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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings NDRPA members! The end of summer is in sight, and school will be starting up soon again. While summer months always seem to go by too fast, this also means we are close to the end of the busy summer recreation program season. I know as parks and recreation staff we all put in a lot of time and effort to make sure our communities around the state have an enjoyable, safe and successful summer season.

NDRPA has been busy during the last year. A quick recap of some of the events are: member meeting with education in Devils Lake in January, Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course in Bismarck in March, HR Conference in Bismarck in April, first-time park board commissioner training webinar in July, ND Trails Conference in Fargo in August, and upcoming annual conference in Dickinson in September. I hope you were able to participate in some of these events. NDRPA works hard to put on great events that are beneficial and valuable to members.

The annual NDRPA State Conference is around the corner, Sept. 11-13, and if time and budget allow I would encourage you to attend. The state conference is in Dickinson this year. The conference always provides for some great networking opportunities to visit with other parks and recreation professionals who are sometimes going through the same struggles and challenges that you are. In addition, there are always great educational

sessions to attend. Please note that for small park districts without full-time staff there are scholarships available. Visit www.ndrpa.com for additional details.

I also share one more reminder of the new budget process for 2018. The preliminary budget is due to county auditors by Aug. 10. The final budget and public hearing date is to be set between Sept. 7 – Oct. 7. Reference ND Century Code 40-40-06 for additional details relating to the budget requirements.

I am going to steal an idea from Darin Krueger, executive director in Williston and past president of NDRPA. Please send me a quick email, ghellyer@gfparks.org, if you read this article. It could be as quick as, "I read the article." I would love to hear from you.

This is my last president's message. I would like to take a moment to thank the rest of the NDRPA Board of Directors and the committees for their service and support during the past year. In addition, thank you to Dana and the rest of her staff for all the wonderful work they do.

Lastly, thank you to all parks and recreation commissioners and employees for everything you do to make your community a better place to live!



George Hellyer
NDRPA President



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.

George Hellyer, CPA
NDRPA President



Sept. 11-13	NDRPA State Conference, Dickinson
Sept. 25-27	NRPA Annual Conference, Indianapolis
Oct. 15	FOCUS Deadline
Feb. 7	Parks Day at the Capitol
March 19-21	Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course, Bismarck

CONTENTS

President's Message	3
Mark Your Calendar	3
NDRPA News	5
People on the Move	5
Park District News	6
2018 NRPA Annual Conference	7
NDSU Students Tackle the NFL Draft Experience	15
State Plan Provides Data about Outdoor Recreation	16
Commissioner's Corner	18
Bismarck Partners Up for Community Enrichment	20
Cooperative Purchasing – Get What You Need	22

ADVERTISERS

B6C Builders	2
Peaks to Plains Design PC	5
Associated Supply Company Inc.	6
My Turn Playsystems	8
Bobcat	9
MTI Distributing	10
R.J. Thomas Manufacturing/Pilot Rock	11
Dakota Playground	12
USTA Northern	13
Herfort Norby Golf Course Architects	14
Rivard's Turf & Forage	17
Grondahl Recreation Inc.	17
Boom Concrete	18
Recreation Supply Company	18
ND Insurance Reserve Fund	19
Cunningham Recreation/GameTime	19
The Tessman Company	20
Acme Tools	21
ND State Procurement Office	22
Premier Polysteel	23
My Turn Playsystems	23
KLJ	24

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Next *FOCUS* deadline: Oct. 15, 2018

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Don't Miss This Year's State Conference

Registration Open

This year's NDRPA State Conference is scheduled for Sept. 11-13 in Dickinson. See the insert in this issue of *FOCUS* for the complete schedule. New this year is the option to register online and pay with PayPal or request an invoice to pay by check. Register at www.ndrpa.com.

Scholarships Available for Small Park Boards

NDRPA is pleased to announce five full registration scholarships for the NDRPA State Conference are available to park board commissioners or staff from park districts that do not have any full-time, year-round staff.

To request a scholarship, contact Sam or Shannon at the NDRPA office at 701-355-4458 or send an email to sgegelman@clearwatercommunications.net. Scholarships will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Park boards are encouraged to contact NDRPA about the conference scholarships by Aug. 24.

Professional Directory Updates Needed

NDRPA is in the process of updating its biennial Professional Directory. If you have not yet submitted updated park board member and staff contact information, please do so by contacting Sam at 701-355-4458 or sgegelman@clearwatercommunications.net.

