

Steve McDaniel, Director

- ✚ Staff and I met with two of the new council members to share information about Parks and Recreation in their respective districts.
- ✚ The Foellinger Theatre is busy working through final contracts on several shows that will be announced in the coming weeks. They are pulling together a great season and I can't wait to hear all the fabulous performances.
- ✚ The design team and I met to discuss the Packard, Brewer, and Reservoir Parks various designs. Several ideas and comments were discussed for all of these projects.
- ✚ Riverfront Phase 2 has taken additional time this past month. The Mayor's office has asked Parks and Recreation to take over the construction management for the city. This month our team has dived into all aspects to make sure we are up to speed.
- ✚ We held an All Employee meeting for park staff. This half-day provided training opportunities to our staff as well as bring them up to speed on capital improvements, master plans, and comprehensive plans, as well as celebrate some individual achievements.
- ✚ Three employees were named Employee of the Year. For 2022 it was Greg Miller. For 2023 it was Larry Hicks and DeAnna Harris.
- ✚ Mayor Henry gave his State of the City address. Parks and Recreation was identified in several slides. It was a very positive speech and we thank him for his support.
- ✚ Chuck and I met with the new President and CEO of the YMCA and one other individual to talk about possible collaborations between our two organizations on several topics. We will continue to explore these options as discussions continue.
- ✚ I gave an update on several projects and programs to the Park Foundation's Board of Directors towards the end of last month. We also discussed our annual disbursements on named endowments. This disbursement should be coming in the next month.
- ✚ Rob and I met with the representative of the PNC Foundation to explore future opportunities that our two groups could work on. This is an ongoing communications effort that we think is very important.
- ✚ The Parks Amenities App prototype was completed. This was a very quick look at what it might look like. Done in about 6-8 weeks. This gives us a starting point to be able to build the rest of the app. The design team is pulling together a proposal on what it would take to finish the app.
- ✚ Also, our registration team is working with a third-party supplier and Vermont Software to build a Parks App that will allow individuals to sign up for programs, rent pavilions, and/or buy tickets for all of the park's programs and events. The software development will be worked out over the next several months.
- ✚ On behalf of all of the staff here at the Parks and Recreation Department and Board of Park Commissioners, we want to send our support to the Mayor.

Chuck Reddinger – Deputy Director of Recreation

Salomon Farm Park, Neighborhood Outreach Community Centers (Youth/Downtown/McMillen Park), Riverfront, Athletics, Aquatics, Golf, Outdoor Recreation, Special Events, Headwaters Park, and Travel Service

✚ General

- All seasonal jobs have been posted on the City of Fort Wayne employment page as well as the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Website
- The Community Centers have formed a planning group to work collaboratively on programs, community partnerships, and events. This group will meet monthly and is comprised of staff from

Jennings Center, Weisser Park Center, Community Center (downtown), and McMillen Park Community Center.

Riverfront

- The Headwaters Park Ice Rink ended its first season under Riverfront Fort Wayne on Sunday, February 25th. 3,192 skaters came to the park in February with others coming as spectators. The Ice Rink during February was relatively slow compared to the previous months. The addition of the “John Crawford Dollar Days” at the Ice rink was a big hit and drew an average of 100 or more skaters every Thursday in February. The donation from the Crawford family and the revenue generated through concessions from the influx of skaters proved to make the \$1 skating and skate rental fee worth it. Another program held at the Ice Rink was “Dancing through the Decades” on the 1st of February. Skaters were treated to a cross-generation music playlist to compliment the décor of each decade from the 1950s to the 2000s. On Sunday, February 4th, the Fort Wayne Ice Skating Club came to Headwaters Park to teach kids under the age of 10 to skate. Around 30 kids showed up for the event for a \$5 fee before the Ice Rink opened. Parents were excited to have the ability to bring their kids down to the Park to learn to Skate. Our final ice rink event was held on the 17th with “Skating with the Miracle Sister”. This event was for kids to come to skate with the Disney character Mirabel from the movie “Encanto”. The afternoon had close to 100 kids coming to skate with Mirabel. We hope to have a new character next year at the Ice Rink.
- Programming at Promenade Park had its usual Karaoke Jam Night with a similar crowd on the 2nd of February. The 2nd Sundays held their monthly kickboxing, yoga, and concert series with average attendance. One new event was added on the Lunar New Year on February 10th called “New Year, New Beats”. This event celebrated K-pop music with a twist of the Lunar New Year celebrations. This free event drew a large crowd of close to 200 K-pop fans to the Pavilion for a dance competition and other activities to celebrate the Lunar New Year. We partnered with the Fort Wayne Korean Festival on this event and hope to add other cultural events similar to this in the future. The annual “Dog Sweater Day” was held on Valentine's Day this year with an increase of 60 dogs participating. The event was moved inside the pavilion to accommodate the colder weather. On February 21st we held an Open House for people interested in renting the Promenade Park Pavilion. Close to 40 people attended the event to see the space from prospective weddings, people who have already booked, and businesses looking for a venue space for company outings. The Open House drew attention and should lead to more rentals for 2024.
- Riverfront staff met with a few outside groups about the Dragon Boat Races to focus on team recruitment and improvements for this year’s event.

Salomon Farm Park

- Preparations at Salomon Farm Park have been intensified during February as the staff eagerly look forward to the 2024 season, featuring sunflower fields, new programs, annual events, and Farmin’ Fun Day Camp.
- The updated camp plans involve an expansion, with an additional two children being added to each group within the 6-11-year-old age range. This adjustment results in a counselor-to-child ratio of 1:12 instead of 1:10. The determination of the number of groups will be contingent on the availability of staff applications.
- Vicki Marquart is set to resume her role as the Farm Camp Supervisor. The assistant position will be taken on by Penni Tuttle, who previously served as a camp counselor last year.

- Salomon Farm Park is currently seeking one or two additional cooking instructors, and discussions have commenced with local chefs in the area for potential collaboration.
- During the all-employee meeting, Salomon Supervisor Larry Hicks and Program Coordinator DeAnna Harris were both honored with the Employee of the Year award for their outstanding contributions during the 2023 season.

Johnny Appleseed Campground

- Campground reservations are quickly filling up, with some weekends within the May to November season already fully booked. Preseason ordering has commenced for the new sites, involving the acquisition of new fire rings, picnic tables, and firewood. Additionally, the staff is actively working on a new map that incorporates the four new RV sites.

Franke Park Day Camp

- Chris Freehill has resumed the role of Franke Park Day Camp Supervisor, and Vivienne Clark, formerly a camp counselor, will now serve as the Assistant Supervisor.
- All Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation camp registration will begin on Monday, March 25, 2024. The camp brochure was released to the public on Monday, February 26, 2024.

Community Center

- The Community Center hosted the Winter Carnival on January 27th from 1:00 pm-4:00 pm. One of the more popular events on that day was the Warm Heart Market (27 vendors) as well as the Antique Road Show. There were activities, crafts, carriage rides, and a mini golf course. There were about 1,200 attendees. The Candy Luge was a big hit again this year and we ran out of candy with 30 minutes left. The event was a success as people seemed to have fun and the center was packed inside and out. The vendors in the market were happy with the traffic and their sales. The Mini golf and the live ice carving were popular as the weather was good and not too cold. The craft had well over 200 children in total. Families also had a blast doing the scavenger hunt!

