

Forum Update

Official Publication of the Mississippi Recreation & Park Association

VOLUME 20

ISSUE 6

JUNE 2007



2006/07 MRPA Board of Directors

President

Michael Taggart

President-Elect

Don Lewis

Secretary/Treasurer

Ann Jones

SRC Representative

Bubba Robinson

MTRA Representative

Kristin Brownlee

Immediate Past President

Michelle Burrell

District Representatives:

District One

Al Rayburn

District Two

Wendy Bourdin

District Three

Terry Reid

District Four

David D'Aquilla



September 10-13
Tupelo, MS

Awards Committee Reviews Award Categories

The MRPA Awards Committee is considering making some changes to the statewide awards program. The purpose of the changes would be to make the awards more competitive based on populations served. For a number of years, award nominations received from smaller departments have been decreasing. By tying the award categories to the population served, smaller departments will compete with smaller departments, etc.

The Awards Committee's plans are not yet finalized but preliminary discussions would break the population into the following categories. Category One would consist of communities serving a population between 0 and 20,000. Category Two would consist of communities serving a population between 20,001 and 50,000 and Category Three would consist of a population base of 50,001 and above.

Another change in the Awards Program that is being planned this year is the introduction of a new award category. The "District of the Year" award will be given to the District that helps promote and increase participation at the 2007 MRPA Live, Laugh, and Learn Together Conference to be held in Tupelo. The competition will be based on the following categories:

- Number of District Agencies attending the convention
- Total dollars raised through convention sponsorships
- Number of agencies submitting award nominations

Points will be awarded for the above categories and the district with the most points will be awarded "District of the Year." The District of the Year will receive a plaque and a credit for up to \$500 from MRPA to be used at a district function.

It is the Award Committee's hope that this award will create a little friendly competition between the districts and help get more people involved at our annual conference. Watch your newsletter and the website for more details as these plans continue to be discussed.

Tupelo Parks and Recreation Install LifeTrail

The weight loss goals of many citizens in Tupelo just got a little boost by the installation of an outdoor fitness system in Ballard Park. The LifeTrail equipment that was installed in late March has been getting heavy usage along the existing walking trails. The 10 station equipment set is designed to give a whole body workout to the individuals in a circuit training type setup. The exercises include opportunities for stretching, upper and lower body warm-ups, and ways to improve balance and stability. Each tri-paneled station has educational information as well as two phases of resistance, for both the beginner and advanced users.

In design, the system is geared to older adults, but anyone is welcome to exercise using the LifeTrail system. We all need to increase our levels of physical activity and with the addition of this system, it will be readily available and affordable to all. Use of the equipment is completely free of charge. Since its



installation, individuals have been taking advantage of the free fitness opportunity. This addition is one step in the right direction towards increasing awareness of health and well-being in our community. With the growing problem of obesity we are making an attempt to provide at least one solution to a complex issue.

Tupelo Parks and Recreation was able to purchase the equipment for Ballard Park with a \$25,000 grant from the North Mississippi Medical Center. The department recently secured a second grant of \$25,000 from BlueCross BlueShield for a second LifeTrail system to be installed in Veteran's Park in East Tupelo planned the Fall.

Claiborne County Fitness Trail

Claiborne County Parks Commission is in the final stages of completing their ½ mile trail project. The project began with a Recreational Trails Grant through the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks. The concept of installing a trail was to locate it in a centralized populated area. This was achieved by incorporating the trail around the well established senior citizen activity center.

The trail project was designed by Williford, Gearheart and Knight engineering firm of Hazlehurst, MS, with the bulk of the foundation work being performed by the Claiborne County Road Department. The tasks performed were vital to the completion of the trail. They laid out the trail, set the base and assisted with clean up. APAC of Mississippi was contracted to do all asphalt work which consisted of pouring the trail and overlaying the parking lot. The landscaping is the final component being installed. Numerous magnolias, azaleas and boxwoods are planted to give the space a natural feel and add some color to enhance the aesthetic.

