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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The official first day of fall has passed and our fall programming is well underway. I am not entirely sure how it is possible, but every year it seems we turn the calendar to May then it is fast-forward to September. It's hard to beat summer in North Dakota. We were fortunate to have record years at our Roosevelt Park Zoo, Roosevelt Park Pool and Souris Valley Golf Course. Our trails were busy, and our parks were filled with individuals of all ages and abilities.

Through all the ups and downs of 2020, one positive to come out of it all was our community rediscovering its own backyard. We have had countless patrons experience a trail for the first time when it was only a few miles from their homes. Families discovered neighborhood parks that they had heard of but never had the time to stop and visit. One of the things I am most proud of being an employee of the Minot Park District and a part of the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association is that we never stopped providing services for our communities throughout the past two years. Even if our programming looked a little different, even if our facilities operated a different way, we remained here for our citizens. We provided and continue to provide safe spaces for individuals to relax, exercise and enjoy.

It's still amazing to me, when I take the time to slow down and notice, how many times the Minot Park District affects my everyday life as a citizen. Four days a week, my day starts off by dropping our oldest daughter off at Maysa Arena for figure skating practice, followed by work and then dropping her off at Souris Valley Golf Course or Jack Hoeven Wee Links for golf practice. Then it's time to pick up our youngest from school and take the dogs for a quick walk on one of the Minot Park District walking paths next to our home. After a quick supper, we head back to the golf course for pick up and then across the street back to the Maysa for the youngest's five-on-five hockey practice. That's just one day in September.

During summer months, our family enjoys even more facilities provided by Minot Park District. I can imagine many of you reading this have the same experiences with your organization. Even when people don't realize it, their local park district impacts their lives in a positive way multiple times a day.

Thank you to each and every one of you for your commitment to improving the quality of life for your citizens and visitors of your community. I know when my family visits your city how hard you all work to make your community great. Some days, it can seem your work goes unnoticed, but all the park professionals reading this know the bathrooms don't magically clean themselves, the grass and the trees don't get trimmed without you, and the playground doesn't remain safe without our maintenance department's constant inspections. Always remember, what you do matters and without you our communities would not be what they are today.

From our Minot Park District family and our DesLauriers family, we hope you all have a happy and healthy holiday season!

Sincerely,

Elly DesLauriers, NDRPA President



NDRPA President Elly DesLauriers with her family.

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Next *FOCUS* deadline: Jan. 15, 2022

Cover photo: Rydell Regional Skate Park, Grand Forks Park District

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New Leadership Elected to Board of Directors

Elly DesLauriers from Minot is the new president, Mike Orr from Grand Forks is the new president-elect, Tyler Jacobson from Valley City is the new secretary-treasurer, Cole Higlin from Mandan was elected for another term as Public Policy Committee chair, Matt Mack from Dickinson was elected as the chair of the Education Committee, and Leah Kelm from West Fargo is the chair of Engagement Committee. New leadership joined the NDRPA Board of Directors at the Sept. 15 annual meeting in Bismarck. Board contact information and a list of committee members can be found at www.ndrpa.com.

Make Sure NDRPA News Arrives in Your Mailbox

Do you receive the *NDRPA eUpdate* in your inbox each month? If not, make sure you provide NDRPA with your email by contacting ndrpaoffice@gmail.com.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JAN. 15

FOCUS Deadline

MARCH 15-17

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Mission

Advancing parks, recreation and conservation
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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.

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COMMISSIONER'S CORNER

Kale Stromme – Devils Lake Park Board



Kale Stromme

Kale Stromme took his first job with the Devils Lake Park Board as a lifeguard when he was 15 years old. Little did he know then he would eventually have a role in shaping the city's recreational plans as a board member. Stromme was first elected in 2010 and is serving a third term on the board.

"I really saw how important parks and recreation was for a community," said Stromme, who graduated from the University of North Dakota with a degree in business management and a minor in recreation and leisure services. "Throughout my time working in the field and learning in college about the field, I found that parks and recreation services are an important aspect of people's lives. I valued it personally and I felt that I wanted to be involved with trying to improve the services we are providing in our community."

Stromme has served the park board through some trying times that included a lengthy flood fight and recent COVID-19 pandemic. He says the key to success is being able to adapt when situations change. For instance, Stromme and the board worked with Fort Totten Little Theater to move its annual indoor show into a park in Devils Lake and it now serves as an outdoor community theater. "It

was such a hit that they have continued to do the show and this year had just shy of 7,000 people attend, which was a record," Stromme said. "It was exciting to attend and see the park so busy. Many nights while the show was going on, there was volleyball, baseball and softball going on at the same time as well."

