

# Forum Update

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## Parks and Recreation Health Promotion Legislation

This Spring two ground-breaking legislative initiatives have come to fruition encouraging active and healthy communities through parks and recreation. NRPA is committed to advancing opportunities for healthy lifestyles and livable communities for all Americans. Public parks and recreation plays a critical role in facilitating community wellness and quality of life.

The Play Every Day Bill (H.R. 2045 and S. 651) helps promote the national recommendation of physical activity to kids, families, and communities across the country. The bill supports the development of a well-validated community assessment tool, a "community play index" that can measure the policy, program or environmental barriers in communities to youth participating in physical activity.

The "Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity (IMPACT) Act" (H.R. 2677) addresses the growing public health problem of increasing rates of obesity, being overweight, and eating disorders, as well as the related serious chronic conditions. Due to its multifaceted nature, the bill takes a broad approach to avoid relying on a single solution to this complex problem.

Specifically, the grants fund community organizations **and now Park and Recreation agencies too** to conduct a variety of activities, which have demonstrated some benefit for curbing obesity, being overweight, and eating disorders. These programs focus on providing specific community interventions, school-based activities, and health care delivery system programs, while focusing on education, outreach, and interventional techniques. This program is authorized for \$60 million in FY08.

## National Playground Safety Institute Course

NRPA and the Arkansas Park and Recreation Association are offering the National Playground Safety Institute on August 20 -21, 2007, with the exam date set for August 22. The registration deadline for the course is July 20 and the course will be offered in Little Rock, AR. To register or to get more information, call (501) 416-6700.

## Clinton to Host National ASA Tournaments

The City of Clinton will host the 2007 ASA Girl's 10 and Under Slow Pitch National Championship on July 26 - 29 at the Traceway Park. The entry deadline for the July tournament is July 20. On August 2 - 5 the department will also host the ASA Girl's Southern Class B 16 and Under Fast Pitch National Championship. The registration deadline for the August tournament is July 27. For more information contact Ray Holloway's office by calling (601) 924-6082.

## Ocean Springs Recreation Booming

The Ocean Springs Parks Director, Sean Campbell, is proud to announce that the Ocean Springs Parks & Leisure Services is in the midst of an extensive long-range plan that will enhance and upgrade several existing parks and facilities. The plan will also build desperately needed facilities to serve the city's growing recreational programs. Plans include a 120 acre sports complex project located off Highway 57 that has been in the planning stages for nearly a decade. State permits have finally been acquired and a referendum on a Food and Beverage tax on restaurants



and bars is anticipated later this year. If the tax is approved, it will fund the construction. Other major projects included in the long range plan include a Multi-Purpose Recreational Center, a skate park, a swimming pool, and a state-of-the-art tennis facility.

Current improvements to be completed this year with funds set aside by the Mayor and Board of Alderman include two new walking tracks, resurfacing 5 outdoor tennis courts and 2 basketball courts, new fencing, and several new playground units with rubberized surfaces.

A feature project in progress includes a complete park renovation including a 2,000 square foot zero depth spray park and a new playground. Several ball fields will receive new vinyl coated fencing, scoreboards, and new natural turf playing surfaces. "We are doing everything we can to utilize these funds to provide facilities and amenities that the residents of Ocean Springs can be proud of," says Campbell. "It is really exciting---from new playgrounds and equipment to sports field upgrades, new walking tracks, and spray parks. There is something for everybody." You can see samples of the long-range plan by visiting [www.OceanSprings-MS.gov](http://www.OceanSprings-MS.gov).

## **HERSHEY'S FastTrack to Sports**

This skill development curriculum was designed for use in Park and Recreation after school and summer camp programs. The first 100 agencies to respond and register, will be accepted as pilot agencies and be given the opportunity to implement this program in the fall.

**HERSHEY'S FastTrack to Sports** was developed by legendary athletes such as Carl Lewis, Rafer Johnson, Bruce Jenner and Michael Johnson, as well as leading coaches in the field of youth sports development. Hershey's own Leroy Galloway helped develop this curriculum to include the fun in fundamental motor skill development. The skills included in this curriculum will help participants develop the strength, coordination and balance needed for track and field as well as numerous other sports. Included in the program kit is:

- **A Starter Guide** for Coaches/Leaders-to provide a description of the skills necessary to master track and field events which can lead to success in many other sports. Skills are introduced sequentially for ease of mastery.
- **Teaching Cards** to provide quick tips for coaching and cueing participants
- **An instructional DVD**
- **Trading Cards** with tips from Track and Field Legends. These are great incentives to give to your participants!

Agencies selected to participate in this program will be asked to implement the curriculum in their after school programs during the fall. Each agency will be expected to complete a process evaluation in November to provide Hershey's and NRPA with feedback on the new curriculum. Contact NRPA if you are interested.

**Visit [www.aboutmrpa.org](http://www.aboutmrpa.org), click on "members" and review the new Award Nomination Categories.**

## **West Nile is Back**

The first West Nile virus death of the season was reported on June 7<sup>th</sup>. The Mississippi Department of Health reported that a Madison county resident, previously reported as testing positive for the virus had died. So far this year, four confirmed cases have been reported. They've been in Walthall, Lawrence, Scott, and Madison counties.

West Nile is most prevalent in middle to late summer. Make sure you and your employees and family members are aware of the dangers of this deadly disease and how they can protect themselves against infection. Workers outside should keep the correct mosquito spray handy and apply it often. It's always better to stay indoors in the early morning and late evening periods, when mosquitoes are busiest.