Approximately 150 people utilize the trail daily. Activities engaged range from walking and jogging to bicycle riding and roller blading. The trail truly is a multiuse facility. The fitness trail offers sheltered benches and drinking fountains at various locations along the trail for individuals who need a place to rest. This trail is designed to encourage all segments of the population to begin or continue an activity program. So far there have been many positive comments from the community, and based on the daily usage of the facility, citizens are backing up their words.

NRPA Advocacy Scores Significant Victory for LWCF Funding

Just prior to the Memorial Day Recess, the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee approved the fiscal 2007 Interior-Environment Appropriations bill on a voice vote. Although only limited information was available from

the Committee staff, park and recreation advocates will be heartened to know that for the first time in three years, the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee approved funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund state assistance program. Even better news is that the subcommittee recommended \$50 million for 2008, a \$20 million increase over the funding level of 2007 and 2006.

The Interior Appropriations spending bill funds the Department of the Interior, EPA, the Forest Service, and other federal land-managing agencies.

Although the total appropriations bill was cut \$753 million from 2007 levels to \$25.7 billion, total discretionary funding was increased by 4.5%. Included is \$199 million for the Centennial Initiative which will begin a ten-year investment in America's National Parks as the 100 year anniversary of the National Park System approaches in 2016.

The House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee approved \$268 million in total LWCF funding for 2008, which includes federal land acquisition activities and state assistance, as well as Forest Legacy grants.

The President's proposed budget, released in February of this year planned zero funding for LWCF for the third consecutive year and planned to terminate this program. Advocates have been tirelessly educating Members of Congress on the importance of this 50/50 matching grant program in the development of local public recreation resources.

This action by the House Interior Appropriations subcommittee is just the first step in a chain of actions to approve a final appropriations bill for 2008. Advocates should monitor the progress of the Appropriations bills in both the House and the Senate, and continue to voice support for this vital program as the appropriations process continues. Please look for Breaking News alerts and regular Dateline Online Legislative Updates over the next few months, as the appropriations process continues.

For additional information contact NRPA Public Policy at 202-887-0290, or email mphillips@nrpa.org.

Rotary Helps Recreation

Rotary International members have contributed more than \$11 million in relief efforts along the Mississippi and Louisiana coasts since Katrina visited our shores in August 2005. Assistance from Rotary came in many forms, but the actual dollar contributions totaled \$11 million.

The City of Long Beach was given just over \$10,000 toward the purchase of a senior citizen bus. The Slidell Senior Citizen Center was given \$45,000 for the purchase of a van and also received \$52,000 for roof repairs. Another project funded by Rotary International was the construction of an \$85,000 playground project in Biloxi. The playground offered play equipment for the disabled and has wellness stations. The very first Rotary project in the park was their "potty in the park" project. The Rotary Club of Jonesboro, Arkansas has committed to help build a multimillion dollar community center in Bay St. Louis.

The center will be constructed across from the Old Depot. The first \$50,000 installment has been used to do the architectural work on the project. If you'd like to learn more about this project or make a contribution, visit www.baystlouisrotary.com.

Health and Livability Summit

The First Annual Health and Livability Summit was held in Atlanta April 17 – 19, 2007. Some 200 participants came together from across the nation to discuss issues related to our community's health and the livability of communities nationwide. This summit was put together by NRPA and Centers for Disease Control to address this most pressing issue in today's society. Three members of Mississippi Recreation and Park Association attended the summit. They were Michelle Burrell of Claiborne County, Richard Ellis of City of Grenada, and Kenneth McMullen of City of Holly Springs.

Inspired by a keynote address from Dr. Howard Frumkin of CDC, the summit was off to an exciting start. He spoke on the role parks and recreation play in moving our communities toward a healthier nation. His talk was accompanied by a humorous, yet enlightening power point presentation. Several topics were discussed during the summit such as environmental effects on our nation's health, community design, strategies for promoting health, and the economics of a healthy/livable community. With such a wide range of topics, it was sometimes difficult to choose a single session. Since this was the case for many, a CD with all sessions was distributed to each registered participant.

