

Forum Update

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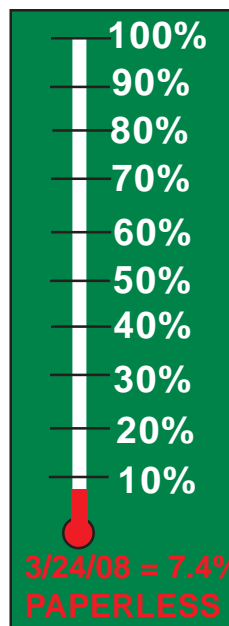
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President's Message MRPA GOES GREEN

*Don Lewis,
Tupelo Department of Parks and Recreation*

The MRPA Awards Committee is now accepting nominations for the 2008 Awards. The purpose of the Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation is to honor the state's outstanding park and recreation agencies. The program gives state wide recognition to communities for excellence in long range planning, fiscal resource management, citizen support systems preservation, program planning, professional development, age special populations.

The Awards are open to all municipal and county park and recreation agencies who are members in good standing with MRPA. The deadline for nominations is August 1, 2008. Nomination packets are available on line at www.aboutmrpa.org. The committee looks forward to an abundant number of nominations from around our state. The winners of all awards will be announced at the MRPA Annual Convention and Trade Show in Vicksburg, Mississippi. The annual Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation banquet, sponsored by **Musco Lighting**, will be held on September 17, 2008.



MRPA State Athletic Committee

The first annual MRPA Soccer Tournament sponsored by Mississippi Youth Soccer Association was recently held in Tupelo on March 1-2, 2008. The 2008 Tupelo Spring Classic was hosted by Tupelo Youth Soccer Association and consisted of teams from Brandon, Pearl, Starkville, Amory, Pontotoc, Saltillo, Tupelo, Southaven, and a few from out of state for a total of 44 teams. With the success of this 'recreational only' tournament, TYSA sent a check for \$1,100 to MRPA. Thanks to Alex Farned, SAC Soccer Coordinator, for all of your hard work.

Future tournament series events for the State Athletic Committee include Youth Softball and Tennis. Softball, both Fast-pitch and Slow-pitch, will be held at Shiloh Park in Brandon on Saturday, May 17. This tournament, as with all of our tournament series events, will be for recreational/league teams only and will be sponsored by ASA Softball.

The SAC is looking to add additional sports for the 2009 year. We will also be sending out bid applications to host 2009 tournament series events in the near future. For more information regarding the SAC tournament series, you may contact any of the following coordinators:

Lee Pickett, SAC Chairman & SAC Softball Coordinator
lpickett@ci.brandon.ms.us

Thanks to our sponsors. MYSA, ASA, and USTA:

Alex Farned, SAC Soccer Coordinator
afarned@ci.tupelo.ms.us

Amy Williams, SAC Tennis Coordinator
awilliams@ci.tupelo.ms.us



S.W.A.C. Tennis in Jackson

City of Jackson just hosted the Southwest athletic conference Tennis East-West Round-up. Matches were played at the City 3 Tennis centers with 9 teams (men's and Ladies) competing for the Championship. Southern University goes undefeated in the Men's matches with Jackson State finishing 2nd. In the Ladies Matches, Southern University also wins with Prairie View ladies coming at number 2. This event was a great success and it looks as if the City of Jackson will become home to this event in the future.

The City of Jackson will be hosting 34 Men's and Ladies' slow pitch softball tournaments this year. Tournaments will begin play in March and will complete in October with the Mississippi State High School Girls State Slow Pitch Championship Games. Softball associations that use the V.A.-LEIGION Complex are A.S.A., U.S.S.S.A., I.S.A., and N.S.A.

Sign-up for the adult softball leagues are underway in the Capitol City of Jackson. Teams can join the various leagues for men's slow pitch, ladies' slow pitch and co-ed play. The City of Jackson charges \$350.00 for teams to join our programs that run from April until August. This year or leagues will be playing by U.S.S.S.A. rules and regulations. The City of Jackson welcomes all teams through out the Central Mississippi area to join our softball leagues.

Infant Swim Testimonial

Submitted by: Jala Ozbirn, Infant Swimming Resource Certified Instructor

MRPA encourages all Parks & Recreation Departments who have aquatic facilities the need for infant swim resource instructors. Tupelo Parks & Recreation and the Tupelo Aquatic Club have a couple of instructors who offer this program at one of our aquatic facilities year round. We have offered this program for two years and the results are astonishing. We are providing highly effective one-on-one instruction for ages 6 months to 6 years. Infant Swimming Resource is the product of over 39 years of ongoing development in the area of aquatic survival instruction. Drowning ranks as the second most prominent cause of accidental death for children under the age of 4 in the United States. These are needless tragedies. Babies as young as 6 months can save themselves from a fall into the water. I wanted to share with you this story from Larry and Karri in Magnolia, TX:

Our 14 month old son finished his ISR classes in February. This Saturday, our whole family was outside playing. I went into the house to cook dinner and my husband stayed out with the children. At one point, our oldest daughter walked away from my husband and told him she was going inside. My 14 month old followed her. My husband thought she knew he followed her, she didn't. In the beginning of my sons ISR classes, he had a certain cry when

he was being trained in the water. It wasn't his normal cry. It sounded like he was saying "I don't like being in this water!" As I stood there in my kitchen, I recognized that specific cry. I ran out the back door and found my son floating in our very cold pool, with perfect ISR form, fully clothed in two layers of clothing, a very wet diaper, and tennis shoes. I reached in the water and picked him up (he was close to the edge) and he didn't even cough. He accidentally fell in that cold pool and automatically remembered what he was taught....so much so that he didn't swallow one bit of water! We dried him off, warmed him up...and he was perfectly fine.

