for 490, and new restrooms for the complex and Wachter Park users. The compressors in the Wachter Arena feature the newest technology in ice refrigeration, and the Wachter Arena is the first facility in the continental United States to install it.

The new Capital Ice Complex is part of the Wachter Park Master Plan, which includes additional parking, a new picnic shelter, new sidewalk connections, new shade structures and a new Magical Moments playground. Finishing touches to Wachter Park will be completed in the spring.

"This complex was created with wonderful public and private partnerships. The Bismarck Hockey Boosters and the Bismarck Figure Skating Club made substantial donations to the project, along with the Chad and Stacy Wachter family. Over \$3.8 million was raised to help create more opportunities for kids and for the public," said Randy Bina, BPRD executive director. "We're very proud of the complex and are excited for the community to come see it."

The original Schaumburg Arena was built in 1974 and

has been home to public skating, high school hockey, youth hockey, figure skating and, during the summer months, the Triple Star Day Camp program.



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# NDPRD Seeking Applicants for RTP Advisory Committee



The ND Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) is seeking applicants for the Recreational Trails Program Advisory Committee (RTPAC). The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is an 80/20 matching grant program that provides funding for both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail projects. RTP is administered at the state level through NDPRD and federally through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

RTPAC is a committee whose purpose is to assist in ranking projects seeking federal trail funds administered by NDPRD and to provide additional program guidance. Committee members are appointed by the NDPRD director and must be recreational trail users and represent trail interests. Committee members are

appointed for three-year terms. The committee meets a minimum of one time per year; members are reimbursed for mileage and hotel expense.

NDPRD is looking to fill the following three categories:

- Non-Motorized (At Large): vacant
- Motorized (Off-Highway Vehicle): vacant
- Motorized (At Large): vacant

If you are interested in being considered for one of these three positions, email [kstankiewicz@nd.gov](mailto:kstankiewicz@nd.gov) by Feb. 28. Include your name and phone number, desired category, county of residence and 1-2 paragraphs with your trails-related experience and why you would like to be considered.



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# COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Mark Weber has served on the Linton Park Board since 2004 and is currently the vice president. He joined the park board in an effort to have a voice in saving the local swimming pool, a facility built in 1956, and a park right outside of town that had been in use since 1918.

Weber's goals as a park board member include keeping the city pool and park maintained so the community, as well as visitors, can enjoy them. The park, located approximately two miles from Linton, had been the hub of the community for many years for July 4 celebrations, family reunions and other gatherings. Weber would like to see the community expand the use of the park.

The biggest challenge park board members face, in Weber's opinion, is financial hardships when trying to keep facilities up to date and in service. Maintaining an outdoor swimming pool is expensive, as is the maintenance of Linton's park. Weber noted, "I feel our park board has done an excellent job of updating and maintaining our facilities, but there are always new projects or things that can be added to make them better."

Weber feels NDRPA is beneficial to park board members because being affiliated with NDRPA gives local park boards a better opportunity to apply for grants



**Mark Weber**

and other funding for maintenance or improvement projects. He said board members also get the opportunity to see what other communities are doing to improve their parks and facilities.

Some of Weber's favorite recreation and park activities include swimming and walking. He said, "I am an avid swimmer and use our pool frequently during the summer months. I also like to walk, and our community has a paved walking path from Linton to the park, about one and a half miles."

The Linton Park Board has undertaken major projects in the last few years. "We recently added seven campsites with full hook-ups in the park that have been used frequently," Weber said. "Last year, we added rural water to get rid of the wells and will be installing a septic/sewer system before next summer." Weber also said the park was severely damaged by a flood in 2009. He said, "We were compelled to raze a pavilion that was built in 1919, but we were able to repair or replace other damaged structures in the park through FEMA funding." The Linton Park Board also renovated the swimming pool, a \$750,000 project, which was funded by a 1 percent sunset clause sales tax and paid off in 2016. Other projects include widening the entry road to the park and adding a new bridge crossing over Beaver Creek.