Weisser Park Community Center

- Core Program sessions Monday – Thursday at 5:30 PM, some of our activities included learning the official rules, scoring and playing cornhole, they made Valentine’s Day cards, and learning various strategies while playing connect four. We had a daily average of 27 Weisser youth participate in our Core Program. Our highest number of Weisser youth participating in our Core Program was 36.
- ACPL had one session with our youth in which the youth enjoyed creating watercolor art.
- Erin’s House had two sessions. The first session consisted of youth sharing what feelings they feel when they lose someone, and playing a game of Talking Circle to share what a person may miss about a deceased loved one. In the second session, the youth learned about “triggers”, listened to the book “Lost in the Clouds” and drew a picture of someone they missed in a cloud.
- Beginning March 7, 2024, we will begin our Indoor Microgreen Garden Program. The youth will meet with Cheryl McGowan of C’s Itty Bitty Greens, each Thursday in March, to learn how to plant, grow, care and the health benefits of growing their microgreens.

Jennings Recreation Center

- The Scouts program (formerly known as Boy Scouts of America) began on Feb. 1st. They meet with the youth one time per week (Thursday) for 45-60 minutes. The youth are enjoying learning about the scouts and various badges and pins that can be earned. They have already learned the Scouts Oath.
- Girls Coalition, which is a piece of Girls Scouts. This is a three-week pilot program (Tuesdays-Feb. 20, 27, and March 5, 2024) and if the program is a success, we will look at having this as a program offered to CYC in the fall. The girls will make from scratch a game board of their choice and be able to take it home for their families to enjoy.
- ACPL (Allen County Public Library) visited on Feb. 15th and the youth enjoyed making Picture Collages
- Parkview Health visited on Feb. 20th and had a round table discussion about being healthy, eating healthy, and physical activity. They completed a movement activity with the youth that involved knowing healthy foods and snacks.
- Black history has been a focus for this month. The staff has done black history trivia, BINGO, JINGO, puzzles, coloring sheets, and matching games to learn and celebrate BLACK HISTORY.
- Jennings is pleased to report that the Full Time Facility Program Coordinator position has been filled. On Feb. 12th Lindley Kistler started in the position and she has been an assistant to the team. She is very good with the youth and they all like her.

Golf

- Gary Whitacre is working on ordering merchandise for the golf pro shops for the opening of the season.
- Bryan Keister and Travis Whitman continue to work on golf equipment to ensure that everything is ready to go for the season.
- Linda Lipp will be conducting training for each golf course staff for sales. This is the first time that it has been done at each course for more individualized training.

Pools

- Daryn Schwartz and Jason Smith will start contacting returning staff as well as pre-interviewing for potential staff.
- Daryn Schwartz reported that the new TEST lifeguard chairs have arrived and are at Northside Pool. He stated that they are a little different than the existing chairs but are much nicer looking.

Sandra Odisho – Finance Manager

For Payroll:

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 197 employees (137 full-time and 60 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending February 24th and paid on March 1st, 2024.
- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing, or in the process of being hired, as of February 29th, 2024:
 - Heavy Equipment Working Leader (Fund 121)
 - Heavy Equipment Operator (Fund 121)

- Maintenance Technician II - Electrician (Fund 121)
- Supervisor IV – Community Outreach (Fund 121)
- Supervisor IV – Neighborhood Programs (Fund 121)
- Seasonal job postings have been submitted to HR and almost all have been posted now. Foellinger Theatre positions are the next batch to go up on the City website. Our Marketing team is regularly updated to keep our Parks website current!
- Actual seasonal hiring has begun! We had our first hiring event on February 29th for the golf course staff.
- We are just beginning to hire for additional recreational and maintenance areas this month as well and getting ready for summer staff to be onboarding soon!

For Front Office

- Rhonda Berg, the Front Office Manager, will be out on FMLA starting February 7th. She has spent much of January training different staff members on her day-to-day and monthly reporting obligations, to cover these areas while she is out recuperating. We are hoping she will return by the end of March.
- Over 500 invoices were processed during February.
- We have processed 48 purchase requisitions to open 2024 purchase orders in February. Along with January purchase requisitions, we now have processed almost 50% of the normal total for an entire year.
- We have been gearing up for the Foellinger Theatre to reopen for the season. Sandra has been working with Rick on ticket pricing models and on updating the current contract language.
- The first Foellinger Theatre show, Rocky Horror Picture Show by the Fort Wayne Civic Theater, will go on sale in our Front Office on March 1st. The second show, Rick Springfield in Concert, will go on sale in our Front Office on March 7th. Per Rick, there will be many more to come!
- We have been coordinating banking changes From Wells Fargo to Lake City Bank for all of our cash collection points. This change was initiated by the Controller's office. We anticipate this change to take place at the end of March and may be staggered into the first few weeks of April, as well.
- We have been working on phone system changes. Our current phone system software is now outdated and will no longer be updated or supported. We will be changing to an updated software version by April 2024. Most of the changes will be behind the scenes, as we will still be able to reuse our current phones rather than getting new ones. We are reviewing information for phone users and making sure it is updated and complete.
- We have been working on the new Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation App through Vermont Systems Inc (VSI), our RecTrac POS system provider. VSI has partnered with Innovative, a leader in app development, to create an app-building platform, that will work seamlessly with the RecTrac system. We are in the beginning stages and are very excited about this new functionality that will allow users to register for classes or activities and also to view information about our Park System. We are hoping to have the app up and running for the public, no later than September or October of this year. It will be offered on Apple and Google Play stores.

Steve Schuhmacher – Deputy Director of Park

Maintenance, Facilities, Grounds, Projects Administration, Safety Compliance, Storeroom, Fleet & Mechanical Operations

+ Facilities Maintenance

- Pavilion rentals totaled: **93** for February. This is down from **96** in January.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations; Study Park, PSI OTE Park, Weisser, Lawton Skate Park, Lakeside pavilion restrooms, and MLK Bridge.
- All Annual cleanings have been completed except Franke Day Camp cleaning, which is going according to plan and should be closed if not completed by the end of the month.
- The new vendor, Reliable Cleaning, is now providing the custodial services at the Main Office.
- Maintenance Tech assisted the grounds department in removing 5 playgrounds that have been scheduled for replacement. The playground equipment and surfacing were removed at Northside, McMillen, Turpie, and Kreager Parks as well as the Boone Street play lot.
- The temporary ice rink at Lakeside Park was removed for the season. The 2023-2024 season saw only 19 days of ice suitable for skating with an average of 10 people per day.
- Work was completed on the new media room at the Northside Park Administration Office. This included updated lighting, paint, and window treatments.
- The remodel of the Magnolia Room at the Botanical Conservatory's catering area was completed.
- Bathroom fixtures needed to be replaced at the Lakeside Park pavilion #1 due to vandalism.
- Lighting upgrades were complete in both the upper and lower PSI-OTE pavilions at Northside Park.
- The Maintenance Technicians completed the following:
 - 10: Alarm Maintenance, 11: Building Maintenance, 3: Carpentry, 8: Electrical Repair,
 - 5: HVAC Maintenance, 5: Key Core Maintenance, 14: Light Maintenance,
 - 1: Lock Maintenance, 15: Paint, 15: Playground Maintenance,
 - 19: Plumbing Maintenance, 2: Sign Maintenance, 10: Vandalism

+ Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment

- Grounds crews continue to remove fallen limbs and debris from various parks.
- Grounds crews are pruning trees in Sears, Northside, Camp Canine, Tillman, and Waynedale Parks. We are using the chipper truck and chipper to speed up the process.
- Kreager winter maintenance continues on 7210's and zero-turn mowers.
- The Parks Department trash truck running 2 days a week.
- Paint, chalk, and soccer nets are ordered for the upcoming 2024 season
- Garage working on putting new brushes on the second broom for Polar Track. This will help us with the greenway cleanup after river flooding.
- Northside, Boone St., Turpie, Kreager, and McMillen Playgrounds have been removed and the ground excavated for new playgrounds to be installed in March.

