

## Steve McDaniel, Director

- # Staff and I met with two of the new council members. The staff and I here at Parks and Recreation are sending our thoughts and prayers to the Henry family. It has been an honor and privilege to serve Mayor Henry all of these years. We have been very grateful for his support and leadership. Mayor Henry always showed his support for our park system. He will be truly missed.
- # The team is working on new software for tracking the work hours of our employees. This will be launched throughout the department in a phased approach over the next several months. This software will align Parks and Recreation with the rest of the city.
- # Proposals were received for Foster Park's entrance and garden designs. This was passed by the board and will now go to the City Council for approval.
- # Chantell and I met with the Jennings Center Advisory Council to continue our discussions on matters about the center.
- # Working on a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Headwater's Alliance regarding the funding for the fountain/splash pad in Headwater's Park. This agreement will define their role as well as ours. This was presented to their board for their consideration.
- # A proposed soccer complex was announced across the street from the entrance to Buckner Park. Alec and I met with one of the developers to discuss their plans. It was informative and I look forward to a possible collaboration in the future.
- # I attended the annual volunteer dinner for the Botanical Conservatory and Lawton Greenhouse volunteers. This was an opportunity to thank all of the volunteers for the thousands of hours for both facilities.
- # The Historic Fort Wayne group launched improvements and a capital campaign for the Old Fort in the hopes of renovating several of the buildings at the Old Fort. We are very excited to see the improvements unfold over the next few months.
- # I attended the Arts United Awards held on March 20<sup>th</sup>. Our partner Friends of the Rivers won the Mayor's Award for their work with Clean Drain Art Murals across our city. It was great to see them win this award.
- # Foster Park Golf Course continues to have construction for the Deep Tunnel Project. This impacts holes 6-10. During this construction time, our team has developed temporary holes so that we can keep 18 open.
- # Franke Park Renaissance Project continues to take shape with the pouring of the deck of the new bridge, as well as the shell of the pavilion going up. The team shared that construction is on schedule for completion later this year.

- ✚ Installation has started on our new playgrounds. Over the next few months, 10 new playgrounds will be installed in 10 parks. This is very exciting to see and I hope the children and families will visit these new playgrounds.
- ✚ The team is working on developing a new Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation App to help citizens connect with our services. Individuals will be able to sign up for classes, rent a pavilion, purchase tickets to ride the Sweet Breeze Canal Boat or book a tee time at any of our golf courses through this app.

## **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**

- Met with the new director of Fort Wayne United and Ten Point Coalition
- Met with Risk Management about river safety for the upcoming boating season
- Held our bi-annual Extended Recreation Meeting for all full and part-time staff. Key topics included marketing, planning, and general networking among the staff.
- Worked with various staff to coordinate the spring seasonal training for recreational staff to prepare for the upcoming summer season.
- Attended the Downtown Safety Committee meeting. This is a monthly meeting to network and discuss ways to maintain or improve experiences downtown.
- Met with other various City departments and groups including Fort Wayne Fire Department, Animal Care and Control, Fort Wayne Police Department, and Lutheran Foundation.

### ✚ **Community Outreach**

- Neil Miller was hired as Supervisor of Community Outreach and began on Friday, March 1, 2024. His primary tasks will be overseeing the Park & Play program, activating McKinnie Commons, and coordinating with outside organizations to maintain and improve Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation's presence in the community.
- On April 6, 2024, qualifying McMillen Community Center, Weisser Youth Center, and Jennings Youth Center children will compete in a Basketball Skills Contest at Boys and Girls Club Fort Wayne (2609 Fairfield Avenue, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46807) at 11:00 AM. This is offered in partnership with the local chapter of Optimist International. Preliminary competition will be held at each location on Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at varying times.

### ✚ **Community Center**

- The annual Children's Book Swap & sale was held April 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, during the FWCS's spring break. This is a great opportunity for kids to come down and swap up to 5 books while purchasing is unlimited. It's also a great chance for teachers to stop in to purchase books in bulk for a low fee, with books as low as 25 cents. From pop-ups to paperbacks there's something for every child or teen.