New directories will be distributed to those attending the State Conference in Dickinson and then sent by mail.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Jeremy Black is the newest addition to the Choice Health and Fitness team at Grand Forks Park District as the customer service and information coordinator. He coordinates day-to-day operations of the front desk and staff, while assisting with information management related to Choice's programs and services. Originally from Hattiesburg, Miss., Jeremy has a bachelor's degree in therapeutic recreation with a minor in psychology.



Dean Feltman has joined Fargo Park District (FPD) in park maintenance. He has been married to his wife, Cheryl, for 32 years and they have three sons: Ryan, Jordan and Zachary. Dean is interested in doing home projects and fixing and building things. He also likes hanging out with family and friends, sports and playing golf.



Stephanie Gates works for FPD as a Ransom/Sargent float. She grew up in Milnor. Stephanie has two sisters and seven nephews. She is getting married to Jon in September. He has three daughters and one granddaughter. Her kids are two dogs, Gabby and Libby. She enjoys reading, walking her dogs, yardwork and spending time with family and friends.

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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Minot Celebrates National Parks and Recreation Month

The Minot Park District (MPD) celebrated National Parks and Recreation Month with events throughout their park system. The free events were hosted from July 15-19.

"July is a perfect time of year to celebrate parks and recreation in Minot," says Ron Merritt, MPD executive director. "The weather is perfect, the flowers are blooming and our facilities are busy with visitors. We invited everyone to come out and celebrate our parks with a week full of free activities."

The week's activities included a scavenger hunt at



Roosevelt Park, exploration of the recently completed Woodland Trail with a tour by the Souris Valley Birding Club, a "Get Fit with Whit" community workout led by Whitney Boehm at the Oak Park Amphitheatre, a rocks painting party with artist Candace Brekke, and a movie in the park, Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle, at the Oak Park Amphitheatre.

Bismarck to Host World Series

In a little over a year, Bismarck will roll out the red carpet to welcome the top 13- to 15-year-old baseball talent in the country to Municipal Ballpark, home of Dakota Community Bank and Trust Field, to participate in the 2019 Babe Ruth League 13-15 World Series. The tournament is scheduled for Aug. 8-15. The Babe Ruth World Series is one of the largest youth sporting events in the country.

As the host community, the Bismarck Babe Ruth League will select its own squad to compete in the event, which will also include eight regional champions from across the country and the North Dakota Babe Ruth 13-15 State Champion. The competition will begin with pool play before advancing to a single elimination bracket to determine the World Series champion.

Bismarck has a rich baseball history. Thousands of Babe Ruth Baseball players have called the Municipal Ballpark their baseball field. Additionally, several semi-pro leagues, including the Prairie League, have called the Municipal Ballpark and Bismarck their baseball home.

"Bismarck is a proud baseball community," said Randy Bina, executive director of Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD). "We have leaders within the Babe Ruth world that we consider great friends and organizers in our community. To take our baseball program to the next level and invite kids from around the country to Bismarck to play is a dream come true for our community. Bismarck has hosted state and regional baseball tournaments. This is our first World Series event."

"This is the type of community that is right for our kids," Robert Faherty, vice president of Babe Ruth League (BRL), said of Bismarck. "A trip to the World Series can be the first time our players have been on an airplane or traveled out of their hometown. When our players get here, they will see a town like their own, where the people care about kids and put community first. That's why we are coming to Bismarck for the 13-15 World Series."

Continued on page 8

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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 6

Hosting the World Series will have an economic impact in Bismarck. There will be more than 200 athletes in town, along with their families and friends. Area hotels, restaurants, grocery stores, shopping outlets, gas stations, entertainment venues and other local businesses will experience direct spending from attendees.

"Babe Ruth League Inc. enjoys a reputation as one of the most successful and tradition-rich youth baseball and softball programs," said BRL President/CEO Steven Tellefsen. "We are honored to bring our World Series to communities such as Bismarck that share our goal: to provide every youngster the opportunity to play the game and have fun doing so. I encourage everyone to rally together in Bismarck in August of 2019 to welcome the teams and families from across America that will be participating in the 2019 Babe Ruth 13-15 World Series."

As the tournament draws closer, more information on teams, game schedules and tickets will be posted on the BPRD website at www.bisparks.org.

