

Mishawaka Parks and Recreation Department

Terry Zeller, Superintendent

2014 was a year of firsts. We broke ground for our most extensive remodel ever to a Park Facility at Central Park, hired a new Golf Pro and started a youth program at Eberhart-Petro Golf Course. The inaugural Beutter Park 5k Run/Walk raised funds for the long-term maintenance of our flagship riverfront park. Complimenting these new efforts, the Parks and Recreation Department continues to offer a wide range of programs, facilities, and special events to our residents, with 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.

The Administration office was also a place of change this year, with a smaller but more effective staff than ever before. These changes saved the community over \$20,000 in personnel costs while our efforts to enforce rules on rentals netted an additional 25% in facility revenue over 2013. We also increased customer service by providing an easier process for the rental of shelters, buildings and the golf course for private events. Park Administration focused on eliminating duplicate efforts and waste in our operations, with greater emphasis on staff expense across all divisions. As a result our overall staff costs remained level, while service levels and satisfaction increased.

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Olympic Day

offerings while maintaining our fees in most program areas, with modest increases in a few programs that had remain unchanged for years. We were able to enhance our daily attendance and facility use overall through added programs and events, which pushed our overall service delivery numbers up over last year.

Although overall costs went up for the Department in supplies and services, we were able to operate with an unchanged budget from 2013, with the ability to request changes to decrease next year's overall costs to the public. This has been, and will continue to be the main focus of the Park Administration; to do more with what we have and be prudent in an uncertain financial future.

The Parks and Recreation Department was able to increase our customer service and program

Recreation and Special Events Division

This year, the Division added a manager to assist the Director in expanding and increasing the quality of our programs. This resulted in the addition of Disc Golf Tournaments, the Beutter Park 5K Walk/Run, and our first Youth Olympic Day. We also saw increases in our Daddy/Daughter Dance, Fun in the Sun Outreach Camps, Oktoberfest and Winterfest. The overall recreation revenues were only slightly below the cost of providing the programs and special events to the City, which shows that our fees and offerings are very stable, relevant, and well-attended by our residents.

Athletics

Youth Sports programs continued to be strong with Tackle and Flag Football managed by the Mishawaka Football League, our in-house organization. This year concussion awareness was a major focus, with our league seeking training in order to remain vigilant and within the evolving laws around this safety issue. This year, Tackle Football had a ‘tailgate party’ event at the end of the season, which was well-received by parents and participants.

The Recreation Division also continued to offer the very popular British Soccer Camp, which brings an international team to our City for a week-long clinic. Our Adult and Senior Softball Leagues remained constant, but long-term will be in need of new facilities if they are to remain strong and popular.

Recreation

George Wilson Park continues to be a highly-used property throughout the year. Tubing revenue rose this year to over \$20,000 and Disc Golf saw another large jump to \$34,000 in 2014.

The Mayor’s recreation program initiative was expanded this year to include more free programs focused on youth wellness and activity. 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.

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Special Events

Our Festivals continued to be amazingly popular in 2014, and offered a mix of small and large events from our Daddy/Daughter Dance to our annual Summerfest in Merrifield Park. This year saw the fourth annual Renaissance Festival in late August. Attendance increased again this year, and we expect an even greater event in 2015. A total of 16 special events were hosted or directly put on by our department, including our second year of being the host city for Urban Adventure. Our Summer Concert Series has continued to be well-attended and a welcome addition to the list of great things to do in Mishawaka.

Aquatics/Ice Rink Division

2014 was another year of growth for programs at the pools. We had our second annual swim invitational at Merrifield Pool, hosting eight teams from around the Midwest with over 300 in attendance. We also added a swim team to our summer use schedule, bringing our pools to maximum capacity. Mary Gibbard hosted the Mishawaka Sharks and the Mishawaka Stars for the 2014 season, adding much needed revenue.



Merrifield Pool

The Ice Rink was down for over a month, but was able to host many hockey teams through the early Spring. The total revenues for the Division were just under \$100,000 which was down from 2013, mostly due to the combined issues with the Gibbard Pool in the summer, the Rink in January, and many cool days for swimming. Within the revenue picture, we did increase our concessions and increased our healthy choices for snacks at Merrifield Pool, and our Learn-to-Swim Classes increased by 20% over last year.

Battell Center



Battell Center

The Battell Center continued its tradition of offering a multitude of classes, performances, and opportunities for room, gym and auditorium rentals. An increased focus on renting of rooms resulted in the highest occupancy since the Center was established.

Our membership has increased for the fitness room, and we had a return of the Company's Holiday Show in the auditorium. 2014 saw new many new programs for all ages, including a big increase in our health and fitness classes.

Golf Course Operations and Maintenance

The Golf operation was completely overhauled for 2014, bringing in a new Golf Pro in March. Our Pro introduced new youth programs, revived our existing ones, and expanded lessons and classes while keeping our revenue consistent year over year. The multi-phase drainage project was finally completed, which will allow play to resume much sooner after a large rain event. Our daily use and solid league participation showed that our golfers continue to value the course as a vital part of their recreational lifestyle.



Eberhardt GC

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. Many areas of the parks were improved with perennials and shrubs, and hundreds of tulip bulbs were planted throughout the parks. Our annual Arbor Day Celebration was held at John Young School, with 4 new trees planted on the campus. Volunteers are an important resource for the city of Mishawaka. The work performed by the various individuals and groups is a great benefit to the community and we look forward to cultivating these relationships in the future. Volunteers helped make 2014 a very productive year.



Beutter Park

Capital Improvement Projects

The comprehensive renovation to Central Park started this fall, which will be completed in the summer of 2015. This renovation will elevate the park to its rightful place as a major piece of the Riverwalk, and compliment the new Hospice Campus adjacent the park. The Park Amenity Master Plan is well under way, which will give the department a road map for future improvements over the next decade.

Park Board

The City's Park and Recreation Board has 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 have served this department well in 2014. 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 now 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 for 2014 were:

Reg Wagle,	President
John Coppens, Jr.,	Vice President
Carolyn Teeter,	Secretary
Ellen West	
William Pemberton	
Michael Faulkner	