+ Manager of Facilities, Trades and Grounds

- There were 12 after-hours calls: 8 code issues, 1 vandalism call, 1 alarm call, and 2 miscellaneous calls.
- Arrow Fence was hired to install netting at the top of the fence at Packard Park.

- Infinity Glass was hired to re-tint the windows at Pond Pavilion after several stickers were applied during the Fantasy of Lights.
- Musco was hired to repair two light poles at the Kreager ball diamond.
- VFP tied the kitchen hood into the fire alarm system at McMillen Community Center.
- Receiving quotes on cameras and internet at the Rea Magnet building.
- Premier was hired to update the camera system at the Lawton Complex.
- The water department installed new electronic devices on the meters at both the Botanical Conservatory and the Ball Diamond restroom building at McMillen.
- Receiving quotes for a few window replacements at the Northside Administration Building.

Main Trac Coordinator

- Main Trac Entries: 4,978 for the month.
- We have had 21, 311 calls this month.
- Working with supervisors to get their employees to turn in correct time sheets.
- Busy entering timesheets, gas tickets, and contracted invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Chucks Recreation Staff.
- Nicole and Forestry starting the Citizen Match Tree program for 2024.

Lawton Garage/Operations Manager

Garage Operations Highlights:

- 156 work orders were scheduled this month, 39 of which were services.
- The last 3 remaining pieces of equipment from the 2023 equipment lease (2 John Deere greens mowers and a John Deere Aerator) will be delivered in March.
- The 2024 equipment lease items were presented to the Park Board and approved. Once the money is released by the Controller's office, purchase orders can be submitted for the items.
- The annual inspections were conducted by Hoff Mobile Bucket Truck Repair on all of the forestry and maintenance tech bucket trucks. All of them passed without any repairs needed.
- The yearly repairs on the zoo train were started with a major need being the replacement of the transmission ring gear. Staff is trying to source a replacement part which is originally from a 1950s Ford transmission.
- A few of the 2024 lease vehicles have already arrived at the dealership. Purchase orders have been written for these but cannot be submitted until the money is released by the Controller's office.
- Truck 184 (2019 Ford F150) had a new replacement transmission installed after the original unit failed.
- The garage has helped the Conservatory by repairing small pedal carts that are part of the current showcase display. They have also assisted by cutting down metal racks that will be used for the Mother's Day plant sale.
- A second barrel ride was brought in from Salomon farm for mechanics to upgrade safety features so the ride can be used at farm events.
- Truck 10 (2008 F250) was involved in an accident caused by someone running a red light. The estimate to repair the damage was over \$16,000 so the truck will be removed from service and the bed and lift gate installed on another truck.
- Truck 99 (Ford Ranger) had a used tailgate sourced and installed to repair the damaged tailgate that would no longer properly open.
- Three new attachments were delivered for the Forestry Toro Dingo. These items are related to forestry work and will allow the crew to more efficiently pick up logs and other debris.

- Rubber tracks were purchased and installed on the heavy equipment Bobcat by mechanics to allow the machine to be used for playground removals more effectively.
- Repairs to the bed of truck 66 (2008 F250) were completed by Bob Thomas Ford and then the bed was coated by H&H to protect those repairs. The truck was put back into service with the facilities crew.
- Two small Toro zero-turn mowers had recalls for the voltage regulators of their Kawasaki motors. Plevna Implement supplied the replacement parts and mechanics installed them.

Storeroom and Property:

- Storeroom staff began stocking up on cleaning supplies, tools, and other materials that will be in high demand once the spring season starts to pick up.
- Hi-visibility jackets and sweatshirts were purchased to supply incoming seasonal employees and other new full-time employees who have been recently hired.
- Staff assisted with the all-employee meeting by supplying audio/video equipment, beverages, and coolers, and assisting with set up and tear down.
- Property Transactions:

24 Branch Manager Grapple	P260	Added into Inventory
24 Branch Manager Rake	P260	Added into Inventory
24 Branch Manager Clamshell	P260	Added into Inventory
24 Milwaukee Band Saw Kit	P252	Added into Inventory
22 Sure-Trac Utility Trailer	P250	Added into Inventory
24 TNT Rubber Bobcat Tracs	P240	Added into Inventory
24 Stihl Kombi Unit Pole Pruner	P240	Added into Inventory
Vortex Granular Spreader	P230	Added into Inventory
75 Wheelhorse tractor and barrel ride	R530	Added into Inventory

2022 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update: Closed

2023 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update:

John Deere greens mowers	23121200
John Deere Aercore 800	23121213
Motorola Replacement radios	Radio Shop is finishing quotes

2024 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update:

Ford F250 Route Trucks (4)	3 are in at City Ford
Ford F350 Chassis	Delivered to City Ford
Ford Maverick Pick-up	Option sheet completed
Chevy 1500 Pick-up (2)	Option sheets completed
IPC Floor Machines (4)	Quotes received
Chevy Equinox	Option sheet completed
John Deere Gators (2)	Quotes received
Ventrac Tractor with Ball Diamond Attachment	Quotes received
Bobcat Stump Grinding Attachment	Quotes received

JLG Electric Scissor Lift	Quotes received
Motorola Replacement Radios	Quotes received
Gravely Remote-Control Mower	Quotes received
Ferris Ride-on Leaf Blower	Quotes received

Superintendent

- Approve and record invoices for various materials used and applied in grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Overseeing a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance.
- Going back over inspections of the Parks and doing new ones.
- Working on 2024 playground inspections.
- Working on River Greenway inspections.
- Working with supervisor staff to remind them of work that needs to be completed.
- Starting 2024 monthly MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks.

Safety

- The Parks & Rec. Safety Committee met on 2-27-24. 4 employees and 1 guest were present
- 1 vehicle crash was reported for this period.
- 1 employee injuries were reported during this time.
- 1 CPR/FA class was held. 9 employees were certified.
- Forklift training has completed the classroom portion. A practice session was held for the operations portion which will be in March.
- I have completed the online Worker Protection Standard Trainer Certification program.
- Hazard Awareness & S.C.A.N. training was provided to each employee who attended the all-employee meeting.
- The review of Parks Safety SOPs continues.

Project Administration

- Boone Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Boone Park Safety Surface – Awaiting final approvals. Installation in March.
- Botanical Conservatory Linkway Interior Construction – Construction is in progress.
- Botanical Conservatory Roof Glass Replacement – Planning in progress for 2024.
- Botanical Conservatory Tropical Paths – Construction is set to begin March 4, 2024.
- Community Center HVAC Control System – Upgrade is in progress.
- Community Center Art Room Renovation – Initial planning in progress.
- Community Center Shuffleboard Renovation – Project planned for April.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Improvements – Planning in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Sidewalk Improvements – Construction is planned to begin in April.
- Foellinger Theatre Electrical Service to Concrete Terrace – Work planned for March.
- Foellinger Theatre Ticketing Office Exterior Improvements – Work in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Restoration Plan – Planning in progress.
- Foster Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Foster Park Pavilion #1 Ceiling Painting – Initial planning in progress.
- Freimann Square Pump House – Fence relocation completed. Awaiting entry door replacement.
- Gren Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Headwaters Park Fountain – Project planning in progress.
- Headwaters Park Pedestrian Bridge Renovation – Construction is set to begin in mid-March.