Stromme has also kept his focus on other activities that matter to the people of Devils Lake, like the annual Lure 'em for Life Kid's Fishing Camp. Volunteers from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department take kids out fishing and do daily activities such as fish identification, knot tying and fish cleaning.

The park district also recently installed a dock system at Creel Bay Golf Course to allow people to park their boats and enjoy a game of golf or enjoy the lake view and have a beverage. Other pending upgrades include significant improvements to the community's largest baseball field, replacing a pavilion in the park and looking for ways to make a community recreation center a reality.

"After multiple surveys, we know our community wants a new center, but we need to figure out what the right mix of wants are to the cost of the facility," Stromme said.

Stromme said North Dakota Recreation and Park Association resources help park commissioners and park employees make informed decisions when facing issues in their community. "It is a great resource for us to use to see what other parks are doing and keep up with park trends in our state," he said.



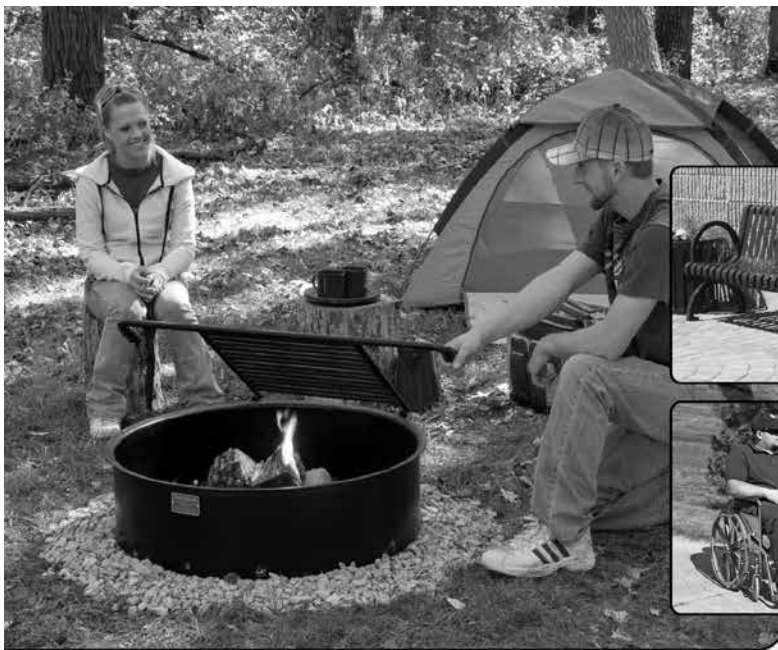
Fort Totten Little Theatre held its summer productions in Roosevelt Park in Devils Lake.



Creel Bay Golf Course in Devils Lake has docks available for boaters who want to play a round of golf.



A child enjoys a sunny afternoon in Devils Lake.



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Bina Retires After Four Decades of Parks and Recreation Service



Randy Bina

Randy Bina retired as executive director of Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) on Oct. 1. His service to the public parks and recreation field spanned four decades and included almost 34 years with BPRD, the last 10 years as executive director.

Throughout his career, Bina was a leader in parks and recreation, engaged locally, regionally and nationally in numerous professional and sports organizations. He was active in NDRPA, serving as president twice. He was inducted into the NDRPA Hall of Fame in 2011 and continues to serve as chair of the Hall of Fame Council post-retirement.

"Parks and recreation is both a passion and profession for me," Bina says. "I express my

deepest gratitude to the many people who have supported me throughout my career, including current and former park board commissioners and staff members, parks and recreation professionals across the state and around the country, and my family."

Bina was instrumental in expanding the impact of BPRD in the community by building collaborative partnerships, supporting successful capital campaigns, hosting sporting events, and developing neighborhood parks and new facilities.

"Randy's commitment to planning and partner outreach have greatly benefited the park district," Board of Park Commissioners President Julie Jeske says. "He leaves a strong legacy for our continued work to provide public parks and recreation services in Bismarck."

Mandan Upgrading Dacotah Centennial Park

The Mandan Park District is making major upgrades to Dacotah Centennial Park, home to Mandan's annual Fourth of July Rodeo, Mandan Horse and Saddle Club, Dacotah Speedway, 20 campsite hookups, community gardens, and 16 acres of soccer fields, including three varsity and 12 youth fields. Annually, more than 30 events with approximately 17,000 patrons utilize the facility.

The district is partnering with the Mandan Rodeo Days Committee and Mandan Horse and Saddle Club to create an improved joint use facility. The Mandan Rodeo Days Committee is responsible for the cost of the new arena. Mandan Park District and Mandan Rodeo Days Committee partnered to secure a \$750,000 donation from Dale Pahlke, Dakota Community Bank & Trust, and a \$1 million commitment from the city's Mandan Visitors Fund to directly benefit infrastructure improvements at Dacotah Centennial Park.