## **NFL Youth Football Grant**

The NFL Youth Football Fund (YFF) and NRPA announce the availability of the 2007 Local Agency Grant Program. The NFL Youth Football Fund is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization founded by the national Football League and the NFL Players Association. The YFF seeks to use football as a catalyst to promote positive youth development and also ensure the health of grassroots football in future generations. Local Agency Grants typically range between \$1,000 and \$5,000 and are intended to be used for football programming, scholarships for undeserved audiences, safety equipment, training for coaches and officials, etc. The deadline to submit applications is Friday, July 20, 2007 at 5:00 p.m. Call NRPA National Partnerships at 703-858-2163 for more information.

## **HERSHEY State Meet**

The state program was very successful this year; there were five new communities (Columbia; Oxford; Lafayette; Byhalia, and Ocean Springs) participating in this program. We had a total of one hundred and seventy-eight participants. The following young men and women are first place finishers and broke the state record in their event this year.

In the Softball Throw (13-14 boys) Senquez Golson of Pascagoula threw 239'-9". In the 100 M Dash (9-10 boys) Cameron Shoemo of Pascagoula ran it in 0:14.2. In the 400 M Dash (11-12 boys) A'Darius Steele of Gulfport ran it in 1:06.00. There were forty-six first place winners, who will be submitted to the regional office where all times are compared to the other states winners in Region 4. The individuals with the best time are usually selected to attend the National Hershey Track and Field event.

A special thanks to the Biloxi Parks & Recreation Department for their support. Thanks also to these individuals for their assistance: Cheryl Bell of Biloxi Parks and Recreation, Bo Cole of Pascagoula Parks and Recreation, Samuel Miller Jr. of Jackson Parks and Recreation, John North, Jr. of Ridgeland Parks and Recreation, Karen Harveston of Brookhaven Parks and Recreation, Manyln Barnes of Oxford Parks Commission, and Harry Williams of Ocean Springs Department of Leisure Services.

Metamorphic

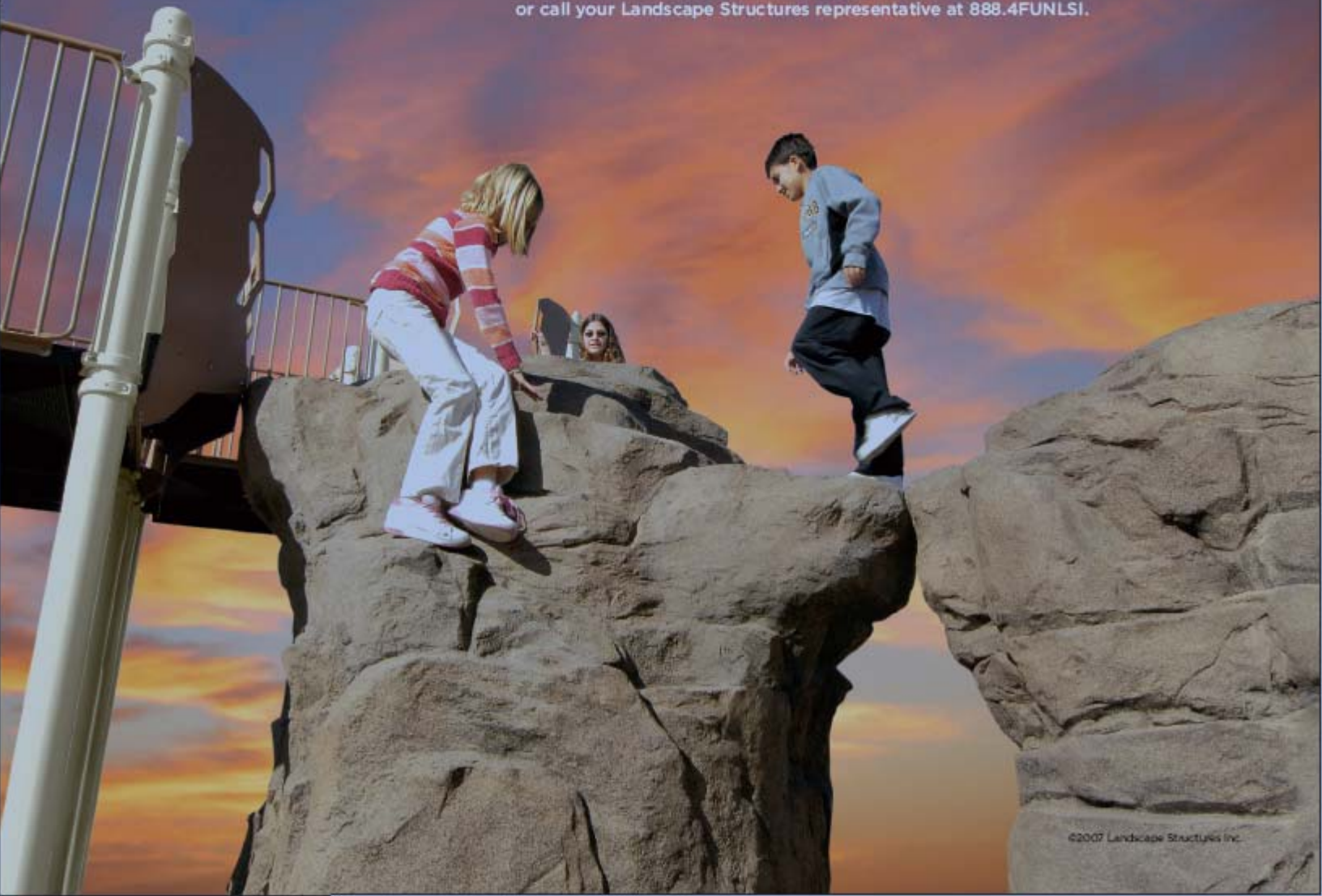
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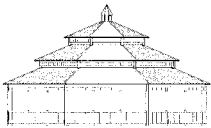
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