- Headwaters Park Lighting Improvements – Planning in progress.
- Kettler Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Kreager Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Lawton Park Trestle Bridge – Currently out to bid.
- Lawton Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Lawton Park Softball Fields – Project completed.
- Lions Park Pavilion Window Replacement – Work is set to begin in early March.
- McMillen Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Mechanic St. Bridge Construction – Project currently out to bid.
- Northside Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Parks System Comprehensive Plan – Project in progress.
- Parks Playground Improvements – Purchase orders received. Planning and coordination are in progress.
- Rea Building Garage Door – Awaiting contractor acquisition of materials.
- Salomon Farm South Field Watering System – Final work to be completed in March.
- Salomon Farm Entrance Signage – Initial project planning in progress.
- Salomon Farm Barn Entry Doors Replacements – Bidding in progress.
- Swinney Park Tennis Courts Recoating – Work planned for June 2024.
- Tillman Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Tillman Park Playground Sidewalk – Design in progress.
- Turpie Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Installation in Spring of 2024.
- Various Parks 2024 Paving Projects – Work planned for late April.
- Various Parks 2024 Pavement Restoration – Work shall begin in early May.
- Various Parks Playground Borders and Drainage – Awaiting final approvals.
- Various Parks Playground Safety Surfacing – Awaiting final approvals.
- Various Parks Entry Identification Signage – Fabrication in progress for Vesey, Sheldon, Cobin, Little Turtle Memorial, and Rudisill Parks.
- Weisser Park Basketball Fence – Work in progress.

Other work:

- Accessed potential and necessary future projects, are planned for next season’s budget
- Various Parks: updating park site plan bases and building plans.
- Various Parks: underground utility locates were scheduled and performed.
- Various Parks: cost estimates for various projects are being prepared upon request, along with the completion of park assessments.

[Alec Johnson, Deputy Director of Planning & Development,](#)

Forestry, Landscape & Horticulture, Riparian and  **BOTANICAL**
CONSERVATORY

Botanical Conservatory Report – February 2024

‘Botanical Speedway’ continued to welcome enthusiastic visitors into a playful, racing-inspired theme that invites children to race along a unique raceway bursting with tropical plants. ‘Botanical Speedway’ honors the deep heritage of racing in Indiana, features an Indy Car on loan from Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum, and a helmet giveaway (5,000) provided by the Bike Safe Indiana Program

through the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT). Families can enjoy the fast, not furious, raceway at the Botanical Conservatory through April 7. The Botanical Conservatory hosted several well-received events in February 2024 including the Orchid Show (February 3-4), Kelly Bremer Artist Reception (February 11), and Home and Garden Show (February 29 – March 3). Staff are gearing up for Great Train Connection (March 8 – 10), Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (March 18), Bunny Tales in the Garden (March 29 – 30), and several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month. Current vacancies include Camp ACTIVenture Counselor & Supervisor (accepting applications), and Conservatory Maintenance Seasonal (accepting applications). A new rental receptionist, Yasmine Serrano, has accepted and began onboarding in February.

Botanical Conservatory KPIs

February 2024 charted an excellent rebound to the same period in 2023. The Botanical Conservatory observed increases in attendance of 4.46% and membership revenue of 30.75% to the same period in 2023. While paid attendance revenue is down a marginal 4.05%, it is a symptom of increased membership sales, as members do not pay admission fees when they visit. For reference, member attendance has increased 24.37% to 2023. Conservatory Shop revenue somehow continues to climb, with an impressive 8.56% increase month-over-month to February 2023 (which previously held the all-time February record for the Conservatory Shop), as well as a record-breaking Home & Garden Show performance, with a 13.62% increase to 2023. Overall, a compelling exhibit theme and inspired execution have really continued to drive traffic in the first quarter of the year.

Attendance

February 2023: 6,640 visitors

February 2024: 7,120 visitors

An increase of 480 or +7.23% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Attendance: 12,089 visitors

2024 Attendance: 12,628 visitors

An increase of 539 or +4.46% to 2023

Admissions Revenue

February 2023: \$28,525.00

February 2024: \$28,063.00

A decrease of \$462.00 or -1.62% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Admissions Revenue: \$50,301.00

2024 Admissions Revenue: \$48,262.00

A decrease of \$2,039.00 or -4.05% to 2023

Membership Revenue

February 2023: \$7,022.06

February 2024: \$13,442.00

An increase of \$6,419.94 or +91.43% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Membership Revenue: \$16,372.06
2024 Membership Revenue: \$21,406.00
An increase of \$5,033.94 or +30.75% to 2023

Conservatory Shop Revenue

February 2023: \$18,295.24
February 2024: \$19,860.89
An increase of \$1,565.65 or +8.56% to 2023

Home & Garden Show Revenue

Home Show 2023: \$13,315.76
Home Show 2024: \$15,129.49
An increase of \$1,813.73 or +13.62% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Gift Shop Revenue: \$45,902.83
2024 Gift Shop Revenue: \$46,482.20
An increase of \$579.37 or +1.26% to 2023

Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

February 2023: \$7,875.00
February 2024: \$8,427.00
An increase of \$552.00 or +7.01% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Rental Revenue: \$22,192.50
2024 Rental Revenue: \$17,807.50
A decrease of \$4,385.00 or -19.76% to 2023

Other Revenue (includes Activity Enrollments, Donations, Plant Sale, etc.)

February 2023: \$4,762.51
February 2024: \$16,257.20

YTD Comparisons

2023 Other Revenue: \$14,267.29
2024 Other Revenue: \$17,884.88

Conservatory Total Revenue

February 2023: \$66,479.81
February 2024: \$86,050.09
An increase of \$19,570.28 or +29.44% to 2023

YTD Comparisons

2023 Total Revenue: \$135,719.92
2024 Total Revenue: \$136,713.09

An increase of \$993.17 or +0.73% to 2023

Botanical Conservatory Business Development

Staff submitted a letter of intent (LOI) for \$20,000 in support of the Desert House Improvements Project to the Olive B. Cole Foundation. Update: The foundation has approved the LOI, and staff will proceed with the grant application with the target of submitting the grant in March.

Staff submitted a grant for \$3,000 support of the ROOTS Music Fest to the Fort Wayne Community Foundation, Engage grant.

Staff submitted a final grant report to the Wilson Foundation for its support of the 2023 Timeless Tradition Exhibit. This report enables us to apply for \$4,500 in funding for the 2024 Gnome for the Holidays Exhibit.

Fort Wayne Metals has agreed to sponsor the ROOTS Music Fest with \$2,000 support.

Staff submitted the 2024-2025 corporate sponsorships pdf to marketing contacts at another 28 local and area corporations. Submissions and follow-up will continue to more area companies.

Promotional and complimentary tickets were distributed to US 93.3 for the 2024 Great Train Connection and to Majic 95.1 for the 2024 Bunny Tales in the Garden. Provided information for the stations' promotional spots. Also coordinated the complimentary video shoot here for FOX55's new anchor.

Staff coordinated the details for the distribution of complimentary tickets to the Park Foundation for 2024 Showcase Garden exhibits. Staff will provide the tickets to each showcase at the preceding foundation quarterly meeting. For 2024 the park foundation will receive tickets to the winter exhibit and butterfly exhibit at their February meeting and the summer/fall and winter exhibits at their June meeting. Staff will also acknowledge their sponsorship of all promotions.

Conservatory donations in January 2024 \$998.77: \$972.77 in memorials for Julie McIntosh - \$100.00 from Sheila Nittmann, \$77.77 from Ryan Mortensen, \$450.00 from the Blue Line Run Club, \$10.00 from Anonymous, \$75.00 from T.M. and L.K. Fritch, \$75.00 from Forest Elementary School Faculty Fund, \$50.00 from Billy and Rebecca Miller and the Hannah/Ruth Circle, \$10.00 from Barbara Christensen, \$100.00 from Nancy Cummings, and \$25.00 from Jacquelynn Payne; and \$26.00 in anonymous cash donations.

Conservatory donations in February 2024 totaled \$10,375: \$375.00 in memorials for Julie McIntosh - \$125.00 from Michael Zollner, \$125.00 from Matthew Chandler, and \$125.00 from Dimitrios Lalos; and \$10,000 from the English Bonter Mitchell Foundation for the 2024 Showcase Garden Exhibits.

