

Forum Update

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President's Message There Are Heroes Among Us

Don Lewis, Tupelo Department of Parks & Recreation

We are always looking for Heroes in our lives... this year could be your opportunity to be someone's Hero by volunteering or getting more involved in MRPA. We, as professionals in our field, have something to offer that can make a difference in MRPA. This year's conference was a big success because of our Heroes! Next year's conference in Vicksburg can be even better with your help.

The MRPA Board met on Thursday September 13th to discuss our goals for the coming year. The three major goals are:

- Increase Participation at the annual MRPA Conference
- Increase involvement with MRPA by expanding the roles of standing committees
- Expand awareness of MRPA among public officials and legislators

If you are already involved with MRPA at the local, district, or state level, thank you for your help. If you are interested in being a Hero, please contact a District or State representative and volunteer today. I look forward to working with all of you to make our association stronger.

Conference Host Proposals Now Due

If your agency is interested in hosting either the 2009 or the 2010 MRPA Annual Conference and Trade Show you have until October 15, 2007 to submit your host proposals. Proposals should be complete with proposed room rates, letters of invitation from agency officials, meeting room provisions, and any social events that your agency plans to provide during the delegates visit to your area. Visit the MRPA website at www.aboutmrpa.org, click on the Conferences tab and you can find a conference resume and other information necessary to assist you in completing the host proposal. If you do not have access to the internet, please call the office a (601) 582-3361 and request that a host proposal be mailed to you. Don't hesitate. The board plans to make site selection announcements at the October 23 - 24 board meeting.

WANTED:

Your views on youth sports for national study

The National Alliance For Youth Sports (NAYS) is conducting a national study on youth sports, and we want to hear from you.

Please visit its Web site at www.nays.org and simply click on the red link at the top of the page to participate in the study, which takes just a few minutes to complete.

The study poses questions on topics that are relevant to organized youth sports, such as the quality of coaching that kids are receiving, background checks, All-Star teams, violence and physical fitness, among others.

Your insight matters, so please take a moment to respond today.



Athletic Committee Update

Three sponsors for the MRPA Recreational State Tournament Series for 2007/2008 have been secured. They are the Mississippi Soccer Association, the United States Tennis Association of Southern Mississippi, and the Mississippi Amateur Softball Association.

The tennis tournament will be hosted by Tupelo Parks and Recreation and will be held October 19 - 21, 2007. The soccer tournament will be hosted by Tupelo Parks and Recreation and will be held October 20 - 21, 2007. The softball tournament will be hosted by Brandon Parks and Recreation and will be held on May 17, 2008.

If your community is interested in hosting future tournaments or if you'd like to register a team for one of the upcoming tournaments, please contact Lee Pickett, Director of Athletics at Brandon Parks and Recreation by calling him at (601) 825-3047 or by e-mail at lpickett@ci.brandon.ms.us.

The goal of the MRPA State Athletic Committee is to help develop teams and individuals through the MRPA State Recreational Tournament Series by encouraging sportsmanship, leadership and perseverance. The committee is committed to building relationships among all current and future MRPA agency members through competition and communication. Your involvement will help the organization achieve these goals and is a sign of your commitment to MRPA and your profession.

Houston Racquet Club Crisis

A 4-year-old boy drowned in a swimming pool at the Houston, Texas, Racquet Club recently. The child was rushed to a local hospital but was pronounced dead upon arrival. It appears that the boy was participating in a children's summer camp at the club. The club advertises two pools with trained lifeguards on duty.

CPS (the Texas equivalent of Mississippi's DHS) ruled that the camp should have been licensed as a day care but was not. Shortly after that ruling it was announced that the club and ten counselors/lifeguards were negligent in the death.

2007 Golf Tournament Winners

Longest Drive – Ricky Hawthorne
Richland Park & Rec.

Closest to the Pin – Michelle Burrell
Clairborne County Park & Rec.

Winning Team – Tupelo Youth Soccer Association
Alex Farned
Brent Rainey
Bill Morgan
Jeff Reeder

Olive Branch Starts Construction of Senior Center

Construction is currently underway for Olive Branch's first senior citizen center. The building will be located in Olive Branch City Park across from the administrative offices. The facility will be 10,000 square feet and feature a computer lab, large dining hall, lounge area, exercise room, educational room, and a full service commercial kitchen. Total cost of the facility is 1.4 million dollars. Funding was provided by a Community Development Block Grant and City of Olive Branch. Two full-time staff members will operate the facility.

Currently the senior programming is being conducted in the parks and recreation administrative building as well as a local church. The number of participants in the program will increase rapidly with the construction of a condominium development which is currently underway next to the center site that is restricted to residents over 55 years of age. The condominium development will have 150 units.