- The Preschool program had three classes that reached the maximum number of 12 children. They were St. Patty's Day Party, Preschool Art (Spring), and Easter Extravaganza.
- The Community Center collaborated with Wane 15 news to cover our Preschool Youth Programs. Pat Hoffman put together a Positively Fort Wayne segment on the program as a whole. The segment aired on March 11th. It was great publicity for our programs, Community Center, and the FW Parks Dept. on Positively Fort Wayne.
- Caleb secured a sand volleyball court to offer youth volleyball to replace basketball this summer.
- Caleb and Linda attended the college/intern fair at Carroll High school in early March.
- Caleb attends the WorkOne hiring event at Franke #1 on 3/21.
- Josh Ogle secured two new sponsors for the Senior Games.
- The Community Center offered some new classes that have been very well received. They are Fairy Garden and Moss Box, Art 101, and Social Foundation (Advanced Ballroom Dance).
- The Spring Line Dancing Classes has 96 people enrolled! We added a Thursday class. The Tuesday class is full with 50 and Thursday has 46. The classes start the week of March 25.
- The Community Center is now a certified Kulture City location. The signs are up and we are finalizing our social story on the Kulture City website.
- McGovern Irish Dance did a demonstration/training class on March 13<sup>th</sup>. It was free and open to the public. There were approx. 20 people came to learn and watch the demonstration.
- The staff has been cleaning and preparing for the installation of the new sound system. They will be here on Wednesday, March 27<sup>th</sup> to begin the process. It is supposed to take 2 days.
- Mary, along with other staff, has been working on improving our WIFI. The Resultant has requested an upgrade to our bandwidth and has expedited our schedule for the installation of the Meraki system.
- Mary and Caleb met with a new Pickleball instructor, Al Jennings. He will be taking over our Intro classes.
- The staff has been planning upcoming events, Volunteer Recognition on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and Mother Son Sports Spectacular on May 10<sup>th</sup>. We decided to stick with the sports theme for the recognition so that we could use decorations for both events. The theme for it is "Our Volunteers are a Real Catch!"

#### Salomon Farm Park

- Salomon Farm Park held a volunteer appreciation breakfast on Saturday, March 9, 2024, starting at 10:00 am. Volunteer groups included garden volunteers, animal care, and blacksmith volunteers. There were 35 volunteers in attendance. This event had not been done for a few years, and the staff wanted to bring it back.
- Staff applications are still being accepted for the Farmin' Fun Day Camp at Salomon Farm Park.
- Camp registration began on Monday, March 25, 2024.
- Available group sizes are based on the current number of applicants. More groups could be added if more staff is obtained. Salomon Farm Park Farmin' Fun Day Camp has the following group sizes listed per week:
  - (30) 4 – 5 age group
  - (120) 6-11 age group
  - (12) FIT (Farmers-In-Training) 12+ years

- (15) CIT (Counselor-In-Training) 13+ years
- 177 campers per week
- Salomon Farm Park is currently seeking one or two additional cooking instructors. Staff members have been in contact with potential candidates who have expressed interest and have conducted interviews with some of them this month. While the positions will not need to be filled until the fall, planning for the Fall Fun Times has already commenced, and the deadline for submitting a copy for the Fun Times is June 28th.
- Chuck Reddinger and Eden Lamb had a productive meeting with Amy-Jo Sites, Animal Care and Control Director, and Lisa Cain, Animal Care and Control Deputy Director regarding Salomon Farm's animal concession permit and ensuring compliance with future animal programs at the farm. The discussion was a valuable collaboration that also involved exploring potential partnerships with other areas of the Parks Department.
- Salomon Farm Park recently transitioned two positions into the regular part-time category: The Animal Care Coordinator and a Maintenance position. Given that Salomon Farm Park operates year-round and maintains animals throughout the year, both of these roles will prove to be highly beneficial to the park's ongoing operations. Bethanie Shipman has transitioned into the regular part-time role of Animal Coordinator, while Nick Ventruella has assumed the maintenance position.