Botanical Conservatory Public Programs

Events

Orchid Show (February 3 & 4)

The Orchid Show, in partnership with the Three Rivers Orchid Society, was quite popular with 1,047 guests who enjoyed the opportunity to view many stunning orchids on display. They could even purchase orchids from the Conservatory Shop as well as from other orchid societies who traveled to join the show! In addition, this year's show expanded in space and duration relocating to the larger Magnolia Room while also extending from Saturday into Sunday. On Saturday from 12:00-4:00 p.m., votes were received for the People's Choice Award when guests voted on their favorite display. The award went to New Vision Orchids from Yorktown, IN.

Education

Beat the Winter Blues Blossoms (February 17)

Returning florist and instructor, Dennis Bowman demonstrated the crafting of spring bulbs with festive accents as an indoor centerpiece. Thirteen people pre-registered for the program. On the day, 10 people enjoyed their participation while praising Dennis' instruction and sharing their eagerness to watch the centerpiece bloom.

AM & PM T'ai Chi for Relaxation (January 23-February 27)

Two six-week sessions of T'ai Chi concluded with both an AM and PM session. Pleasingly, both sessions had new registrants, particularly in the PM session! Participants also took advantage of the opportunity to practice T'ai Chi in the gardens.

Youth Field Trips

There were 3 field trip groups in February totaling 74 students. There were 103 students from 6 groups in 2023; 0 students from 0 groups in both 2022 and 2021; 102 students from 1 group in 2020; and 83 students from 6 groups in 2019.

Adult Groups

There was one scheduled adult group with 15 guests in February.

Exhibits & Displays

Botanical Speedway (January 13-April 7)

The latest showcase exhibit has people racing to the Botanical Conservatory where they are engaging in an unexpected kind of fun! At first sight, guests delight in a backdrop of colorful tropical plants adorned by black and white checkered flags. Adults and especially young children find themselves in awe of all the different activities including sitting in a bright green Indy car (generously loaned from the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum), flagging racers from the control tower, cheering in a grandstand, and posing in the winner's circle. The chance to drive pedal cars and act as part of a pit crew is something you won't find anywhere else this winter! In addition, each child is invited to take home a helmet provided by INDOT.

The Octane Collection by Kelly Bremer (January 13-April 7)

The Octane Collection brings the "Botanical Speedway" theme into the gallery hall with 14 pieces that celebrate the speed, science, history, and pageantry of car racing. This Fort Wayne artist has been featured in previous Indianapolis 500 publications and is collected internationally by drivers, fans, and car enthusiasts. A public artist reception was held on February 11.

Sweetheart Orchid Display (January 30-March 3)

Space was devoted in the Botanical Conservatory's Tropical House on both the main and lower levels to this year's Sweetheart Orchid Display. Conservatory guests found themselves captivated by such pleasant blooms showing off vibrant color, intricate detail, and a trailing fragrance. Also, a worthwhile association with February's Orchid Show!

Volunteers/Staff

February was an exciting month for volunteerism... A new volunteer completed training for the Front Desk and began fulfilling scheduled shifts. Two new high school students went through volunteer orientation, and two more volunteers have scheduled orientation and activities in March. CAS students also returned for the semester, which suggests program success from the partnership that began in 2023!

At the Front Desk, 8 volunteers covered 36 shifts while 10 volunteers filled 38 shifts in the Gift Shop. A weekly garden volunteer cleaned several beds both inside and outside while a plant groomer continued to take care of plants in the Gift Shop. A total of 6 volunteers filled 600 goody bags for the upcoming Great Train Connection, and a seventh prepped the bags by stamping the Botanical Conservatory logo. Leading into March, 4 volunteers participated in the first day of the Home and Garden Show.

At the start of February, staff returned for a second year of participating in STEAM Night at Haley Elementary. Approximately 80 students enjoyed potting-a-plant at the Botanical Conservatory's designated table set with soil bins, spider plant starts, pots, bags, and care sheets.

Upcoming

January 13-April 7: Botanical Speedway Showcase Exhibit
January 13-April 7: Kelly Bremer Art Exhibit: *The Octane Collection*
January 23-February 27: AM & PM T'ai Chi for Relaxation, pre-registered series
January 30-March 3: Sweetheart Orchid Display
February 29-March 3: Home & Garden Show at the Memorial Coliseum
March 8-10: The Great Train Connection
March 13: Volunteers – SCFVA Seed Packaging
March 14: Pysanky: Ukrainian Eggs, pre-registered program
March 16: Epiphytic Plant Mount, pre-registered program
March 18: Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, reflecting over 2023 service
March 21 & 22: Volunteers – Goody Bag Assembly
March 29 & 30: Bunny Tales in the Garden

Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

Sycamore Tree Care completed pruning in the Tropical House of the Cycads to reduce the Mealybug population, subsequently, staff sprayed insecticide and reset ant traps to combat the population. Later in the month, beneficial insects were released throughout the Tropical House.

Plant lists were finalized for the 'Raise a Glass' showcase exhibit in collaboration with the Lawton Park Greenhouse team.

Spring cleanup and aggressive pruning are well underway to set the stage for a great year of outdoor planting in 2024. CAS at Anthis volunteers have resumed their Wednesday schedule to assist with these tasks.

Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

Staff completed LED light conversion in all areas of the basement.

Bids were received for the replacement of doors and transom windows in the Jaenicke Room and Kessler Room, and doors for the sales garden; the project has been submitted to purchasing for approval.

Bids were received for the wallpaper removal and painting of the Jaenicke Room, Kessler Room, and the north side of the Magnolia Room. This project will be completed in March.

Tropical linkway renovation is underway by Schenkel Construction.

Lawton Maintenance Technicians (MTs) performed the demolition and installation of the new wallboard in the service area of the Magnolia Room. S&E Construction will be installing the new drop ceiling and MTs will return to install new Lighting to finish the project. Estimated completion is mid-March.

Three storage trailers that had stored showcase props and materials have been cleaned and emptied, use of the trailers was conveyed to Headwaters Park. Showcase props were moved into the Rea facility and organized for easier access and storage.

A new Duct Sock will be installed in the Magnolia to give a more even distribution of airflow and increase efficiency to improve customer experience. Estimated completion is mid-March.



Volunteer Shirley Weldon doing a potting demonstration during the Orchid Show



T'ai Chi participants delighting in the Tropical House



*Children racing around
the “Botanical
Speedway!”*



*Sweetheart Orchid Display
in the Tropical House*



*Students doing pot-a-
plant at Haley Elementary
School*

Planning Report – February 2024

The Franke Renaissance construction project continues on schedule. Progress is being made on the bridge and pavilion. We have seen masonry work begin, while the pavilion roof structure continues to be put into place. Parks staff, along with our design consultant, reviewed art proposals for work to be included in the pavilion foyer and hallway.

Management of Riverfront Phase II has once again changed hands; Parks is now managing the project from an Owner’s standpoint. Construction documents continue to be completed by the design team, while work continues on the early bid package items. One permit (Construction in a Floodway) has been received, while we continue to await the IDEM and ACOE permits.

A draft copy of the nearly complete Comprehensive Plan was received late in the month; Parks staff will be reviewing and discussing any final changes with the team early in March.

Construction documents are anticipated to be complete for Brewer Park Redevelopment by the end of March. We look forward to reviewing the final plans and preparing the project for bidding this spring. Construction documents are also anticipated for completion in late March/early April for Packard Park Redevelopment. Details are being discussed and incorporated into the final design. We anticipate bidding on the project in a few months.