Mandan to Host National Softball Tournament

The 2018 National Softball Tournament will be held in Mandan Aug. 24-26. The Mandan Softball Association hosts teams from all over the country and has received inquiries from South Dakota, Missouri and Wisconsin. Mandan has hosted previous tournaments with teams from much of the northern Midwest, stretching from Colorado across Iowa and north to the Canadian border.

The Men's 35 was held in Mandan in 2016. Because of the association's tremendous amount of success, they were awarded the tournament in 2018, adding Men's 45 and Women's 35 divisions (both of which haven't had a national tournament in years due to cancellations). The Mandan Softball Association looks forward to holding the same event again in 2019. Registration is available at mandansoftball.com.

Continued on page 10

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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 8

Bjur Graduates from Fargo Leadership Program

Fargo Park District's Programming Supervisor Craig Bjur completed a nine-month leadership development program in May with the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber. The program fosters relationships among community leaders, explores community issues and solutions, and provides opportunities for professional development and civic engagement.

"It was great to see how our class of 40 created and implemented these projects that impacted thousands of



people, ranging from newborns to senior citizens, across the metro community," Bjur said.

The FMWF Chamber offers the leadership program each year to area professionals. In 2019, Shannon Lang of Valley Senior Services, an organization owned and operated by the Fargo Park District, will be participating in the program.

Fargo On The Move Promotes Active Lifestyles

While it's commonly understood that physical activity can have immediate and long-term health benefits, understanding that fact doesn't always get people off the couch and active. That's why the Fargo Park District, along with their community fitness center Courts Plus, recently teamed up with local wellness facilities, Family Wellness and the YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties, to launch the new Fargo On The Move initiative. Fargo On the Move encouraged community activity by offering fun new ways to be active through creative play and social connection.

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Though some would call the fitness clubs competitors, Fargo On The Move organizers didn't see it that way.

"Promoting healthy lifestyles is a central part of the mission of each of our organizations," explained Jenna Johnson, director of Family Wellness. "By teaming up with the other clubs in town, we're hoping those individuals who might be interested in making steps towards a healthy change will take advantage of the opportunity to include an active component to their life."

To help the community move, Fargo On The Move presented a week of free activities and events June 11-15 with components intended to creatively encourage movement. Staff from each organization came together to work each event held at various parks in Fargo. Events featured creative components such as Kickerball Challenge, Outdoor Playground Circuit classes, healthy cooking demos, Imagination Playground and more.

In addition to the fun events, Courts Plus Community Fitness, Family Wellness, Fercho YMCA and Schlossman YMCA provided free access to their fitness facilities that week. The initiative also included a hashtag campaign to encourage participants to showcase how they are being active.

Minot Hosts Fourth of July Festival

The Minot Park District (MPD) celebrated their Fourth of July Festival in Roosevelt Park.

"We were excited to bring back a Fourth of July Festival to Roosevelt Park," says Ron Merritt, MPD executive director. "It is a day of celebration for our community, as well as a day to honor all the men and women who serve in our military and our first responders."

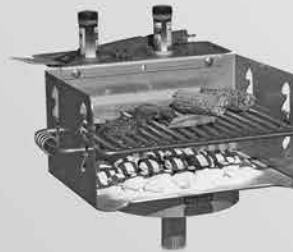
The schedule included a patriotic ceremony at the Medal of Honor Memorial, city band concert, festival with food vendors, bounce castles, yard games and much more.



Continued on page 12

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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 11

Fargo Welcomes New Park Officer

The Fargo Park District (FPD) welcomed their newest team member, Officer Josh Marvig, this spring as the new park officer.

Marvig joins the team as a contracted position with the Fargo Police Department. His new role with FPD is comparable to a school resource officer. He is responsible for maintaining law and order in Fargo parks and other FPD properties while maintaining public safety. Some of his new duties include foot patrol of Fargo parks, facilities and events, community education and, of course, crime prevention.



“By having a dedicated officer who has the ability to respond in short notice to situations in our parks, we are able to focus on hotspots of concern,” shared FPD Deputy Director Dave Leker. “Not only are we able to address issues faster as they happen, by having him available on a routine basis it will help us address concerns and prevent future issues in individual parks.”

Marvig graduated from Hawley High School in 2012 before attending Alexandria Technical and Community College for Law Enforcement, graduating in 2014. He worked security at Sanford Health in Fargo before joining the Lisbon Police Department in 2015. In April 2016, Marvig joined the Fargo Police Department and has resided and worked in Fargo since.