#### Sweet Breeze Canal Boat

- Sweet Breeze applications are still available online at the City of Fort Wayne website. Amanda Black, Assistant Boat Administrator, and Eden Lamb have been interviewing potential candidates.
- The Sweet Breeze operation is seeking to add five additional staff members. Ten staff members plan to return for the 2024 season. Training we begin in May.
- In addition to two other positions, the role of Assistant Boat Administrator has been approved to transition into a regular part-time position. Amanda Black, who currently holds this position, has now been appointed as the Assistant Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation and Boating. In this capacity, she will primarily focus on overseeing Sweet Breeze operations, as well as managing outdoor recreation activities at Lindenwood Nature Preserve and other outdoor recreation programs and events.

#### Johnny Appleseed Campground - The final step in the campground construction process was the hydroseeding of the new sites. Weather permitting, this task was completed this month.

#### Franke Park Day Camp

- Applications are still being accepted for Franke Park Day Camp on the City of Fort Wayne website.
- Camp registration began on Monday, March 25, 2024.
- Available group sizes are determined by the current number of applicants. Additional groups may be added if more staff are hired. Franke Park Day Camp offers the following group sizes per week:
  - (20) 4 – 5 age group
  - (156) 6-11 age group
  - (12) Junior Leaders 12+ years
  - (36) CIT (Counselor-In-Training) 13+ years

- 224 campers per week
- Franke Park Day Camp will be held Monday, June 10, 2024, through Friday, July 26, 2024, with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July being an off week.

### Weisser Park Center

- **Microgreens Indoor Garden:** On Thursday, March 7, 2024, our Microgreens Program began. We had 2 sessions. In the first session, the youth learned the nutritional value of consuming microgreens, prepared soil, and planted broccoli, arugula, radish, and turnip microgreens. Youth were given instructions on how to care for the microgreens so they would grow properly. They did a fantastic job of following the instructions and daily routine to care for their microgreens. On Thursday, March 14, 2024, the youth enjoyed a beautiful and tasty harvest of microgreens. They bagged their harvest of microgreens and planted a second batch of microgreens consisting of radish, kale, and arugula. We are looking forward to another successful harvest.
- **Bucket Drumming:** On Monday, March 11, 2024, our seasonal team lead member, Rob Mauldin facilitated our youth in learning some fundamentals of drumming. For example, how to grip the drumsticks, counting, and basic beats. The youth were excited that they were going to learn the art of bucket drumming.
- **American Red Cross Hands-Only CPR Class:** On Monday, March 11, 2024, the American Red Cross instructed our youth on how to use Hand-Only CPR to save lives. The youth were excited to learn and had plenty of great questions for the facilitators.
- **STEM Learning:** The youth enjoyed participating in a Lego building competition, building helicopters using popsicle sticks, and assembling puzzles.
- **Allen County Public Library:** ACPL had one session with our youth. The youth learned about famous sculptures and viewed pictures of their art. The youth also enjoyed making their self-standing sculpture using construction paper.
- **Erin's House:** Erin's House had three sessions. In the first session, Erin's House used puppets to assist youth in understanding and processing their emotions regarding loss. In the second session, the youth listened to the book *The Grief Rock*, shared positive ways they can remember their deceased loved one, and learned about Erin's House Summer Camp. In the third session, the youth enjoyed a Ball Toss Trivia Game regarding processing grief.
- **Parkview Healthy Seeds:** On Tuesday, March 19, 2024, Parkview Healthy Seeds celebrated National Nutrition Month with the youth. The youth learned what foods are good for different systems within the body and made and enjoyed eating Salsa Hummus using tomatoes, carrots, peppers, mint, and garlic.

### Jennings Recreation Center

- On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Jennings Recreation Center received its first-ever youth-published book. It was a free service from Studenttreasures. Jennings Recreation Center book is titled, *What Kindness Means to Me*. Each of the 22 student authors had to draw a picture and explain what kindness meant to them. This program was fun and exciting for the youth, they took their time and were able to explain their thought process in detail. Each author did get a paperback copy of the book and certificate to take home and share with their family.