Since 1991, the Mandan Park District staff and Mandan Rodeo Days Committee have set up a temporary arena on the stock car racing track in front of the speedway's grandstand for the July rodeo. The project will result in a permanent, spectator-friendly home for a major annual community event while also enhancing facilities for a multitude of youth rodeos, equine competitions, riding clinics, and other activities.

The improved facility will now be known as the

Dale Pahlke Arena on the Dakota Community Bank & Trust Rodeo Grounds. The facility will feature a larger arena with improved drainage, new fencing and gates, new announcer stand, audio visual system, 4,000-seat grandstand, livestock pens, contestant warm-up area, future exhibit hall, and a maintenance/storage shed. Dacotah Centennial Park updates will include accommodating ADA upgrades to bleachers and LED lighting throughout the facility.

Mandan Park District is working with Icon Architectural Group to construct the project. The goal is to have the facility ready by the Fourth of July in 2022.



A new 4,000-seat rodeo arena is part of the upgrades at Dacotah Centennial Park. The arena is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2022 Mandan Fourth of July Rodeo.



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Minot Park District and Rotary Team Up to Offer Kayak Rentals

The Minot Park District and Minot Noon Rotary Club are making kayak rentals available through a “Rotary 4 Recreation” campaign that started in October 2020. Proceeds from T-shirts sales through the program allowed for the purchase of six kayaks, paddles and life jackets.

“We are thrilled to donate these items to the Minot Park District to encourage outdoor activities like kayaking in our community. We look forward to our



Community members can rent kayaks to use on the Souris River through the Minot Park District.

continued partnership and bringing more recreational activities to the region,” Rotary 4 Recreation Committee member Staci Kenney said.

Kayaks are available to rent through the Minot Park District’s recreation office. The cost is \$10 per kayak per day. That includes paddle and life jacket. It is on a first-come, first-served basis. Renters must have their own means of transportation and proper equipment to secure the kayaks while transporting. Payment is due at the time of rental. Kayaks are available for pick-up Monday-Friday, noon-4:30 p.m. Rentals are 24 hours, pick-up is any time after noon and drop off is anytime between 8 a.m. and noon the following day. If past noon the following day, renters will be charged for a second day at drop-off. There is no pick-up or drop-off on Saturday or Sunday. Friday rentals are three-day rentals only (\$30).

Ron Merritt, executive director of the Minot Park District, said, “We are excited to work with the Minot Noon Rotary Club on this project. The Souris River is a recreational opportunity just waiting for our community to enjoy. Our goal is to continue to grow this program with more recreational offerings along the Souris River.”

Klipfel Begins New Role as Executive Director of Bismarck Parks and Recreation District

Kevin Klipfel began his service as executive director of Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) on Oct. 2. Klipfel was previously the BPRD facilities and programs director.

He has a degree in parks and recreation administration from the University of North Dakota and started his public parks and recreation career 30 years ago at BPRD as a recreation specialist. Throughout his career, Klipfel has held leadership positions in Valley City and Dickinson, before returning to his hometown and BPRD. Klipfel is a Certified Park and Recreation Executive and a Certified Playground Safety

Inspector. In 2019, he received the Distinguished Professional Award from the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association.

“The board of park commissioners conducted a national search for the executive director position, and Kevin rose to the top of the candidates with his professionalism, experience and understanding of the community,” says board president Julie Jeske. “Kevin’s knowledge of the park district and expertise in the field ensures a smooth transition for staff and community partners. We look forward to working with Kevin as he leads our award-winning and accredited



Kevin Klipfel

agency into the next era.”

“I appreciate the trust the board has placed in me to lead BPRD into the future,” Klipfel says. “We will continue our work to provide affordable, accessible and sustainable public parks and recreation services in Bismarck as we evolve and grow to meet the ever-changing needs of the community.”



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NDRPA Inducts Two Members into Hall of Fame

Tim Kuntz of Bismarck was the 24th member inducted into the NDRPA Hall of Fame on Sept. 14 during the Awards Banquet at the NDRPA State Conference.

Kuntz has been an active NDRPA member for 35 years and was passionate about the importance of his job. “North Dakota citizens and visitors should receive an outstanding return on spending for leisure opportunities,” Kuntz said. “It is important to the overall health of our citizens and builds a sense of community. Our profession provides a vital role in the quality of life.”