Minot Holds Groundbreaking Ceremony for Zoo Habitats

Minot Park District held a groundbreaking ceremony June 19 for construction on two new habitats for the

Continued on page 14



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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Continued from page 12

lions and tigers at the Roosevelt Park Zoo.

A generous gift of \$1 million from Conni Ahart and Clint Severson has been added to the Centennial Capital Campaign. Ahart was among the distinguished guests turning the first shovels of dirt for the project. Both donors have been invited to help name the new habitat for the lions.

The groundbreaking event marks a milestone in the largest capital campaign in the zoo's near-100-

year history. Each habitat is designed to exponentially increase each species' living space, as well as enhance the zoo experience for the 90,000 visitors that explore the zoo each year.

The combined total cost of the two projects is \$5,847,711. The general contractor bid was awarded in April to Rolac Contracting Inc. The capital campaign cabinet has raised \$4,271,485 and will continue to raise funds. Learn more about the projects at www.rpzoo.com.



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NDSU Students Tackle the NFL Draft Experience

The ND State University (NDSU) Sport Management program attended the 2018 NFL Draft in Dallas, Texas. Nearly 50 NDSU Sport Management students worked the NFL Draft. They helped manage the NFL Draft Experience for fans outside AT&T Stadium, which included virtual reality stations, football target tosses, field goal kicking competitions and autograph stations. They saw firsthand how an event with more than 100,000 attendees per day is organized and had the opportunity to network with people from across the country.

Students volunteered their time to assist with the draft festivities. They were responsible for providing a positive atmosphere for NFL fans, dealing directly with customers to ensure they were enjoying the fun opportunity provided. Because of this experience, students gained first-hand knowledge of customer service and sport event operations, as well as working in a sport environment and understanding the requirement to work long, extensive hours.

In addition, the trip included student development opportunities. Students visited the University of Kansas' Allen Fieldhouse to learn more about the operation of a facility and toured the Dallas Mavericks' organization to learn about behind-the-scenes operations of an NBA organization.

"The draft is something I always watch on TV, and this year I worked it and got a picture with the NFL commissioner," said Brady Faber, a junior in the NDSU program. "Working such a large-scale

event was amazing. I loved the atmosphere and learned a lot."

The camaraderie between the students on the trip was evident by event organizers, who dubbed the team "NDSU 50."

"Becoming closer with my fellow sport management students as a whole was very rewarding," said junior Matthew Wurnig. "It's good to get to know the people that make up your program and to expand your friend group."

"Sport management is a varied degree, from youth level all the way to the professional level," said Tyler Tracy, NDSU Sport Management program coordinator. "My goal is to get students into the industry while they're still in school. They need to find out what they want to do, and trips like these are a great way to help them do that." Tracy has been the program coordinator/lecturer for the NDSU Sport Management program for the past two years and said he and students are already deciding where to volunteer next year.



State Plan Provides Data about Outdoor Recreation

Every five years, the ND Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) completes a *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP). Although required to maintain state eligibility for federal outdoor recreation grant funding from the National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration, the SCORP is much more. It offers a wide-ranging view of outdoor recreation in North Dakota from both citizen and provider perspectives.

The 2018-2022 SCORP is a helpful resource for anyone involved in offering outdoor recreation opportunities in North Dakota. According to the publication, six out of every 10 North Dakota households (60 percent) report outdoor recreation is very important, while 93 percent report it is important. Five percent more North Dakota households feel outdoor recreation is very important today compared to five years ago. Demand is clearly increasing.

Echoing these sentiments, 49 percent of public parks and recreation providers in North Dakota report demand for outdoor recreation facilities and activities exceeds supply for their users. In fact, numerous facilities have more than 20 percent of providers reporting demand exceeds supply.

User Perspectives

The following broad categories of outdoor recreation activities offered at parks, sports complexes and recreation areas are of most interest to North Dakota households:

- Going to a park, natural area or green space to play, have fun, use a playground, enjoy nature or relax (63 percent) and picnicking (55 percent).
- Camping (61 percent).
- Using trails for walking, running, bicycling or horseback riding (61 percent).

According to North Dakota households, the following outdoor recreation facilities rank lowest (poor in both quality and quantity, meaning it must be greatly improved or replaced) among those North Dakota households interested in participating in a specific activity:

- Downhill skiing or snowboarding areas (60 percent).
- Exercise trails with exercise machines or equipment at stations (58 percent).
- Off-highway vehicle (ATV, dirt bike or side by side) trails (56 percent).