Since yesterday, I have been just staring at my baby in amazement. In the full knowledge that had we not made the sacrifices we did to get him water trained, he would be dead right now. None of us heard him fall in that pool, we only heard him cry. We would not have heard that cry had he not been taught the self rescue technique. My heart aches for other parents who have lost babies to water accidents. ISR's goal to ensure "that not one more child drowns" was fulfilled today. I strongly encourage everyone who has children to make whatever sacrifices are necessary to make your baby water safe. This program works, our son is L-I-V-I-N-G proof! And a huge thank you to his instructors, Bonnie and Becky!

For more information go to: www.infantswim.com

BOARD REMINDER

Our April meeting will be held via webconference. Check your e-mail for log-in instructions and passwords.

Registration Information on the Member News Page at www.aboutmrpa.org/:

MRPA Awards Applications - Due August 1, 2008

MRPA Golf Tournament ~ April 9, 2008
City of Oxford, MRPA: \$200 Hole Sponsorship, \$220 Team

MRPA Softball Tournament ~ May 17, 2008
City of Brandon, MRPA: \$225 Fast-Pitch, \$200 Slow-Pitch

Inclusion Conference Registration ~ June 12 & June 13, 2008
University of Southern Mississippi: \$75 registration fee

Operation TLC2 : Order form & NRPA Guidelines

2008 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) Survey

Aquafina Pitch, Hit, and Run~Locals in March-April 2008

Parks and Recreation Issues Get Top Billing: National Legislative Forum

Gives Voice to Top Health, Environmental Issues

Over 400 park and recreation leaders and advocates joined forces in Washington March 12-14 to learn more about the critical funding issues facing the parks and recreation industry and to take their case to Capitol Hill for a day of meetings with members of Congress and their staff. As a result of these meetings, NRPA members were able to obtain commitments from several key legislators who pledged to work for the advancement of specific appropriation and legislative measures.

The National Legislative Forum on Parks and Recreation provides an opportunity each year to focus national attention on the top priorities for funding and for advancing the nation's health and environmental agendas, with specific impact on the places and spaces Americans enjoy in their own communities. This year, delegates carried some critical messages to Capitol Hill:

- that funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – a critical resource for land acquisition and preservation at the local level – is in danger, threatening the good work of local governments to protect natural resources.
- that America's cities desperately need Congress to reauthorize the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act (UPARR), which provides federal support to improve urban park systems and create more and better places for people to recreate close to home.
- That passage of the Play Every Day Act will help identify the gaps in our communities' recreational offerings so that we can provide America's children and youth with adequate opportunities for physical activity.
- that passage of the No Child Left Inside Act would allow states to create environmental literacy programs and help to eliminate the "nature deficit" in America's youth.

The educational portion of the 2008 National Legislative forum provided attendees with insider information from well known champions of parks and recreation as well as political analysts. The event opened with remarks from Lyle Laverty, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks at the U.S. Department of the Interior. Later in the day, Congressman Jim Clyburn (D-SC-6) spoke to the delegates before receiving the National Recreation and Park Association's National Congressional Award. And the day closed with former U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers speaking to the delegates and introducing nationally-known political analyst Larry Sabato, who provided an assessment of the current American political landscape.

The following day, after a series of visits to congressional offices, delegates celebrated their accomplishments and honored Senator Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Representative Mary Bono (R-CA-45), Representative Ray LaHood (R-IL-18) and Representative Mark Udall (D-CO-2) as recipients of the National Congressional Award.

More details can be found on the activities and events taking place last week at the [National Legislative Forum Blog](#).

MRPA Members on Paperless Membership

Each member who chooses to become a paperless member through the online form has the opportunity to tell us why. Here are a few comments MRPA would like to share:

Nature is what makes this country unique. -
Monica Denmark-Thomas 3/19/08

I went paperless because I am going green.
Tiffany 3/17/08

The President's comments reminded me that this could be a small but important way to save money for MRPA and do my part in "going green."

Thank you for deciding to do this. - Jan Cossitt,
Clinton Parks & Recreation 3/11/08

I work best by email. In my position I receive nothing but paperwork. Email allows me to go back periodically and check what I still need to do. -
Cheryl Bell,
Biloxi Parks & Recreation Superintendent 2/11/08

Visit www.aboutmrpa.org to go paperless. Are you one of over 260 members not receiving association e-mail updates but not yet ready to join our paperless members? Send your name to info@aboutmrpa.org, and we'll update your profile! Over 60% of MRPA members do not have a current e-mail address on profile. These members do not receive weekly newsbites containing important P&R updates. Please take advantage of this MRPA service by reviewing and correcting information on your renewal application each year.

MRPA State Championship Series - Soccer

Hosted by Tupelo Department of Parks and Recreation and Tupelo Youth Soccer Association

The Tupelo Department of Parks and Recreation, Tupelo Youth Soccer Association, and Mississippi Soccer Association are excited to announce that our first ever MRPA soccer tournament was a success. Tupelo Youth Soccer Association combined their Tupelo Spring Classic, and the MRPA Championship Series to play this tournament on March 1-2, 2008 and had forty four teams participate. These teams came from Brandon, Pearl, Starkville, Amory, Pontotoc, Slatton, Tupelo, Southaven, and even a couple came from out of state.

The success of this tournament enabled Tupelo Youth Soccer Association to send MRPA a check for \$1,100. With the success of this year's tournament, TYSA is planning for next year's tournament to be even larger. For more information on this tournament call 662-841-6440.

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