- On February 26<sup>th</sup>, Jennings Recreation Center took 18 youths to the Allen County Public Library for their Black History Treasure Hunt and Library Cards designed with Rosa Parks' picture. The youth had a great time tracking down clues to complete the hunt and get a prize.
- On March 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Girl Coalition partnered with Jennings Recreation Center for a pilot program. This was for female youth only. Each female youth created their very own board game to take home and play with their family. 10 youths completed their board games. They each used their creative minds to design the board game just as they would like it. Girl Coalition supplied all the necessary items to get this complete. The hope is that they will make this an ongoing opportunity for (with other programs and activities) young ladies to show how they can be innovative thinkers and designers.
- On March 12<sup>th</sup> the American Red Cross instructed 25 youth at Jennings Recreation Center youth on how to use Hand-Only CPR to save lives. The youth were excited, very attentive, asking questions, and eager to learn. The Facilitators were very friendly and upbeat and the youth liked their presentation and using the small trucks as the "human".
- On Thursdays Jennings Recreation Center has partnered with "The Scouts" (formally the Boy Scouts) The Scouts now offer programs for both males and females from Kindergarten through high school. Jennings has 15-18 youth who are registered and participate weekly. They have learned the Scout motto and basic rules and expectations. They play a variety of games that follow the guidelines and principles of the Scouts.
- STEM/STEAM: Hands-on interactive program led by Jennings Center staff. The youth started small growing plants that are inside Jennings on the window ledge. They all started from little seeds and the youth are eager to check and water them daily/weekly. Some of them have outgrown the pot they came in. The students worked together through all steps of the process to see their plants grow from seeds that they doubted to the beautiful plants they now see.
- Adult programs are up and running at Jennings Recreation Center. The center offers free yoga on Thursdays (12-1 pm) and on March 5<sup>th</sup> added Meditation as a 6-week program (March 5-April 9<sup>th</sup>).
  - Feb. 21- March 20<sup>th</sup>- YOGA- 17
  - Feb 21-March 20<sup>th</sup> – Mediation- 14 (2 sessions)
  - Feb 21<sup>st</sup>- March 20<sup>th</sup>- Lunch and Games- 18
  - Feb 21<sup>st</sup>- March 20<sup>th</sup>- Presentations- Parkview Blood Pressure and Stroke assessment - 8
- On March 4, 2024, Jennings Recreation Center hosted the PoADEC (People of Afrikan Decent Elders Council meeting. There were 11 members present at the meeting.

## **Golf**

- Jason Smith stated that the majority of seasonal golf staff were officially hired and trained ahead of the course openings. He also stated that hiring will continue as summer gets closer.
- Gary Whitacre reported that Foster, McMillen, and Shoaff Golf Courses were officially open for the season. He stated that it's been a roller coaster ride as far as the weather goes. The promising aspect is that, on nice days there are a lot of golfers.

- Tom Mizzell reported that he had/is going through all of the golf carts to make sure that they are being maintained and doing preventive maintenance on them to avert potential problems during the busy season.
- Bryan Keister reported that he has been going to the semi-weekly “big dig” construction meetings. He, along with Steve McDaniel and Chad Shaw have expressed concern for the temporary path along Foster Golf Hole #10. The construction company has said that they were going to put up temporary fencing to prevent greenway patrons and workers from getting hit by stray balls. Bryan stated that he still hasn’t seen anything yet.
- Gary Whitacre stated that two of the golf clubhouse assistant managers are switching locations. The hope is that they will have a fresh perspective on operations.

+ **🚦 Pools** - Daryn Schwartz reported that he is receiving numerous pool applications. Especially lifeguards. He stated that this is great news compared to the previous three seasons. He has been in contact with the returners and interviewed the new applicants.