Provider Perspectives

The facilities for which the highest proportion of public parks and recreation providers say demand

exceeds supply include:

- Paved multi-use trails (31 percent).
- Modern campgrounds (30 percent).
- RV/camper sites with electricity/water hookups (30 percent).

The outdoor recreation facilities providers report most in need of improvement or expansion to better meet the needs of their users include:

- Regular swimming pools (26 percent).
- Tennis courts (21 percent).
- Swimming bathhouses (18 percent).

Using SCORP Data

As the SCORP identifies, demand for outdoor recreation opportunities across much of North Dakota exceeds the supply of accessible, high-quality infrastructure. Based on analysis of the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation in North Dakota, the SCORP prioritizes categories of facilities for grant funding at the state level, as well as in the state's eight legislatively determined planning regions, for the five-year period from 2018 to 2022. However, this data is useful beyond grant proposals, offering public parks and recreation providers perspectives on what opportunities users are seeking in their region of the state. The SCORP provides statistically-sound data for public parks and recreation providers to use when planning new or renovated outdoor recreation facilities in their communities.

Statewide Facility Priorities 2018-2022

Primary Needs	Secondary Needs	Tertiary Needs
Non-Motorized Trails	Swimming/Water Facilities	Shooting Sport Facilities
Playgrounds/Picnic Areas/Open Space Parks	Recreational Boating Facilities	Canoeing/Kayaking Facilities
Campgrounds	Winter Sports Facilities	Sports Courts/Fields
		Motorized Trails

These outdoor recreation facility priorities, along with regional priorities, will be utilized as part of the NDPRD's allocation of grant funds for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Recreational Trails Program this year through 2022.

Electronic versions of the SCORP and its companion publications, *Recreational Trail Needs* and *Wetlands Priorities*, are available on the NDPRD website at www.parkrec.nd.gov.



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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

South Heart, a small community of about 420 people located approximately 10 miles west of Dickinson, did not have an active park board for a couple of years. Members in the community became interested in cleaning up and improving the already existing baseball field, as well as offering a little league baseball program, so they appointed a few community members to the park board. Currently, the South Heart Park Board consists of five members: Shelly Jacobson (5 years), Kristen Jung (5 years), Arlen Kubas (5 years), Jon Jacobson (5 years) and Scott Jung (1 year).

The park board's goals include continuing to offer the little league baseball program, which has been a great success, and the 5-6th grade football program. They are also working toward adding new playground equipment to their three parks and improving the parks and community as needed.

One of the challenges the park board faces is having a small budget to fund the programs they would like to

offer the community and the upgrades to equipment and facilities they'd like to make. Another challenge is finding reliable individuals to manage the facilities and programs. "We have been incredibly lucky with community members helping us," Shelly said.

The South Heart Park Board believes their membership with NDRPA is beneficial to the park board members. "NDRPA has been a great resource for us when we have had questions about policy or procedure," Shelly said.

The little league baseball program has become an event for the whole community. "Our baseball program has been a wonderful addition to our community," Shelly said. "It is a great opportunity for family and kids to get together and enjoy the summer."

The park board has made a few recent additions to their equipment. They have added a swing set and two riders to their Lions Pavilion/baseball field park. They have also added a new shed next to the baseball field.



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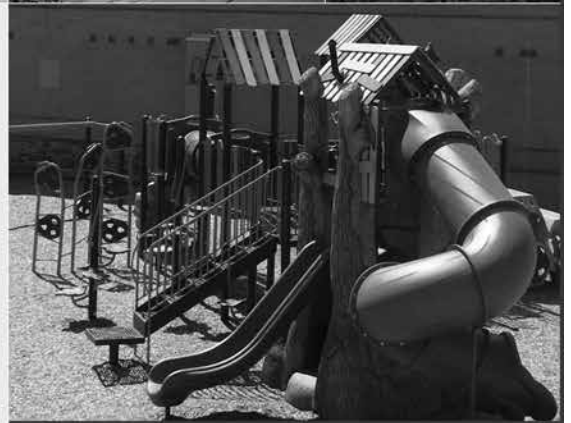
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Bismarck Partners Up for Community Enrichment

All kinds of boxes are popping up in Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) parks this spring. Here's a snapshot of new ways in which parks provide both cultural and community enrichment.