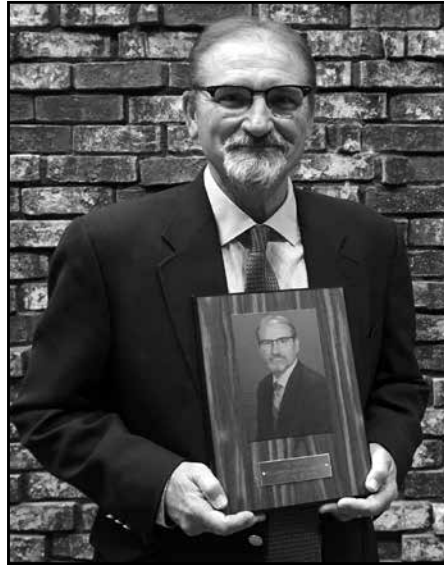
Kuntz earned a bachelor’s degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead in 1983. He spent most of his career with Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD), and also worked briefly for the Moorhead Parks and Recreation Department and Dickinson Parks and Recreation. Kuntz retired in 2019 from BPRD where he was recreation manager. He was a certified park and recreation professional and a certified playground safety inspector.

Throughout his career, Kuntz has been active in his profession and in his community. Among the many organizations in which he has participated are Babe Ruth League, North Dakota Amateur Basketball, North Dakota Amateur Softball Association, Prairie Rose State Games, and Bismarck Soccer League. He has been recognized twice with a VIP Award from the Bismarck-Mandan Convention and Visitors Bureau and is a member of the North Dakota Babe Ruth Hall of Fame.

Kuntz has earned accolades from his peers:

“Tim goes the extra mile with supporting partnerships, serving as North Dakota Babe Ruth Baseball state commissioner for 12 years and our Midwest Plains commissioner for 11 years,” said Wayne Beyer, executive director of the Wahpeton Park District. “He is a recognized parks and recreation leader – dependable, trustworthy, passionate about America’s pastime sport and very deserving of the NDRPA Hall of Fame.”

Fellow Hall of Famer James Kramer of Dickinson added, “Tim’s hard work and dedication are second to none, and nowhere is it more evident than his involvement with NDRPA. His commitment to being



Tim Kuntz

an active member by holding offices and participating on committees is one reason NDRPA has grown into a successful organization.”

Kuntz was active in NDRPA leadership, serving on multiple committees and holding several offices, among them secretary, FOCUS editor, membership chair, and president. He was a member of the planning committee for NDRPA’s joint conference with the South Dakota Parks & Recreation Association and a member of the review committee that hired the first NDRPA executive director. Kuntz also represented NDRPA as its professional representative

to the NRPA Midwest Regional Network. He was recognized previously by NDRPA with the Fellow Award, now known as the Distinguished Professional Award, in 2003.

Dennis Nybo, director of New Rockford Park District, was the 25th inductee into the NDRPA Hall of Fame.

For 32 years, Nybo has worked to make sure diverse recreational opportunities are available to everyone. That’s why he could always be found serving on boards and associations whose missions were to promote fun, healthy activities.

“Each individual is unique and has different expectations,” Nybo said. “For some, it may be a park bench to enjoy nature, for others, swimming or baseball. Both are important needs to be met for all community members and guests.”

Nybo earned a bachelor’s degree in parks and recreation administration from the University of North Dakota in 1988. He has worked for several parks and recreation agencies throughout his career, including Rolling Meadows Park District in Illinois, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District and Devils Lake Park District. He is a certified park and recreation professional and a certified pool operator.

Nybo has been actively involved in many sports associations, including Prairie Rose State Games, North Dakota Amateur Basketball, National ASA Softball, North Dakota Amateur Hockey Association, and USA National Hockey. He also is a member

HALL OF FAME

of the New Rockford Eagles, has officiated hockey and been active in school booster clubs. He has received the Outstanding Local Program/Volunteer Award from the National Hershey's Track and Field Program.

Nybo's work has earned praise from his colleagues:

"I did my internship with the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District in 1994, and Dennis took me under his wing," former NDRPA President Bob Gillen recalled. "He helped get me active in many of my various volunteer positions in hockey and parks and recreation. His energy, optimism and passion are demonstrated daily. One thing I can say about Dennis after 27 years of knowing him, he works extremely hard, but loves to have fun while doing the job."