The summit offered great networking opportunities with professionals from similar circumstances and population densities. The education sessions provided ample opportunity to hear proven ideas and strategies as well as discussion possibilities. Professionals from corporate America, the medical community, and the field of parks and recreation came together to share ideas to move our nation toward a healthier future. This kind of collaboration will continue to be necessary if we are to reach the goal of a healthier population.

NRPA Dues Increases

The National Recreation and Park Association has announced that the dues increases approved by the Board of Trustees several months ago, will take effect on July 1. NRPA members will continue to receive a complimentary subscription to Parks & Recreation magazine, specialized Branches and Sections, member rates for conferences, education opportunities, publications and other resources, full access to NRPA Research Database, Career Center and NRPA.net, a 24/7 online listserv for information sharing, participation in the National Awards Programs, access to NRPA's new online supplier search engine NRPA Supply Chair, as well as other add-on benefits such as insurance coverage, travel, and rental card discounts.

Beginning July 1 Professional member rates will be \$135. Retired rates, for persons that have retired from parks and recreation, will be \$62. For all Citizen Advocates, including those who serve on park and recreation boards or advisory councils in elected or appointed civic roles such as commissioners, mayors, town council members, and citizen volunteers, NRPA's annual membership dues will be \$57. The Associate membership rate will be \$135 which covers individuals not professionally employed in the field but associated with it in some way.

Special package rates will also be available beginning in July. An Agency Package rate of \$510 allows three professional members and up to ten citizen board members. Other professional members within the same agency can purchase professional membership for \$90.

A Group Package of \$310 includes up to three professional members working in agencies or other environments, such as universities, colleges, military base installations, hospitals, etc.

Industry suppliers of park and recreation products and services can join as a Corporate member for a \$505 annual fee.

For more information or to receive a membership application, contact Membership Services at (800) 626-6772 or by email at membership@nrpa.org

Laugh, Live, and Learn – Experience MRPA **2007 Convention** **September 10-13** **Tupelo, MS**

BancorpSouth Conference Center
Host Hotel: Hilton Garden Inn Tupelo
Prize package for the district with most attendees

F. Lamar Evans, Editor
Forum Update
P.O. Box 16451
Hattiesburg, MS 39404-6451
Voice (601) 582-3361
Fax (601) 582-3354
Email info@aboutmrpa.org

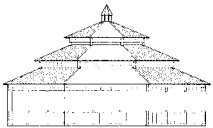
NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Hattiesburg, MS
Permit #70

Affiliated with:

*Mississippi Amateur
Softball Association*



poligon[®]
PARK ARCHITECTURE



Hammill & Associates, Inc.

2104 Chapel Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35216
205/979-6616 Fax: 205/979-8530
1-800-423-6661

www.hammill.net tomhammill@hammill.net



Cindy Jefcoat
Project Manager
Mississippi Territory

Phone: 601-624 KIDS (5437)
Fax: 601-939-0652
email: crj@jefcoatfence.com
www.miracle-recreation.com

**JEFCOAT RECREATION AND
CONSTRUCTION**

Howard Sommer Co.

9333 Breakstone Cove, Collierville, TN 38017
PO Box 17573, Memphis, TN 38187
Veteran Owned - Established 1961

RECREATION:

Playground Equipment • Fibar Playground Safety Surfacing
Fitness Courses • Skateboard Ramps • Shade Structures
Bleachers • Bicycle Racks • Sports Backstops & Goals

FURNITURE

PVC Coated Over Steel • Tables • Benches • Trash Receptacles
• Planters • Heavy Duty Wood Tables & Benches
with Steel Frames • Charcoal Grills

Phone: 901-753-1911 - FAX: 901-753-1083

Mississippi Grass Nursery

We plant fresh, top quality sprigs using our precision
equipment on athletic fields of all kinds in Mississippi
and surrounding states.

Our grasses include MS Pride, MS Express, and
MS Supreme, Tifway 419, Tifway II, and Tifdwarf
and Centipede sod.

117 Highway 49 • Hattiesburg, MS 39402
888-268-9888 • FAX: 601-264-8773

QUALITY TURF FOR THE GULF SOUTH