+ **🚦 Riverfront Monthly Report**

- The 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Literacy Expo kicked off March programming at Promenade Park. This event led by Riverfront Staff Jesus Rosario continued to build off its inaugural event last year to include more vendors and educational sessions for the Fort Wayne community.
- Our second Sundays at Promenade continue to grow its attendance at Kickboxing with 9round studios as we look to move this program and yoga outside as it begins to warm up outside.
- A new Riverfront Program was held on March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick’s Day called the Green Thumb Garden Tour. This event had close to 200 people in the Park Foundation Pavilion to listen to workshops on gardening, landscaping, plants, and much more. Local vendors sold plants and seeds to get people ready for Spring planting. We also held a plant walk that gave away close to 100 different types of plants donated to the event. The City of Fort Wayne utilities department was also in attendance to talk about the different opportunities they have for grants and other programs to assist in urban gardening and much more.
- March 24<sup>th</sup> we held our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Riverfront Spring celebration at the park to 250 people in attendance. The pavilion was packed with families to see the Soaring Hawk bird presentation along with different kids’ arts and crafts to celebrate the beginning of Spring. Soaring Hawk had 2 owls, 2 hawks, and a bald eagle and allowed the attendees to have an up-close interaction with each bird. The Fort Wayne library was in attendance with an activity to create an owl out of paper and we also had an activity that allowed the kids to create a bug hotel for them to take home with them.
- On March 31<sup>st</sup> was the River Rangers: Eclipse Explorers. This event is a spinoff of our Summer River Rangers weekly program to bring kids to the park to learn about STEM through hands-on activities. We partnered with the Purdue Fort Wayne astrology department to provide an immersive educational experience for kids to learn about the solar eclipse. The event cost \$5 and each participant was given eclipse sunglasses so that they would be able to observe the eclipse on April 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Rentals at Promenade included a Bridal shower on March 9<sup>th</sup> that had close to 100 people in attendance. “One Lucky Guitar” marketing group rented the pavilion and areas of the Park to shoot some promotional videos for Fort Wayne Tourism video. This video will include interviews with local people working in Fort Wayne and image shots of the rest of the Park to promote downtown Fort Wayne. The Botanical Conservatory Volunteer Dinner was held on

March 18<sup>th</sup> with around 114 people in attendance. The night was filled with great food from Shigs n Pit along with drinks from Ted's Beer Hall. The evening celebrated the many volunteers who helped the Conservatory throughout the year. The pavilion was decorated with floral arrangements and plants from the Conservatory and included presentations on the annual report from all the work that they had been able to accomplish throughout the year.

### **McMillen Park Community Center**

- Registrations were up this month by about 15% compared to last month. We had 43 new registrations for March. We are constantly getting new children joining our after-school program. The Kids Korner numbers have decreased by about 20% this month compared to last month. We had 261 patrons visit the Kids
- The Ladies First youth program had the chance to pick what type of guest speaker they would like to come and talk to. They chose a police officer. Officer Bryant came and filled them in on what it's like being a cop in Fort Wayne and answered some questions they may have had. The ladies asked lots of questions and got their official police badge (stickers) to take home. One girl asked why are police officers so racist. Her being 9 years old and asking a question of that magnitude made a big impact on the vibe in the room and opened the other girls up to asking in-depth questions. The girls learned the importance of always being aware of their surroundings, never going anywhere with a stranger, never touching a gun lying around the house, and if anything, bad happens dial 9-1-1! At the end of the class, one student was so comfortable she told Officer Bryant that her father is in jail and if he sees him could he tell him she loves and misses him? Her feeling comfortable enough to say that in front of the other girls was very heartfelt. Officer Bryant was very grateful he got a chance to put to rest some of the stereotypes children tend to have about police officers.
- March 1<sup>st</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> Kids Café served 486 meals. From March 1<sup>st</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> we served 317 snacks. From March 1<sup>st</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> there were 578 children in attendance. We served 25 Breakfasts from February 1<sup>st</sup> – to 19<sup>th</sup>. Our Kids café program is going along great. Each week we have different children come in and work in the kitchen. They are learning how to prep food, measure ingredients, temp food, serve food, do the milk count, properly clean up after cooking, and prep for the next day. The children love helping in the kitchen there are always more volunteers than positions available to help.
- On March 16<sup>th</sup> we held a Parents Night Out. There were 23 children signed up to attend and 17 showed up the night of. This month's theme was Bees. They played Bee BINGO. The children got to use Jelly beans as their markers for the game. There were 6 winners. The prize was a bubble pop pouch full of candy. All the children got to either eat the jelly beans after or save them to take home. After the activity, they went to the indoor playground and played. They love the indoor playground. They were taught how to play GAGA ball, they played catch with the football and played a round of kickball. After they went to watch the movie and eat pizza. The children didn't want to watch The Bee Movie so they ended up watching Wreck-It Ralph. It's always funny

at dismissal because the children never want to leave they always say “We just got here. Why is it so short?”.