Dennis Nybo

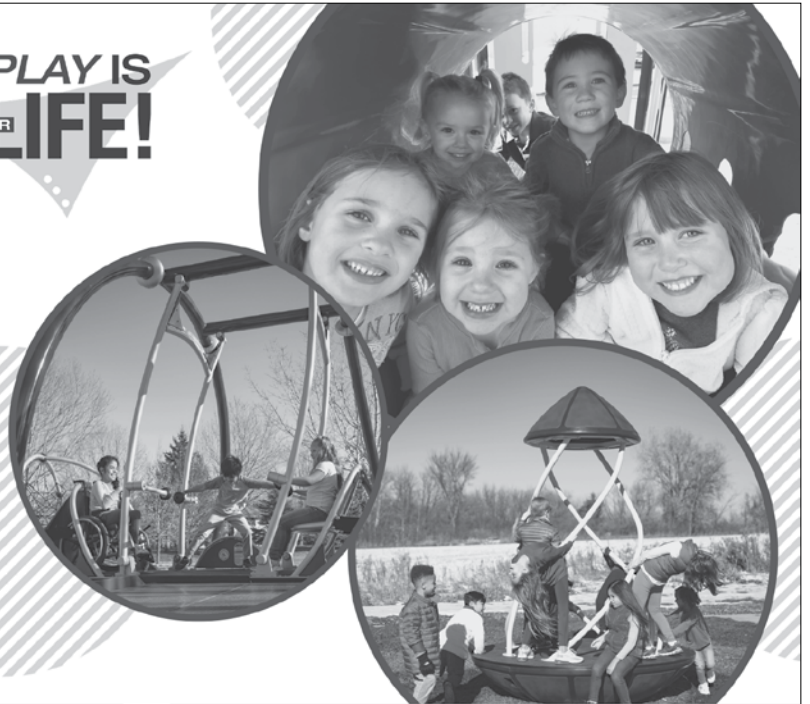
"Dennis is a passionate parks and recreation professional and has been very involved with NDRPA and the profession," Devils Lake Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Terry Wallace said. "Dennis was very instrumental in the North Dakota Hershey's Track & Field Program. He is highly deserving of becoming a member of the NDRPA Hall of Fame."

Nybo has served and continues to serve on numerous committees and has held several leadership roles with NDRPA, including Sports Committee chair, FOCUS editor and NDRPA president. He also served as NDRPA's representative for the National Hershey's Track and Field Program. In 2003, NDRPA recognized him with the Fellow Award, now known as the Distinguished Professional Award.

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NDRPA Awards Presented

NDRPA presented eight awards during the 2021 Awards Banquet on Sept. 14 at the NDRPA State Conference in Bismarck. Congratulations to all the award winners!

DISTINGUISHED PROFESSIONAL AWARD

This award honors professional members of NDRPA and NRPA with more than 10 years of experience.



Tyler Jacobson
Valley City Parks and Recreation



Mike Wald
Bismarck Parks and Recreation District

CITIZEN ADVOCACY AWARD

This award recognizes a citizen, an elected or appointed official, or volunteer who has demonstrated an outstanding contribution to the park, recreation and conservation movement.



Dr. Steve Chuppe
Bismarck



Rep. Mike Lefor
Dickinson

GOLDEN EGG AWARD

This award, established in honor of former Fargo Park District Superintendent Bob “Goose” Johnson, acknowledges outstanding and innovative park projects throughout the state.



Cottonwood Park Expansion
Bismarck Parks and Recreation District
Pictured: Randy Bina,
former BPRD Executive Director

PARTNERSHIP AWARD

This award honors organizations for outstanding contributions to the park, recreation and conservation movement.



West Fargo Fire Department
Pictured: Travis Olson,
WFFD Community Risk Reduction Officer

OUTSTANDING YOUNG PROFESSIONAL AWARD

This award honors professional members of NDRPA and NRPA who have experience of less than 10 years and are age 35 or younger.



Hilary Flatt
Valley City Parks and Recreation

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING AWARD

This award recognizes and honors an NDRPA member agency or organization that demonstrates leadership with advanced groundbreaking ideas in programming.



VEER (Venture, Explore, Encounter, Rentals) through VC, Valley City Parks and Recreation
Pictured: Amy Pederson,
VCPR Recreation Manager

Fargo's Island Park Undergoes Master Plan

Island Park is the oldest park in Fargo, part of the original townsite of Fargo plotted out by the Northern Pacific Railroad. The Fargo Park District is looking to celebrate the park's history and increase public awareness of Island Park's amenities and natural beauty by undertaking a future-focused master plan for the park.

The Fargo Park District received four proposals for Island Park master planning services. Fargo Parks staff reviewed and scored the four proposals and interviewed two firms. After the interviews, staff recommended and the park board ultimately approved AGL Landscape Architects & RDG Planning and Design (AGL & RDG) for master planning services for Island Park.

At the October board meeting, the board made one change to the timeline. The original plan was for the Island Park Master Plan to be completed in tandem with the remodel and replacement of the more than 40-year-old Island Park Pool, due to the age and condition of the pool. However, input from the Fargo community and Island Park

neighborhood during the planning process for the pool project asked for the Island Park Master Plan to be completed before the Island Park Pool project. The change in timeline allows for pool architectural and engineering design services to be engaged as part of the master plan process.