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# Council Updates Hall of Fame Nomination Requirements and Encourages Nominations

The NDRPA Hall of Fame Council has revised the Hall of Fame nomination requirements and process to reflect the following:

- The due date for nominations has been changed to July 15.
- A letter of support from a Hall of Fame member or Hall of Fame Council member will be required as part of the nomination requirements.
- One black and white 8x10 photo, bust only, in high resolution format (minimum 300 dpi), must be supplied electronically with the nomination.
- The current NDRPA Past President will no longer be a required Council member and serve as secretary.



- Council meetings and votes may be undertaken by any means of communication.
- The Council will be responsible for the Hall of Fame induction ceremony at the Awards Banquet.

NDRPA honors individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the parks and recreation field in North Dakota, based on a reputable performance attested to a personal record of accomplishment. Hall of Fame recipients are announced and recognized at the NDRPA Annual Awards Banquet. Recipients receive a plaque, and another plaque is displayed at the ND Sports Hall of Fame in Jamestown.

A list of current Hall of Fame members and nomination forms are available at [www.ndrpa.com](http://www.ndrpa.com).

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# Take Advantage of Outdoor Heritage Fund Grant Opportunities

By Randy Bina, ND Outdoor Heritage Fund Advisory Board Member

The purpose of the ND Outdoor Heritage Fund (OHF) is to provide funding to state agencies, tribal governments, political subdivisions and nonprofit organizations, with higher priority given to conservation practices in North Dakota by:

Directive A. Providing access to private and public lands for sportsmen, including projects that create fish and wildlife habitat and provide access for sportsmen;

Directive B. Improving, maintaining and restoring water quality, soil conditions, plant diversity, animal systems and by supporting other practices of stewardship to enhance farming and ranching;

Directive C. Developing, enhancing, conserving and restoring wildlife and fish habitat on private and public lands; and

Directive D. Conserving natural areas and creating other areas for recreation through the establishment and development of parks and other recreation areas.

The OHF recently completed its 10th grant cycle. To date, more than \$32 million has been awarded to 117 OHF projects.

Check the OHF website at [www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm](http://www.nd.gov/ndic/outdoor-infopage.htm) to see the complete and varied list of funded projects that benefit the North Dakota outdoors. The OHF has been extremely positive for North Dakota's outdoor recreation, providing funds for 38 projects (32 percent of the total projects) in Directive D, totaling more than \$5 million.

The remaining application deadlines in this biennium are April 1, 2018, Oct. 1, 2018, and May 1, 2019. Please visit the website and consider applying for a project that fits within the guidelines of the program. Adequate funding remains and improvements to North Dakota's outdoor recreation benefit so many of our citizens. Feel free to contact me with any questions at [rbina@bisparks.org](mailto:rbina@bisparks.org).

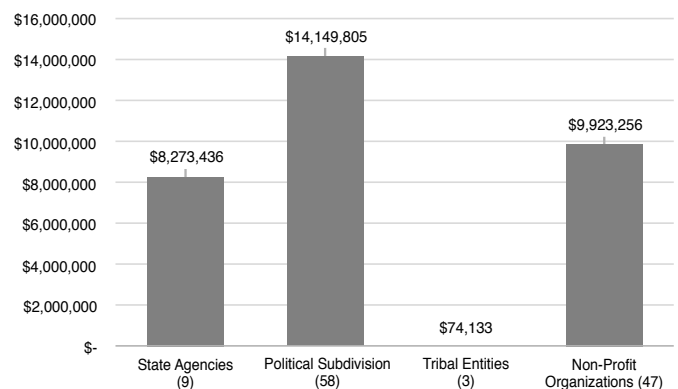


## Examples of Funded Projects of NDRPA Members

- Beach Park Board: \$25,000 for Beach City Park Northside Playground
- Beulah Park District: \$42,120 for Beulah Bay Campground Expansion and Conservation Project
- Minot Park District: \$116,250 for Woodland Trail Phase 2
- Morton County Parks: \$187,650 for Graner Park Bank Stabilization

