

Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Department

Terry Zeller, Superintendent

The Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Department offers a wide range of programs and special events to our "Hometown" community. We have over 318 acres of green space for the community to enjoy. Your Parks provide opportunities to relax, exercise, and seek entertainment in a variety of areas and at a participation level that fits your lifestyle. We pride ourselves on the level of customer service we provide to each and every patron from a call, visit, or participation in a program. We continued our mission by offering quality programs and events, but did a little make-over in 2011. We are very excited with the new additions to our Department such as a well embraced day camp, a delightful dance in the park, and last but not least, we welcomed our new Superintendent, Terry Zeller.

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The pool and rink finished out the year with record attendance and continued diversification in services. Our landscape crew worked with the community in new ways, and our festivals and concerts were well attended throughout the spring and summer. Our recreation programs continue to blossom, providing the youth of our community the opportunity to get healthy, stay healthy and to provide them with the necessary tools to enhance their life skills. The Parks Department staff believes that all generations deserve the opportunity to enhance their lifestyle. Youth sports, adult recreation and senior shape-up are the building blocks of a true "Hometown" community.

Working with an essentially unchanged budget from the previous year, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to increase our customer service and program offerings, maintain our fee structure, and work smarter to increase revenues. We were able to maintain daily attendance and facility use overall despite poor weather conditions in 2011, with a very wet spring and bitterly cold winter.

Recreation/Athletics

In the area of Recreation, we added a very successful day camp to our programming, allowing more children to participate in summer activities at Castle Manor in Merrifield Park. Our Youth Sports programs inherited from the school system showed strong attendance this year, seeing growth in Youth Football attendance. We continued to improve our service delivery for these sports by working closely with the Schools to resolve issues from our inaugural year of operation. George Wilson Park maintained its



prominence as the place to go throughout the seasons. The Disc Golf program held steady year-over-year and the tubing hill doubled its total revenues, bringing in \$53,000 for this facility alone in 2011. The Mayor's "Let's Move Mishawaka" initiative was promoted again this year with an emphasis on youth sports and physical activity programs. We will continue to look for ways to bring more young people into park facilities to combat childhood obesity and promote health and wellness. This is the key to creating the next generation of active and involved citizens for our City.

Special Events

Our Festivals continued to be amazingly popular in 2011, and offered a mix of small and large events from our Daddy-Daughter Dance to the three day Summerfest in Merrifield and Crawford



Parks. This year saw the addition of the Renaissance Festival in late August, which filled Kamm Island with family-oriented activities and entertainment and was very interactive for kids that attended. Attendance was far beyond what was expected, and we are planning to have this event back in 2012. A total of 11 special events were hosted or directly put on by our department, and this part of our mission is the most publicly visible of any that we undertake. In addition to

special events, our summer concert series, held both downtown and at the golf course, has continued to be well attended and a welcome addition to the list of great things to do in Mishawaka.

Merrifield Pool and Ice Rink

Merrifield Pool saw the highest attendance in 16 years, serving over 17,000 residents and also generating its highest yearly revenue at \$83,176.00. This growth occurred as we continued to trim operating costs while still providing the highest standards of health and safety for pool users. The Ice Rink faced a difficult operating season with the snow and cold, but still managed daily attendance that was similar to previous years. Successful events such as the Notre Dame 'Practice on the Pond' and Winterfest were well attended.





Battell Center

The Battell Center continued its tradition of offering a multitude of classes and performances. An increased focus on renting of rooms has resulted in two new art classes, a ballet class, and additional yoga classes and over \$66,000 in collected class fees. We also partnered with the Logan Center to initiate a program for kids with disabilities that culminated with a public performance of “High School Musical”. We are

intending to continue to expand our partnership with this important community center as we move into 2012. A new auditorium contract approved by the Park Board this year is expected to give groups looking for a well appointed performance venue expanded opportunities to utilize the Battell Center at a very reasonable cost.

Golf Course Operations

This past year showed that even with bad weather, the Golf operation continues to be a busy and vibrant part of Mishawaka’s recreation offerings. We logged over 26,000 rounds of golf this year, resulting in over \$360,000 in revenue in 2011. A very wet Spring resulted in fewer rounds played than in previous years, but our daily use and solid league participation showed that our golfers continue to value the course as a vital part of their recreational lifestyle. The continued promotion of junior golf at Eberhart resulted in sustained student participation, and we are focused on increasing this part of our mission for golf in 2012.



Landscape Division

Our efforts in improving the beauty of our open spaces and facilities were realized in the many additions to the grounds of our parks this year by the landscape division. This year our crew worked with Judith Rubleske and Kathleen Petitjean of Neighborhood Organic Gardening to

establish the first neighborhood garden in Mishawaka at Normain Park. Landscape projects for the year included additional plantings at the Riverwalk, hundreds of tulip bulbs planted throughout the parks, and 16 new trees and over 200 perennials added to our public spaces.

Capital Improvement Projects

Park Facilities were a focus in 2011, with a Riverwalk addition at Crawford Park and improvements there including a new spray pad. Hillis Hans Park renovations were also completed in 2011, and the park now has completely new amenities including a playground, walks, landscaping, and a shelter. These projects constitute the start of an overall master plan for park renovations that will result in improvements to many parks in the coming years, including Central, Mary Gibbard, Merrifield, and Twin Branch Parks.



Park Board

The City's Park and Recreation Board have continued its dedication and devotion to the city patrons as well as our agency. Creating a more streamlined meeting process, assigning committees focused on specific areas of the organization, and maintaining a high profile at special events has served this department well in 2011. The Board's continued passion and drive to meet the needs and desires of the community is proven through the continued growth of recreational programs offered each year. Through their guidance, recreation and special events will continue to evolve for people of all ages today and well into the future. The Park Board will continue their ongoing oversight ensuring that all facilities and parks are beautiful, clean and safe for all to enjoy. Members of the Mishawaka Park Board are:

Reg Wagle, President
John Coppens, Jr., Vice President
Carolyn Teeter, Secretary
Ellen West
Michael Bergin
Robert "Doc" Shriner