The vision is for a master plan that respects the existing natural beauty while thoughtfully guiding future long- and near-term park improvements with guidelines for phased implementation. The master plan will define the park's future by generating ideas for unique artistic and cultural features not found in other area parks.

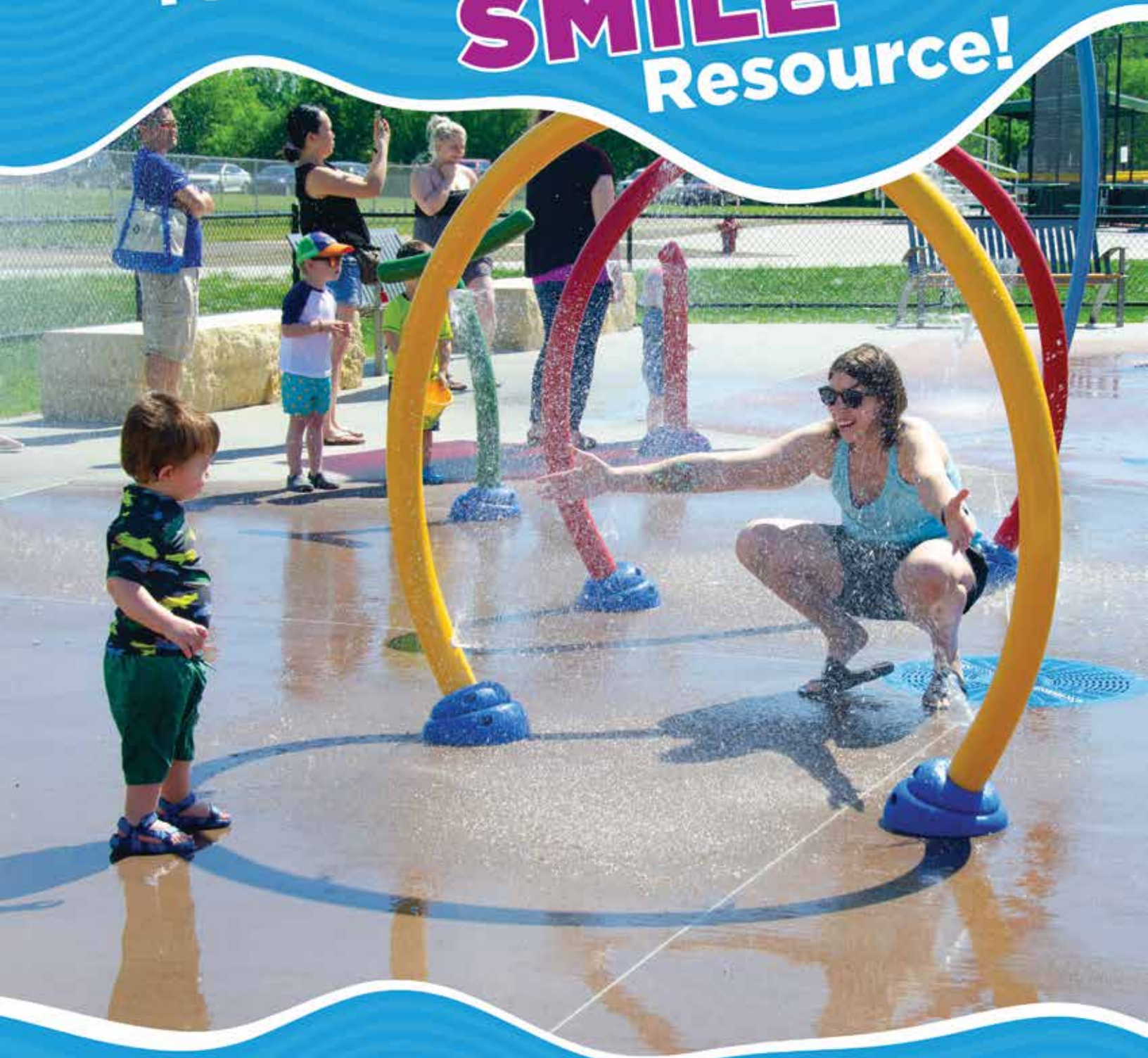
Over the next six months, AGL & RDG will undergo a process of data collection and basemapping to prepare inventory and analysis maps of information related to cultural and historical elements, parking, pedestrian use, programming use, the arts-related marketplace in the FM area, access, safety, natural elements, and existing structures. A project steering team comprised of park district staff, community

stakeholders and user groups will be assembled to draft plan goals, objectives and priorities as well as discuss project schedule and public participation. AGL & RDG will develop an online public participation platform as well as facilitate open-house design workshops. Utilizing the information they've gathered throughout the process, AGL & RDG will prepare a draft master plan of Island Park with recommendations for implementation in 5-, 10-, 15-, & 20-year phase increments. This drafted master plan will be presented to the public by the design team for feedback and refinement. The project will close out with a meeting with Fargo Park District staff and steering team to debrief and discuss implementation and next steps.

