

# Forum Update

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## 2007/08 MRPA Board of Directors

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## Presidents Message

*Don Lewis, Tupelo Department of Parks & Recreation*

The MRPA Board of Directors and Committee Chairs met January 16<sup>th</sup> at the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries & Parks. Thanks to Ramie Ford for making the conference room available. This was a very productive meeting and I think the Board and the Committees are making great progress. We spent the first part of the meeting reviewing our 2008 Goals. Here is a summary of the Committee Chair reports:

### **Goal I**

- The Education Committee has a program outline in place and they are looking for ideas on topics of interest from the membership.
- The Annual Conference location has been established for the next two years and we are accepting proposals for 2010.
- The Board has revised the vendor registration form and increased the exhibitor fee to \$500. This fee includes sponsorship recognition on many of the conference events.

### **Goal II**

- The MRPA policy and procedures manual is almost complete. We are only missing three sections.
- All standing committees have Chairs in place and they are working to set goals for their committees.

### **Goal III**

- The Board is working on ways to expand our role in the state by developing relationships with the public and private sectors.

The second part of the meeting was spent making some major changes for MRPA:

- The Board approved a sponsorship package with MUSCO Lighting to be the sponsor of our Annual Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Banquet.
- The Sommer/Kirkland Scholarship Fund has been set up in a perpetual fund and at least one scholarship will be funded annually.
- The MRPA Agency membership and Professional fees have been increased.
- MRPA will host a NPSI Safety Inspector Certification Course in Hattiesburg.

I am pleased with the progress that we are making but would still like to get more people involved. This is our association and it will take the help and support of the membership to really make a difference. The next meeting will be a web-conference call meeting April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## An IRS Notice for Your Non-Profit Partners

The IRS recently issued a warning about a current version of a scam e-mail which falsely claims to come from the IRS. It appears to be directed toward certain tax-exempt organizations. The IRS reiterates that it will never send unsolicited, tax account related e-mails to taxpayers.



## Position Announcement

Desoto County is seeking a candidate to serve as their Planning Commission Greenway Coordinator. The person in this position will perform or assist in the development of studies, analysis and recommendations in connection with greenways, river access and park facilities. Some of the specific job related duties include:

- Conducts site plan and subdivision plat reviews and request for rezoning when relevant to public recreation issues and or opportunities
- Prepares reports and supporting map data descriptive of research and recommendations
- Explains recreation planning to the general public
- Prepares or assists in the preparation of technical reports
- Serves as primary contact for all trail related matters
- Serves as liaison with volunteer trail groups in the County and with adjacent localities on regional trail issues
- Recruits volunteers for ongoing trail maintenance
- Works with neighborhoods and individual citizens in local trail planning
- Researches property ownership in proposed trail areas
- Contacts property owners and works through acquisition issues with County Attorney's Office

Qualified candidates will possess a bachelor's level degree in Planning, Landscaping Architecture, or a related discipline with at least three years of applicable experience. The salary will depend on qualifications and experience.

If you are interested, contact the Personnel Office, County Administration Building, 365 Loshier St., Ste. 320, Hernando, MS 38632 or call (662) 429-1392 by February 8, 2008.

## Field Maintenance Workshop

MRPA District I and the MSU-Extension Service will conduct a Field Maintenance Workshop on **March 05, 2008 at the Oxford Park Commission Activity Center.**

Sessions will include **Field Layout & Design** presented by Oxford Park Commission staffers Don Smith & Roy Smith, **Soil PH & Fertility** presented by Olive Branch Park & Recreation employee Steve Hoggard, **The ABC's of Field Maintenance** presented by Southern Athletic Fields representative Brad Essary and a **Field Maintenance Program** presented by Ernie Bennett with Grassland.

The morning break is being sponsored by MUSCO Lighting and lunch will be sponsored by Grassland. The final session of the day will be an **Equipment Checklist** program.

The registration fee is \$30.00 for Professionals and \$10.00 for Students. CEU's are included. You are asked to register by February 22. Make checks payable to MRPA District One and mail them to Bubba Robinson, Oxford Park Commission, 310 South 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Oxford, MS 38655. If you have questions, call 662-232-2390.

## Hershey Track and Field Notice

I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to participate in an exciting ongoing program sponsored by the Mississippi Recreation and Parks Association. This program is sponsored by Hershey Food Corporation and is designed for the beginner in track and field. Conducted on a grass roots level under the supervision of recreation leaders from the National Recreation and Park Association and education professionals from the National Association for Sports & Physical Education, the program is open to every girl and boy between the ages of 9 and 14. Spiked track shoes and starting blocks are prohibited. Only short pants and tennis shoes are needed to participate.

The program begins each May, when local park and recreation departments in cities and towns around Mississippi arrange qualifying trials for girls and boys in their respective communities. These local meets are one of the most important aspects of the program because they attract and introduce participants to the program.

All first place winners from the Local Meets will advance to State Final Meet which is held on June 7, 2008 in Gulfport, Mississippi. State winners are eligible for selection Region Teams that receive all-expense-paid trips to the program's National Final, held in August in Hershey, Pennsylvania on Thursday, July 31- Sunday, August 3, 2008. Because the Hershey Youth Program is a playground, each state is guaranteed at least five positions on its Regional Team. Last year five athletes from Mississippi were selected to represent our State.