Consolidation sewer projects continue at Foster Park. These projects are having a significant impact on the park both physically and about access, but staff continues to coordinate with City Utilities in trying to minimize effects. The tentative completion of these projects is October 2024, so impacts will continue to be seen throughout the year. We are taking part in bi-weekly construction update meetings; site safety has been of recent concern as the weather has improved and we are having more visitors to the park.

Four proposals were received for the Foster Park Entrance Design project. Staff is currently reviewing each, and will be requesting a contract with the successful consultant in March. This project will consider a redesign of the park entrance and will include a new maintenance building, pedestrian and vehicular connections, and newly imagined landscape spaces, all in response to and made necessary by impacts to the park from Utilities' tunnel and consolidation sewer projects.

Temporary stabilization was completed for the failed portion of the St. Marys Streambank Stabilization project. We are now working with the City's legal team to determine liability and responsibility to move towards permanent repair.

The Fourth Street Trestle Bridge Replacement Project has been posted for bidding. Bids are due at the end of March; we anticipate construction in winter 2024-25.

Conceptual plans were created and reviewed with staff for a new dining garden at Salomon Farm Park. Further design and construction are pending available funding and a timeline from recreation management.

Staff reviewed current and upcoming grant opportunities with both the Mayor's office and with Rob; this planning helps set the course for improved efficiency in project planning and grant seeking. Chad completed MS4 training and inspection certification. Utilities have set the course for improved inspections to take place across the city and have requested that other departments begin to become familiarized with the process. This certification will offer the chance for us to inspect our construction projects as needed.

Staff met regularly with Conservatory management to discuss various agreements, staff training, marketing, showcase, and facility operations. Progress continues to be made on the various capital projects within the facility that were discovered through the facility assessment and internal discussions.

Horticulture and Landscape Report- February 2024

Landscape staff cleared mud off the docks after a large flood event at Promenade Park.

Landscape staff continued on their ornamental tree pruning schedule focusing on Swinney Park, Franke Park, Reservoir Park, Promenade Park, and Rea Park.

In preparation for spring mulch, landscape staff continued landscape bed cleanups and shrub pruning; completing Promenade Park, Foellinger Theatre, Kreager-Taylor's Dream Playground, Riverfront IIA, Reservoir Rain Garden, Downtown Community Center, Northside Pool, Meyers Park, Franke Pavilion 1, Franke Pond Pavilion, McMillen Community Center, Courthouse Green, Freimann Square, Salomon Farms, McKinnie Commons, Weisser Center, Indian Village Park-Sears Pavilion, Shoaff Golf Course Clubhouse, North Side Park-PSI OTE Upper and Lower. Bed cleanups at Headwaters Park are still ongoing.

Landscape staff spent time picking up large limbs from some selected parks after windy weather.

Honeysuckle removal and treatment along the riverbanks at Headwaters Park was completed by landscape staff. This has been an ongoing project that began last year with the help of volunteers and the riparian division.

Honeysuckle removal and treatment have been ongoing in Foster Park as landscape staff continues to try to eradicate it from wooded areas located adjacent to the gardens.

Some aged-out and overgrown shrubs were removed in Foster Park.

Using the Botanical Conservatory's new engraver machine, Lakeside staff made all new rose identification signs for every rose variety located in the Lakeside Rose Garden Beds. Staff was able to install all the signs into their respective rose beds as well.

Lakeside staff edged all curbs and main rose gardens. These gardens were also mulched.

Landscape staff began removing all exposed, outdated, damaged, and unsalvageable irrigation lines from beds in Headwaters Park. This will be an ongoing project.

Some poor weather has resulted in greenhouse work (transplanting, seeding, etc.) being completed by landscape staff.

All pesticide SDSs were updated digitally. All landscape staff's mobile pesticide binders were updated as well.

Landscape staff assisted the Botanical Conservatory with the delivery of plant material to the Home and Garden Show.

Multiple RFQs for landscape maintenance were sent out for bid.

The Lawnganics contract was renewed for Turf Fertilization and Weed Control annual maintenance for the Various parks contract, as well as Headwaters Park.

Triscape's contract was renewed for mulching Promenade Park.

Visionscapes was awarded two mulching contracts that include Foellinger Theatre, Kreager-Taylor's Dream, Meyers Park, Downtown Community Center, McMillen Pool, Northside Pool, Nuckols Park, Freimann Square, Courthouse Green, and Main Street Medians.

Mowing contracts were renewed with Pride Landcare for Foellinger Theatre, Myers Park, Franklin Park, Powell Park, Freimann Square, Courthouse Green, Main St. Medians, and the Downtown Community Center.

A mowing contract was renewed with Mow Baby Mow for Promenade Park.

Heartland Restoration Services contract was renewed for native plantings, rain gardens, bioswales, etc. at Salomon Farms, Kreager Park, Buckner Park, Lakeside Park, Reservoir, and the Thomas Nature Sanctuary.

Due to favorable weather, Visionscapes began one of their mulching contracts, completing mulching at Foellinger Theatre, Kreager-Taylor's Dream Playground, and Meyers Park.

In the greenhouse, we have enjoyed the contributions of five new volunteers. Total volunteer hours worked in February were 333.50, and 29,500 seeds were sown for parks, the Mother's Day Plant Sale, and the Conservatory Showcase exhibits.

Riparian Management Report- February 2024

Removed 2.3 tons of logs from Saint Joseph River along Johnny Appleseed Park's shoreline to prevent downstream log jams.

Scouted along Saint Marys River for any potential hazards such as manmade debris or woody debris.

Removed approximately 1.5 tons of debris (tires, litter, shopping carts, and scooters). Cut through several logs on the shore that would be a potential hazard when rivers rise, approximately 5 tons of woody debris.

Continued discussion and cooperation with Public Works for improving the area under Main Street Bridge as a cache point better suited for future log removals.

Completed spring commissioning of workboats to prepare for the upcoming season.

Completed all geese trapping permits for the annual geese relocation project with McMillen as the newest addition to the list to improve the conditions of the golf course.

Began scouting for goose nest signs for the upcoming egg-addling season.

Updated the emergency procedures for both Sweet Breeze and the Riparian Department, including emergencies such as Man Overboard, Fire, Collision, Catastrophic Engine Failure, or onboard leak.

Began collaboration with Risk Management to improve departmental training for trailers, boat operation, and general safety.

Forestry Report- February 2024

Updated the ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ for forestry. This information will be made available to the public on the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation website.

Issued two purchase orders for the removal of street tree stumps. In total, 499 stumps are scheduled for removal and should be completed within the next few months.

Contract crews continue with the removal of street trees throughout Fort Wayne, with a total of 342 street trees and their associated stumps slated for removal by mid-June.

Collaborated with IDNR, HHS Environmental Science Club, and the SCFVA to order nearly 2500 sycamore tree seedlings. These trees will be re-packaged and delivered to area third graders during the last week of April.

Began planning for the 2024 Arbor Day celebration. This event will be held on Friday, April 26th.

During February, forestry crews completed 46 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to accommodate the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.

39 high-priority trees were removed by in-house crews this month. 23 of these were located within our parks. 3 were storm damage removals and 7 were a result of vehicle damage.

This month crews responded to 27 storm-related fallen/hanging limbs and 5 trees were privately owned that had fallen in the right-of-way.

Completed 13 inspections/appraisals of trees that had been damaged by vehicles. In total, these incidents resulted in \$12,477.00 of damage in February.