Congratulations to MRPA Award Winners

Howard "Bo" Phillips Facility Design of the Year **Class II - Population 15,000-34,999**

The City of Clinton Parks and Recreation Department won this award for the first two phases of Brighton Park. The project has consumed eleven years of work thus far with phase three still left to be completed. The project has an estimated cost of \$2.7 million and is being funded by the sale of bonds. The family oriented facility has something for everyone including art, tennis, and activities for seniors.

Class III Population 35,000 and greater

Tupelo Parks and Recreation won this award for their Life Trail. The trail has a set of ten outdoor wellness stations that provide strength training, flexibility, and balance activities for visitors. Although the trail is geared toward older adults, the benefits are seen across the age spectrum.

MRPA Arts and Humanities Award of Merit

Class II - Population 15,000-34,999

The City of Clinton Parks and Recreation Department won this award for their Kidz Art Camp. The program was developed to

provide an opportunity for kids of all ages to have art in their lives, increase their skills and knowledge of various art media. The Kids Art curriculum serves ages from two through Senior Adults.

MRPA Special Event Award of Merit

Class I Population under 15,000

Pontotoc Parks and Recreation received this Award for their Fourth of July Celebration. This event was funded by local businesses. Five bands performed throughout the event. There were also children's games provided free of charge. The night ended with a huge fireworks show. An estimated 5,000 local citizens attended the event.

Class II Population 15,000 - 34,999

Ridgeland Recreation and Parks took this award for their Feel the Heat Major League Soccer Game. The department has partnered with the South Madison County Soccer Organization and the Chicago Fire to provide major league soccer action in Ridgeland. Coaching staff and players of the Chicago Fire train and interact with the citizens throughout the day and before their big game. The game is very popular and draws more than 5,000 in attendance. In addition to the soccer element, the department offers children's activities and games throughout the park.

Class III Population 35,000 and greater

The City of Tupelo Parks and Recreation Department won this award for their Lighting of Ballard Park project. Winners of a "What Christmas Means to Me" essay contest light the park throughout the entire holiday season. Local elementary children entertain the crowds with the sounds of Christmas. The event takes place over a two week period with different schools participating in a program each Thursday night. In addition to the music, there are free carriage rides throughout Ballard Park.

C.W. Kirkland/Howard Sommer Award

Brian Yarbrough of the University of Mississippi received this award. Brian will receive a one year membership in MRPA and the National Recreation and Park Association. This award is funded each year by contributions from members. You are encouraged to make your tax-deductible contributions throughout the year in memory of longtime MRPA friends C.W. Kirkland and Howard Sommer.

MRPA Scholarship

Keith Gaskin of the University of Mississippi received the MRPA Scholarship award this year. Keith will receive a check from MRPA in the amount of \$500. The money is to be used to help offset his educational expenses. Students are encouraged to enter the MRPA Scholarship Awards programs throughout the year. Applications can be found on-line at www.aboutmrpa.org.

MRPA Recreation Professional of the Year

Ray Holloway, Clinton Parks and Recreation Director, was honored with this recognition for 2006/2007. Ray graduated from Mississippi State University. In his spare time he serves on boards for Senior Olympics, Keep Mississippi Beautiful,

Calendar of Events

MRPA Board Meetings

October 23-24	Ocean Springs
January 15 - 16	Tupelo
April 23	Jackson
August 6	Vicksburg

District I

Field Maintenance Workshop	March 5
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District II

Field Maintenance Workshop	February 27
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MSDHS Child Care Advisory County, the Red Cross, USYSA TopSoccer, and the MSA State Board. He has twenty years of municipal and state park and recreation experience. In his current position he supervises 23 employees and oversees 68 different programs. His motto is "Providing Something for Everyone."

Congratulations to this year's award winners. The MRPA Awards Committee encourages you to consider an entry in the many categories for next year. The Award Nomination information can be found on the MRPA website and you can enter a program or a project at any time throughout the year.

The MRPA Awards Committee is developing a District of the Year Award category. The award will be used to recognize the MRPA district that was most successful in supporting the state association. Watch for details as the category is developed.

Bylaw Changes Approved

A number of proposed bylaw changes were adopted by the members who attended the Annual Membership Meeting held in Tupelo on Monday, September 11, 2007. The majority of the changes centered around defining the specific duties and responsibilities of committee chairs. However, other changes were approved that will establish a permanent Educational/Professional Development Committee that will be responsible for all elements of conference planning. Committee members will serve staggered terms on the revised committee in order to establish more continuity in conference planning for the coming years. Additionally, new term limits and qualifications were placed on some of the officers. In the future if you wish to seek the office of President-Elect you must have served the association in some active capacity for two previous years. The MRPA President, beginning with the 2007/2008 term will serve a two year term.

Additional changes to the Constitution and Bylaws were discussed by members in attendance, and it is likely that these changes will be proposed to the document in the coming months.

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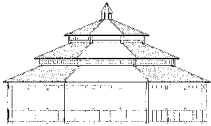
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