Fargo Park District looks forward to working with AGL & RDG on the master plan process for one of its community gems. The planned outcome is a re-envisioned park that complements the exuberance of reemerged downtown Fargo, is a destination to a broader audience and enhances connections to the Red River and adjacent neighborhoods.



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Success Story | Alexander Park Cold Spring, MN

Next to the picturesque Sauk River and close to downtown, the city of Cold Spring, MN couldn't have asked for a better location for a new park.

To get the project started, the city officials turned to CRS for their expertise in recreation planning and design. A local engineering firm was brought in to assist with civil, landscape, and architectural work. With an understanding of the goals, CRS created a complementary design of wet play, dry play, and shade to elevate the park experience. By working closely





The Magic of Play

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together, this partnership of owner, engineer, and our in-house design staff brought the city's ideas to life.

“CRS designed the Splashpad, playground and shade features to meet our vision and budget. They were very knowledgeable and responsive to our many questions. We could not be happier with how it all came together.”

Today, Alexander Park is the pride of the community offering a beautiful gathering place for residents and tourists alike to socialize, enjoy a large variety of recreational fun, and make lifetime memories.

To learn more about this, and other CRS projects, visit **crs4rec.com/projects**



**“CRS designed the Splashpad,
playground, and shade features to
meet our vision and budget.”**

- Jason Craft, Alexander Park in Cold Spring, MN



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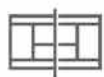
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Veterans Memorial Park Opens in Grand Forks

Nearly 10 years in the making, the Grand Forks Park District's Veterans Memorial Park was officially opened and dedicated on Sept. 11 in front of nearly 1,500 onlookers.

Speakers included former UND Aerospace UAS Program Director Al Palmer, Mayor Brandon Bochenski, UND President Andrew Armacost, and North Dakota Adjutant General Major Gen. Al Dorhmann. The ceremony also included remarks by Grand Forks Air Force Base 319th Wing Commander Col. Timothy Curry, who shared his memories of 9/11 and his role as part of the team that killed Osama Bin Laden.

In addition to the decorated and honorable speakers, the Red River Valley Motorcyclists positioned 13 bikes, which were draped with the U.S. flag by members of the UND ROTC program during the ceremony, in memory of those servicemen and women who lost their lives in the recent U.S. evacuation of Afghanistan. Each deceased person's name was read by Palmer.

The 90-minute ceremony recognized the hard work of the Veterans Memorial Park (VMP) Committee over the last decade, as well as the donors who made it all possible. In total, more than \$2 million (land not included), was raised by nearly 200 individuals and organizations over the years. These efforts have made for the creation of a one-of-a-kind park that features:

- Five obelisks representing each of the five branches of military service
- An educational Memorial Granite Wall with laser-etched images to depict the American veteran role from the first wars and conflicts to the latest electronic warfare
- An anchor from the USS Kiska, a Navy ammunition ship that saw service during the Vietnam War
- 1,200 personalized and engraved memorial stones to honor loved ones who have served or are currently serving
- Park shelters and benches for meditation and reflection
- Replica models of military aircrafts, with future development incorporating additional military equipment



Visitors pay their respects at the memorial wall at Veterans Memorial Park.

Through community philanthropy and the tireless work of local veterans and the VMP Committee, the Veterans Memorial Park will now forever be a sacred gathering place for veterans, military members, families, and community members to celebrate, recognize, remember, and honor the lives of those who are serving or have served in the United States Military. The VMP Committee is still seeking to raise about \$100,000 for finishing touches to complete the park's full plan.

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A black and white photograph of an indoor playground with various slides, climbing structures, and platforms. The equipment is set on a soft, padded floor. In the background, a sign for "WEST FARGO PARK DISTRICT" is visible.

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A black and white aerial photograph of a baseball field with its diamond and bases clearly visible. The field is surrounded by trees and a fence.

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PARK DISTRICT NEWS

Grand Forks Celebrates Rydell Regional Skate Park Phase 2

The Grand Forks Park District celebrated Phase 2 of the Rydell Skatepark at Kannowski Park on Sept. 18. Featuring an open skate session, food and music, giveaways, prize drawings, and skate competitions, hundreds gathered to celebrate the near completion of this unique regional park.