Forestry staff responded to and resolved 46, 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

Kathryn Pargmann – Manager Lead of Marketing

- ✚ www.RiverfrontFW.org had 2,845 hits to the site this month and the Promenade Park link had 1,842 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 1,274 hits in February.
- ✚ Completed the following evaluation reports: Be Your Artist (Coiled baskets), Winter Culinary classes at Salomon, and Winter classes at the Botanical Conservatory.
- ✚ Created 6 Engage web links (Powell, Packard, McKinnie, Brewer, Northside, Boone) for the NEW Engage website (engage.cityoffortwayne.org).
- ✚ Completed 46 Design projects.
- ✚ Day Camp/PODS brochures and postcards completed and distributed to schools.
- ✚ Dragon Boat sponsor and team brochures completed.
- ✚ Submitted grant application for Sensory Room.
- ✚ Met with PNC Foundation to learn more about potential future funding opportunities.

- ✚ Created an overall sponsorship brochure covering all Park programs to reach out to potential cash sponsors; this should begin going out to area businesses in early March.
- ✚ Received notification of Tree City and Growth Award for 2023 from Arbor Day Foundation.
- ✚ Media promotions for Spring Fun Times, Ice Rink, Day Camp, PODS brochures, and more.
- ✚ Continued to edit and compile the 2023 Annual Report document and Executive Summary document.

✚ **Social Media Total Mentions, including television, radio, newspaper, and websites:**

December 86 January 66 February 52

✚ **Web Statistics:**

<u>Users:</u>	<u>Hits:</u>	<u>Month:</u>
36,103	98,699	December
35,802	108,453	January
36,965	117,268	February

✚ **Social Media Totals for the months of:**

	December	January	February
FB Followers	86,785	88,062	80,205
FB Reach	327,551	336,521	230,472
 Twitter Followers	13,821	13,854	13,881
 Instagram Followers	24,942	25,192	25,262

Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations

- ✚ Shoaff Park and McMillen Park golf courses will open for the season on Tuesday, March 12. Nine holes at Foster Park will open on Wednesday, March 13, and the entire course will be open as of Thursday the 14th.
- ✚ Staffing levels are good, with the vast majority of last year’s staff returning. After opening, we will determine any additional staffing needs, and we have a good pool of applicants to choose from. The initial paperwork/drug testing day was February 21 and was well attended. Staff training was held on February 29.
- ✚ Golf course merchandise has already begun arriving. Inventory will consist of basics (balls/tees/gloves) with some expansion into apparel (hats, shirts). By design, inventory is limited to basics, but has been expanding based on how it is received by our patrons. We will not be stocking hard goods (clubs/bags).

- ✚ High School boys golf and middle school golf will start as soon as the courses open. A total of seven schools utilize our facilities.
- ✚ Leagues are being contacted for the start of their seasons (usually mid-late April). There is every reason to be optimistic about the new season!
- ✚ The big concern starting the season is how Foster Park will be received. LOTS of construction is going on associated with the Big Dig project, and the front nine is modified to include three shortened holes and a provisional green. Signage will be placed along the construction boundary to try and keep golfers out of that area. It remains to be seen how this will affect the amount of play, and we will be monitoring it closely.
- ✚ We are expecting delivery of 16 new carts to Foster Park in late April/early May which should put us in a good position for the year while allowing us to start increasing the number of carts in the total fleet. As we are putting carts back into service for the year, we will be discovering how well the fleet got through the winter.

Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



FW PUBLIC WORKS
**Greenways
& Trails**
In Your Neighborhood

- ✚ We opened bids for the Covington Road Trail: Hadley Rd to Getz Rd on February 29th. We only had two bidders. The low bid was Fleming Excavating at \$1,938,246. Construction will likely begin in the middle of April but could be delayed due to Aqua and NIPSCO moving their facilities.
- ✚ Neil Miller has left the Greenways & Trails Department and joined the Parks Department. We've made an offer and hope to have the new person begin on 3/11 or 3/18.
- ✚ We will be sending a Request for Qualifications out soon to hire an engineering firm to design the last phase of the Poka-Bache Connector in the City limits along Bluffton Road from Lower Huntington Road to Ferguson Road.
- ✚ On March 27th from 1-3, The League in partnership with Anthony Wayne Services will host an Inclusion Institute with a focus on our trail system.
- ✚ We had the pre-construction meeting with Krafft Water Solutions to discuss the construction of the Hanna Street Trail from Decatur Rd to Burns Blvd. They want to wait until school is out, so construction will begin in July.



Division News and Media Coverage:

Input FW, Feature on The Landing

<https://www.inputfortwayne.com/features/BeBetteronTheLanding.aspx>

Adams Radio Group, Fair Housing Summit coming in April

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/03/12/registration-now-open-for-the-2024-fair-housing-summit/>

WANE, City golf courses open

<https://www.wane.com/news/fore-fort-wayne-parks-golf-courses-open-for-2024-season/>

WPTA, Animal care discussion at City Council

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/12/national-organization-critical-fwacc-allen-countys-pets-deserve-better/>

WFFT, Neighbor complaints lead to trash bin violations and fines

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/neighbor-complaints-leads-to-trash-bin-violations-and-fines/>

WANE, DORA update

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/downtown-fort-wayne-gets-approval-on-dora-whats-next/>

WPTA, Ten Point Coalition receives award

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/11/fort-wayne-uniteds-ten-point-coalition-honored-unsung-heroes-event/?tbref=hp>

WFFT, Plans for Washington Center Rd.

https://www.wfft.com/news/allen-county-plans-to-expand-part-of-washington-center-road-to-four-lanes/article_abd3f970-e022-11ee-b20d-47c26a104a72.html

Adams Radio Group, Everyone Home meeting to address homelessness

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/03/11/everyone-home-meeting-hopes-to-address-homelessness/>

WPTA, City golf courses to open

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/10/golf-courses-opening-2024-season-throughout-fort-wayne/>

WANE, Parks and Recreation Community Center feature

<https://www.wane.com/news/think-the-community-center-is-just-for-seniors-these-kids-tell-a-different-story/>

The Community is asked to come together to help with a new Buddy Bench

A bench planned for Citizens Square would recognize Mayor Tom Henry

Fort Wayne, Ind. – The public is being asked to help donate one thousand cleaned and empty milk jugs for a new Buddy Bench to be installed at Citizens Square to recognize Mayor Tom Henry. The milk jugs will allow for a new bench to be built.

Residents may drop off milk jugs to Biggby Coffee at Georgetown, 6568 E. State Blvd., during normal business hours, March 9-23.

Resident Sammie Vance founded the Buddy Bench initiative in 2017 at the age of eight as an easy way for kids to find companionship. More information about Sammie and the Buddy Bench program can be found here - <https://sammiesbuddybenchproject.com/> and <https://www.polywood.com/buddybench>.

Mayor Henry has been a supporter of Sammie’s Buddy Bench efforts. They have had the privilege of meeting many times at benches around Fort Wayne, and Sammie included him in her book that was published a few years ago.

WPTA, Conservatory feature

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/07/walk-park-train-connection/>

WOWO, Great American Cleanup coming in May

<https://wowo.com/plans-are-in-place-for-fort-wayne-to-participate-in-the-nations-largest-community-improvement-program/>

City TV, Neighborhood Presidents meeting for March 2024

<https://acpl.viebit.com/player.php?hash=xT25UD5rtbXMb2KA>

City Golf Courses to Open March 12 and 13

Offering Season Passes, Instruction, Tournament and Group Outings

Fort Wayne, Ind –Foster, Shoaff, and McMillen Park Golf Courses will open for the 2024 season next week. McMillen and Shoaff will open on Tuesday, March 12, at 10:00 a.m., followed by Foster Park Golf Course on Wednesday, March 13, at 10:00 a.m. After opening day, the first start time will be 10:00 a.m. at least until the end of the month. Cart conditions for each course and opening for the driving ranges at Shoaff and McMillen will be determined day-to-day. Please call to inquire.

Also due to the ongoing construction of the Big Dig Sewer Project in Foster Park, the front nine will have a couple of temporary tees and greens starting in the 2024 golfing season and will last for an undetermined amount of time:

- Hole number four will have a temporary green.
- Two holes will play from shorter tees.
- The par on the front nine will be 34, which will make par for the course 34-35/69.