Little Free Pantry

Participants in the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce Leadership program approached BPRD asking for support in providing sites for the Little Free Pantry program, a place for neighbors to help neighbors.

According to the program organizers, "The Little Free Pantry is a give-and-take system, with pantry boxes placed in areas of highest need. The concept is to 'give freely,' meaning donors (including residents and/or individual pantry sponsors) give what they can without strings attached. The pantries are accessible 24 hours



a day, seven days a week, by donors or by people who may need an item. Goods available in the boxes vary from boxed goods, individually wrapped items (beef jerky, chips, ramen noodles, etc.) and canned goods to baby supplies and toiletries. Because the stocked items are generosity-based, each pantry carries a variety of items."

The Leadership Bismarck-Mandan class participants wanted to expand the Little Free Pantry program, both in terms of locations and awareness. Little Free Pantry boxes were built by Roughrider Industries in Bismarck, and parks, with accessible spaces all over Bismarck, seemed like a good fit. BPRD Operations Manager Dave Mayer worked with the class to find park locations.

Little Free Pantry boxes can be found at Sons of Norway, Kiwanis, Custer, Rosa Young and Lions parks. Many of the pantries are stocked daily and even several times a day. The pantries are stocked by community volunteers. Several businesses and organizations "sponsor" a pantry, keeping it stocked and in good working order.

There are now 25 Little Free Pantries in Bismarck-Mandan.

Poetry Boxes

Your next walk in a Bismarck park may include a dose of poetry.

Dakota West Arts Council (DWAC) and BPRD joined forces this summer to create, install and fill 10 Poetry Boxes throughout Bismarck parks.

The goal of the Poetry Boxes is to showcase local poetry – or the sharing of a favorite poem – for all to enjoy while strolling, walking or riding through a park.

The concept of the Poetry Box is fairly simple, and a sign on each box directs the reader to "Take A Moment. Leave Inspired." Interested folks can share their own poetry or a favorite poem by writing or typing it on a piece of paper, lifting the Poetry Box lid and inserting the poem. If there is already a poem in the box, people remove it before inserting a new one. Submissions will be periodically checked, and those deemed inappropriate will be removed. There are no deadlines or suggested length of time that a poem will be in a Poetry Box. The Poetry Boxes are self-contained and monitored by anyone who passes by.





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"Parks are a place of activity and recreation," said BPRD Executive Director Randy Bina. "They're also a place for relaxation, art and culture. We're happy to be working with Dakota West Arts Council to bring a different dimension to our parks and hope that people enjoy the Poetry Boxes."

"Poetry is a powerful art form," said DWAC Executive Director Eileen Walsh. "These Poetry Boxes create a place for the written word to be shared and enjoyed. Each of the 10 Poetry Boxes are art forms in themselves, since each one is built the same but is painted differently. Each Poetry Box will be shaped by those who choose to participate, which is really wonderful."

To kick start the Poetry Boxes, DWAC worked with the ND Humanities Council and inserted the Poetry Boxes with poems submitted from Bismarck-Mandan literary artists, most who have published their poems in "A Second Thought," a ND Humanities publication.

Poetry Boxes, also known as poetry poles or posts, are appearing in public spaces across the country, including Portland, Ore., St. Tammany Parish, La., and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Little Free Library

Having access to books builds community and literacy and inspires readers, especially young readers. That's the goal of the Little Free Library movement. It's a "take a book, return a book" free book exchange.



Little Free Libraries have been sprouting up across the country since 2009 and recently found a home in Johnny Gisi Memorial Park in Bismarck. A family that lives close to the park approached BPRD, asking permission to put a Little Free Library in the park, offering to be stewards of it and to keep it stocked and in good working order.

The most common version of a Little Free Library is a small wooden box filled with books. The books are generally focused toward young readers, but books for readers of all ages can be included.

The Little Free Libraries provide 24/7 access to books and can be located, with permission, almost anywhere: individual yards, business property or public spaces. There are currently 13 Little Free Libraries in Bismarck.

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By Christy Schafer, State Procurement Office

Did you know you can use state contracts to purchase goods and services you need? Cooperative purchasing is an effective tool government entities can use to leverage time and cost efficiencies. Partnering with the ND 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. Let's do more with less!

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You can find more information about all state contracts on the OMB website at www.nd.gov/omb/statecontracts. If you have any questions, contact the State Procurement Office at 701-328-2740 or infospo@nd.gov.

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