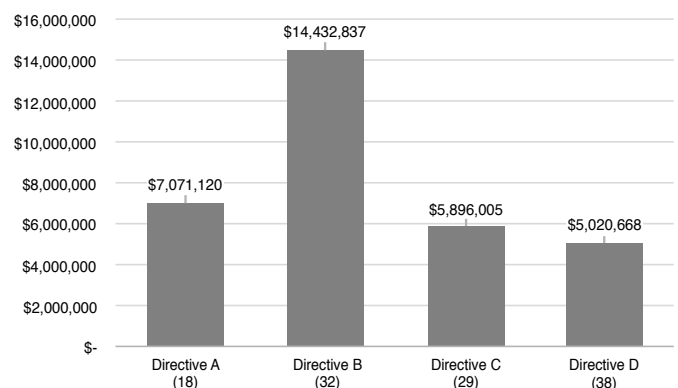
## FUNDS AWARDED BY ENTITY

Total: \$32,420,630  
(117 Applications)



## FUNDS AWARDED BY DIRECTIVE

Total: \$32,420,630  
(117 Applications)





# PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



**Becky Bjornson** is a receptionist/office assistant for the Fargo Park District (FPD). Becky is married and lives in Moorhead. She is originally from Detroit Lakes, Minn. She is a season ticket holder to the UND hockey games and likes spending time with friends and family.



**Stephanie D'Ambrosio** was hired as the events specialist for FPD. She is originally from Minot. Stephanie graduated from NDSU with a degree in hospitality and tourism management. She's always had a passion for sports with her favorite being hockey. She also loves hunting in the fall with her dad and their dogs.



**Tyler Kirchner** was hired as the FPD project manager/landscape architect. He has a wife and two kids and is interested in Bison football and hockey. Tyler's background/education is in landscape architecture from NDSU. He spends most of his free time with his kids, coaching or playing sports with them.



**Tyler Marran** is the front desk coordinator at FPD's Courts Plus in Fargo. She is new to Fargo and excited to start working with the Courts Plus team. Tyler started working at the front desk in November.



**Casey Stern** is the newest park maintenance employee for Mandan Park District (MPD). His work is shared between the Starion Sports Complex and the Park Department, where he has worked for the last few summers maintaining MPD's baseball diamonds. He is very excited to be part of the MPD team.



**Ben Nelson** is the aquatics coordinator at Grand Forks Park District's (GFPD) Choice Health & Fitness in Grand Forks. Ben grew up in Chanhassen, Minn., and graduated from Minnesota State University Moorhead. He spent the last six years working at various health clubs around the midwest before moving to Grand Forks.



**Taylor Richardson** has joined the GFPD Forestry Department as an arborist. Originally from Pillager, Minn., Taylor attended the University of Minnesota Crookston majoring in natural resources.



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# NRPA Poll: Americans Turn to Parks and Recreation to Cope with “Winter Blues”

Depending on where you live, finding a way to cope with the “winter blues” can be difficult. That’s why, according to a recent poll conducted by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), more and more Americans are turning to their local parks and recreation centers to stave off the winter blues. Among the 80 percent of Americans that plan to do something to cope with the winter blues this season:

- 44 percent plan to surround themselves with family and friends, such as at a local park or recreation center
- 32 percent plan to stay active by exercising indoors, such as at a gym, local recreation center or through indoor sports
- 25 percent plan to go outdoors for leisure or to stay active, such as at a local park or trail
- 16 percent plan to pick up a new hobby or take a class, such as at a local recreation center