Please note: Foster Park Golf Course will be presented and played as-is.

City golf courses begin operations at sunrise and close 30 minutes before sunset, weather permitting. When inclement weather occurs, courses may close for a short period, or the day, depending on the severity of the weather. To check on course availability or to schedule tee times, call the golf course clubhouse where you plan to play.

Foster Park Golf Course	427-6735	www.fostergolfcourse.com
McMillen Park Golf Course and Driving Range	427-6710	www.mcmillengolfcourse.com
Shoaff Park Golf Course and Driving Range	427-6745	www.shoaffgolfcourse.com

Season Passes are on sale at the Main Parks Office (705 East State Blvd.). To schedule league reservations, an outing for a business, or tournaments, contact Gary Whitacre, Manager of Golf Operations by phone at 260-427-6016 or email at gary.whitacre@cityoffortwayne.org.

Follow FortWayneParksGolf on Facebook for course conditions and range announcements, information on discounts, and more.

Inclement Weather Procedure: Any program changes, facility closures, or other weather-related adjustments will be posted to the FWPRD social media pages and website. Text alerts will be sent (to those who have opted into this service). If the Mayor declares an emergency, all Parks and Recreation facilities and programs will be closed or canceled.

WFFT, Neighborhood Improvement Grant feature

https://www.wfft.com/community/city-of-fort-wayne-neighborhood-improvement-grant-application-deadline-friday/article_861a6528-db3d-11ee-a2f7-3f4438ff976d.html

WFFT, City solar efforts highlighted

https://www.wfft.com/news/local/fort-wayne-aims-to-offer-residents-solar-panels-if-epa-grant-approves/article_69d099b4-db42-11ee-abda-4b34cc94ed58.html

WANE, TRAA update

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fate-of-traa-rests-with-city-county-officials-councilman-says/>

WPTA, 'Walk in the Park' segment with Parks and Recreation on health event for the public

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/02/29/walk-park-free-blood-pressure-stroke-risk-assessment-event/>

This is an article borrowed from the magazine ***Parks and Recreation Business*** - THE WEEKENDER

Parks, Nature's Great Teachers

Parks play so many vital roles in communities. They're protective habitats for countless species, they're natural spaces for play and exploration, they're integral to conservation and sustainability efforts, and on the list goes. This week, however, I was reminded of how nature—and by extens the parks and recreation industry—is one of our greatest teachers.

One example—we're in the midst of National Invasive Species Awareness Week. To honor the initiative, Indiana State Parks urged its Facebook followers to wipe their shoes with a boot brush before entering nearby nature preserves. This simple action helps visitors avoid tracking seeds f invasive species in parks.

In another instance—the team from Timpanogos Cave dedicated an Instagram post to the differences between blue jays and Steller’s jays, two bird species that are often mistaken for one another.

And I’ve encountered several other educational tidbits like these, brushing up on everything from evidence-based playground recommendations to upcycled plastics.

Of course, parks are places to breathe, unwind, to move our bodies, and park leaders are there to both protect these spaces and help us make the best use of them. But regardless how we engage with parks, one thing we’re always doing in them is learning.

That’s indicative of what we do at *PRB+*, too. We dedicate a great deal of time to learning about what’s happening in parks, rec, and camps so that we can share our findings with you. Each new issue offers our readers an opportunity to learn and get inspired. Our March issue (not May, as I mistakenly said in Tuesday’s newsletter) continues in this tradition, offering new perspectives and technical details about various aspects of maintenance. That issue is coming very soon.

If you’re able to get to a park this weekend, take some time to look around you and learn, whether it’s through your own observations or more structured local programming. And visit prbplus.com for a last look at our February stories to see what you might have missed.

The options are limitless. There’s always something new to be discovered.

Jefferey Spivey - *Editor, Northstar Publishing*

WFFT, Community leaders send prayers to Mayor Henry

https://www.wfft.com/news/community-leaders-send-prayers-to-henry-family-after-mayor-s-cancer-diagnosis/article_012fac5c-d52e-11ee-a048-d7d808ae8d55.html

WFFT, What would happen if Mayor Henry has to step down

https://www.wfft.com/video/what-would-happen-if-mayor-tom-henry-has-to-step-down-amidst-cancer-battle/video_c63b7f7c-305c-5d6f-92ee-a0f3e643ec11.html

WANE, Road closure announced due to Google campus construction

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/portion-of-paulding-road-set-to-close-due-to-google-data-center-construction/>

WBCL, Mayor Henry seeking applicants for his youth engagement council

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/fort-wayne-mayors-youth-engagement-council-seeking-applicants>

WBCL, Implementing streetlights in Fort Wayne to combat crime

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/implementing-streetlights-in-fort-wayne-to-combat-crime-audio>

PBS 39, Primetime program with Sen. Glick and Rep. Lehman as guests

<https://www.pbs.org/video/sen-sue-glick-rep-matt-lehman-yxtzyw/>

Adams Radio Group, Jonathan Leist named new director of Community Development Division

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/02/26/new-director-of-fw-community-development-announced/>

WANE, Mayor's State of the City

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/mayor-commends-fort-waynes-unprecedented-momentum-in-annual-address/>

WPTA, Engage Fort Wayne feature

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/02/21/engage-fort-wayne-new-online-community-engagement-platform/>

Adams Radio Group, Mayor wins national award

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/02/21/environmental-protection-actions-win-mayor-henry-national-honor/>

WANE, Vacant office space in Fort Wayne

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/31-football-fields-of-fort-wayne-office-space-sitting-vacant-is-that-normal/>

WPTA, Visit Fort Wayne unveils 10-year tourism master plan

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/02/13/visit-fort-wayne-unveils-10-year-master-tourism-plan/>

Adams Radio Group, Fire Dept. receives grant

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/02/13/fwfd-gets-big-boost-for-training/>

WANE, Visit Fort Wayne shares 10-year vision for city's growth through tourism

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/visit-fort-wayne-shares-10-year-vision-for-citys-growth-through-tourism/>

WANE, Pontiac Street Market update

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/3-months-later-checking-in-with-the-pontiac-street-market/>

WANE, City Council on container homes

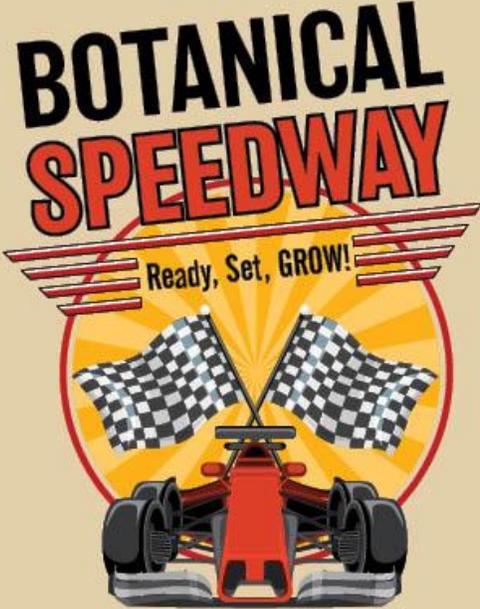
<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/city-council-ships-it-container-homes-approved-in-fort-wayne/>

WFFT, Visit Fort Wayne's tourism master plan

https://www.wfft.com/news/local/visit-fort-wayne-unveils-ten-year-plan-to-attract-more-tourism/article_31fe32ba-cadc-11ee-9876-673f5b3b51ae.html

Input FW, Franke Park Renaissance

<https://www.inputfortwayne.com/features/PlacesofNEI-frankeparkrenaissanceplan.aspx>



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