If your community is interested in this program or have any questions, please contact Larry Davis at [ldavis@ci.gulfport.ms.us](mailto:ldavis@ci.gulfport.ms.us) / 228-868-5889.

## Excellence at a Public Tennis Facility: Ridgeland Tennis Center

The Ridgeland Tennis Center in Ridgeland, MS recently was awarded the Mississippi Tennis Association's (MTA) Member Organization of the Year Award. What does this mean, you might ask? Each year the MTA asks tennis players, pros and facilities to nominate individuals, facilities and professional teachers and coaches for special awards. The category for Member Organization of the Year is awarded to a USTA Member Organization in recognition of outstanding service to the local community, to the organization members and to the game of tennis. Ridgeland Tennis Center most definitely qualifies in all areas as the winner of this award.

This tennis facility has 17 hard courts and is the largest public facility in the state. During the past eight years that Cheryl Harris and Susan Toler have been the sole directors of the facility, they have made outstanding progress in promoting tennis for all age groups by being responsive to the needs of the local community, The MTA, The Southern Tennis

Association and the USTA. Ridgeland Tennis Center has earned the enviable reputation for hosting well run junior tournaments and their efforts have paid off. Among the tournaments they have been awarded are: USTA National Open for the Girl's 16s, The BullFrog USTA Southern Section Designated for the 6<sup>th</sup> straight year, Aquafina MS Junior Open Championship and the MS Cabot Lodge Junior Qualifying Closed Championships. In addition to these highly rated junior tournaments, Ridgeland Tennis Center has also hosted two additional junior tournaments, two Novice tournaments and four NTRP Adult tournaments, one of which is a benefit tournament.

Ridgeland Tennis Center is home to a USTA Junior Team Tennis Program. Between this program and the summer camps over one hundred young people who were totally new to the game of tennis became members of the USTA in 2007.

What does this mean to other Mississippi Parks and Recreation Departments? The MTA is here to assist you in any way needed to help you establish quality Adult and Junior Programs at your facility. The USTA programs are organized at the local level with the help of local volunteers and Local League Coordinators that work closely with the MTA office in Jackson. Facilities that run USTA programs can apply for grants from the MTA to help get the programs running and receive assistance for MTA Staff to come to their facility and put on special events to promote these programs. For more information you can go to [www.mstennis.com](http://www.mstennis.com) or call 601-981-4421.

## Aquafina Pitch Hit and Run (Formerly known as Pepsi Pitch, Hit & Run)

MRPA members are encouraged to Host the Official Skills Competition of Major League Baseball & provide the opportunity of a lifetime for the youngsters in your community!

Register to host a local event at [www.mlb.com/phr](http://www.mlb.com/phr)

- It's a **FREE** and easily administered 1-day event
- Can be hosted on a baseball diamond or any open field
- Open to boys & girls ages 7 to 14
- Only takes a handful of volunteers to organize the local competition
- 4 levels of competition – Local, Sectional, Team Championship & National Finals
  - Local: Hosted one day in March, April or early May

- Sectional: All Local winners advance to a Sectional in their area
- Team Championship: The top scorers are eligible to compete in a Major League Stadium & be recognized in a pre-game ceremony
- National Finals: Top scores nationwide earn an all-expense paid trip to the MLB All-Star Game to compete in the National Finals competition

Please visit [www.mlb.com/phr](http://www.mlb.com/phr) to register to host a Local Competition. Upon registration of your local event, you will be sent an administrative kit with a handbook, promotional posters, registration forms, award ribbons, etc. Also visit [www.nrpa.org/mlb](http://www.nrpa.org/mlb) for more information on how your participation in Pitch, Hit & Run makes you eligible for the Double Play Grant.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me (**Bennett Mayfield, MLB Pitch, Hit & Run National Headquarters, 678.994.0106 direct**). I look forward to your participation in Pitch, Hit & Run. Don't let the youngsters in your community miss out on this opportunity!

## MUSCO: MRPA Platinum Sponsor

*Leigh Ann Mallory  
City of Tupelo Parks and Recreation*

MRPA is pleased to announce that we have secured our first platinum sponsor for our 2008 conference in Vicksburg, MS. The sponsor has placed their name on our annual awards program held to recognize our hard working park and recreation agencies. Having a sponsor of this caliber will place a brighter spotlight on our existing awards banquet and program. The importance of this banquet is to assist departments in showcasing all of their successful programming over the past year.

The 2008 Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation banquet is now proudly sponsored by Musco Lighting and will be held September 17, 2008. Partnering with Musco will allow us to take our awards program to a new level. We are grateful for their sponsorship and look forward to many years of partnering to move recreation forward in Mississippi.

Speaking with Jason McNatt on Musco's sponsorship, he said,

"Musco is a sponsor of the MRPA and we believe it is important to partner with our state park and recreation associations. We do this because it is the associations that assist its members to develop programs of excellence for it's citizens."

Jason went on to say;

"Part of our mission at Musco is to assist park associations as they work to design and develop high performance facilities that are efficient to operate and maintain. We are proud to sponsor the MRPA 2008 Awards of Excellence in Park and Recreation banquet in Vicksburg."

F. Lamar Evans, Editor  
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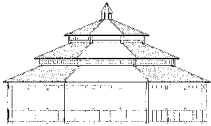
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