"Phase two has only been complete for a few weeks and we are already seeing visitors from all over the area traveling to Grand Forks to use the skatepark," said Jill Nelson, director of operations and community relations for the Grand Forks Park District. "With features like a skate bowl, quarter pipes, ramps, a vertical wall, and more, Grand Forks is now on the map for having a destination skatepark in our region."

The first phase, completed in 2018, cost \$350,000 and the second phase cost \$450,000 with roughly 90% of funds raised through donations resulting from grants, the generosity of community members and the dedication of Grand Forks Park District Foundation's Skatepark Committee. The project received a \$196,000 community development block grant from the city of Grand Forks, a \$100,000

donation from the Engelstad Foundation and just over \$100,000 from the 2017 Rydell Car Show, in addition to donations from a number of other businesses and local entities.

With a few final plans to finish the last touches of the park (i.e., grading, seeding and fencing) the destination skatepark can now be fully enjoyed by skaters, roller bladers and scooter enthusiasts alike for many years to come.



A skateboarder catching air at Grand Forks' Rydell Regional Skate Park.

IS YOUR BUDGET BEING STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT?

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a US dollar bill that is being stretched between two fingers. The bill is a \$100 bill, and the words "ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS" are visible. The hand is holding the bill by the edges, and it is being pulled apart, making it look thin and stretched.

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Fargo Park District Hosts Another Successful 'Lab'

For the third year, the Fargo Park District held a STEM-focused science event called The Lab. The event is for elementary kids ages 7-12. The Lab transforms Rheault Farm into a science lab for a day full of fun experiments. The specific science focus changes year to year. The focus of the 2021 event was geology and biology.

Local college professor Graeme R. A. Wyllie, Ph. D., and the Concordia College Science Academy partnered with the district. Wyllie and his students created the science experiments and taught them while the district provided the space and supplies.

In 2020, The Lab was held virtually instead of in-person. Videos of each experiment were created for families to do at home. That event was done primarily through Facebook with 400 event responses and 15 active participants. Event participants could also access The Lab videos on YouTube.

The in-person event has grown from 50 to 200 participants. It is great to see a specific STEM-themed event have such high attendance.



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Bismarck Sees Efficiencies with New Playground Inspection Software

The Bismarck Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) Operations Division transitioned from a paper to an electronic playground inspection process this summer.

BPRD now uses CityReporter™ software for both high-frequency and low-frequency playground inspections. Staff utilize tablets in the field to perform inspections using BPRD's own checklist, which was imported into the software. Any deficiencies on the playground equipment are captured by the tablet camera, complete with geolocation, and the photos are tied directly to the inspection checklist. When staff return to the office, the inspection data is uploaded to the cloud via WiFi, and emails are sent to the appropriate staff for review.

The new system has not only streamlined the entire

process but also created significant efficiencies. Prior to digitization, staff performed all inspections on paper, without the benefit of images, which resulted in significant hard copy files. In addition, no longer does the reviewing supervisor have to travel onsite to view each playground deficiency identified by a staff member. The photos tied to the inspection checklist also provide for quicker communication with the manufacturer for parts. This results in faster replacement of any issues and therefore safer playgrounds for the community.

The system has proven to be user-friendly. Staff not accustomed to utilizing tablets for work were able to pick up the technology quickly.

The software offers the possibility of adding other BPRD inspection checklists in the future.



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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE



Macy Schlaht has recently joined Valley City Parks and Recreation's (VCPR) full-time staff as marketing coordinator. She is currently a senior at Valley City State University majoring in business administration with minors in marketing, digital design and business software applications,

along with certificates in professional sales and digital marketing. She has been working in the VCPR Aquatics Department since 2016 and is excited to start in her new role upon graduation in May. Schlaht enjoys managing the women's basketball team, adventuring in the outdoors kayaking and camping, and being with friends.



Wes Colborn, former facility supervisor at ICON Sports Center, has been promoted to facilities manager for the Grand Forks Park District. Colborn will be responsible for managing all the park district's ice arenas and baseball/softball complexes, as well as serving as the point of contact for

program scheduling at the facilities. A Crookston, Minn., native, Colborn has more than 25 years of experience in the ice arena industry and a master's degree in parks and recreation from the University of Minnesota. Colborn assumed his new role as facilities manager on Oct. 5 and has been with the Grand Forks Park District since 2012.



Casey Zimmerman joined the Grand Forks Park District as the new facility assistant supervisor for ICON Sports Center and the Altru Wellness Village where he plays a crucial role in the maintenance and upkeep of the facilities. Originally from Grand Forks, Zimmerman is excited about

the great opportunity to work in a community environment serving the Grand Forks public. In his free time, he enjoys working out, fishing, golfing, or anything outdoors.

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