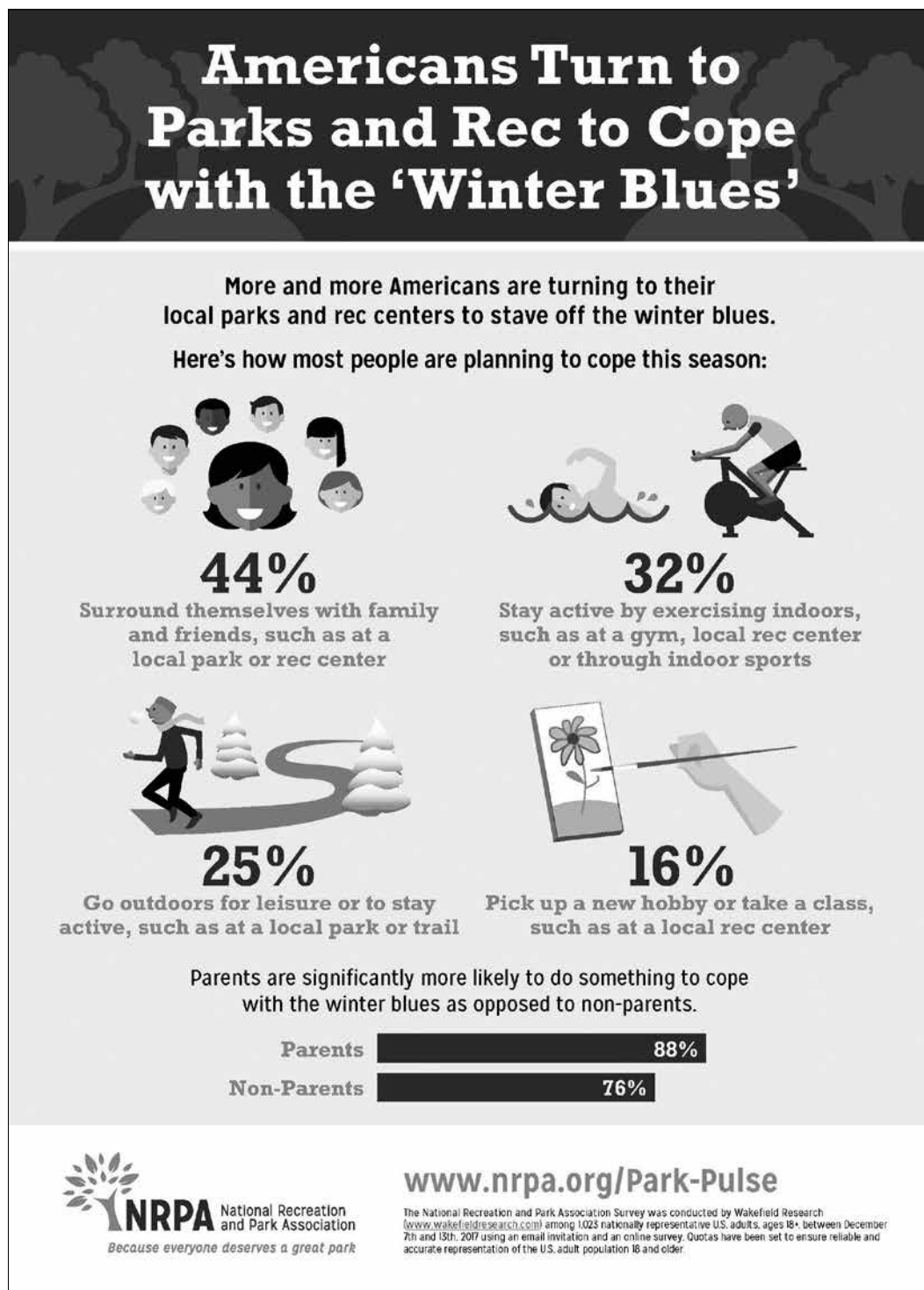
Overall, parents (88 percent) are significantly more likely to do something to cope with the winter blues as opposed to non-parents (76 percent).

“The benefits of parks go beyond promoting good physical health,” said Barbara Tulipane, NRPA president and CEO. “Parks provide mental health benefits as well, through the use of green space and nature-based activities that foster a sense of community.”

Living close to parks and other recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth. Moreover, parks provide a connection to nature, which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels, tightens interpersonal relationships

and improves mental health.

This poll is part of NRPA’s Park Pulse, a continuing series of monthly surveys that gauge the public’s opinion on topics relating to parks and recreation. To explore previous Park Pulse survey results, visit [www.nrpa.org/Park-Pulse](http://www.nrpa.org/Park-Pulse).





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