- The Kids Korner numbers have decreased by about 20% this month compared to last month. We had 261 patrons visit Kids Korner this month. And when FWCS is out, Kids Korner isn't open to the public and that may be an attribution to the reason why the numbers have decreased.
- During March adult programming has increased due to additional programming. The adult open gym has been getting a lot of attention. During open gym we have full-court basketball games, volleyball courts are being used, and also the game of Sepak Takraw. Cardio Fit and Essential Step started back on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Cardio Fit is a ramped up fast pace cardio class for women. Essential Step is a smooth dance routine class taught by Lisa Little. The class has resumed from a break and is seeing an increase in participation. Adult Basketball has started back up and is now in its fifth week.

## **Sandra Odisho – Finance Manager**

### **✚ For Payroll:**

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 143 employees (137 full-time and 106 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending March 23<sup>rd</sup>, and paid on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing, or in the process of being hired, as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024:
  - Heavy Equipment Working Leader (Fund 121)
  - Heavy Equipment Operator (Fund 121)
  - Maintenance Technician II - Electrician (Fund 121)
  - Gardener Helper (Fund 121)
  - Supervisor IV – Neighborhood Programs (Fund 121)
- All of our seasonal positions have been posted and are live on both the City's website and our Parks and Recreation website.
  - Seasonal maintenance staff and camp supervisors are being hired now.
  - Golf courses are now open and we are working on getting them fully staffed.
- We had three new regular part-time positions added this month, a Maintenance and Animal Care Coordinator for Salomon Farm and an Assistant Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation and Boating.
- Currently, we are evaluating and reviewing our payroll procedures and looking to streamline our processes with the use of an electronic timekeeping system. The City Information Technology Director is assisting us with this transition.

### **✚ For Front Office**

- Rhonda Berg, the Front Office Manager, came back to work from FMLA on March 18<sup>th</sup>!
- The big news for March in the front office is Day Camp Registration! In March we got all the camps set up on our registration system and checked and double-checked that they would be ready for the first sale date, which was March 25<sup>th</sup>. Our revenue increased by 25% over 2023's first day of registration. It was a very busy day!!
- Several Foellinger Theatre shows are currently on sale, with Rick saying there will be many more to come!

- The pavilions that are winterized were almost all being used every Saturday and Sunday in March. The office staff was busy assisting customers with reserving times this Spring and Summer. All 22 pavilions are reserved for every Saturday and Sunday in June already. Pavilions are very popular for graduation parties.
- 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. This change is scheduled to take place on April 8<sup>th</sup>.
- 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 middle 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. Kim has been working diligently on this with VSI and also with Park's Marketing Division to make sure the app is a good representation of our Department. We are hoping to have the app up and running for the public, no later than June or July 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: **155** for December. This is up from **141** in November.
- Graffiti was removed from the flowing locations; Swinney Homestead- Tunnel, Foster Pavilion # 3, and Lakeside Pavilion 1 Restrooms.
- Updates to the locks at all the pavilions are done. The update allowed facilities to communicate with the Main Office staff with a more direct approach to the pavilion lock codes. A new update will be coming in 2024 with new features that will benefit us.
- Downtown Community Center's annual cleaning is continuing.
- The new holiday light display for McKinney Commons was installed for its inaugural season.
- The 2023/2024 season of the Nice Rink at Lakeside Park began as the rink was installed during the first week of the month.
- New furniture for the Albert Jennings Center was assembled and moved into the computer room.
- Repairs were made to the Franke Park Day camp Nature Lodge. This included exterior window trim and interior door frames.
- Plumbing fixtures were removed from the Franke Park heavy equipment salt barn.
- New outlets were installed on the exterior wall for the Lawton Park forestry building which allows for the engine block heaters on the bucket trucks to be safely plugged in.

## **Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment**

- Mowing crews were able to continue mulching leaves until December 15th.
- Mowing crews then spent time pressure washing the mowers, greasing them, and then storing them for the winter at Kreager Park.
- Crews used dump trucks to pick up limbs and debris from the parks before snow covered these locations.
- All summer turf equipment has been cleaned, serviced, and stored for the winter in various locations including Lawton Park, Kreager Park, Harris Rd., and the Sears barn.
- All snow equipment has been set up, serviced, and prepared for winter use.
- Relief crews utilized the warmer weather by doing some late fall trimming of the greenway and have helped out with leaf cleanup.
- Heavy Equipment has been staying busy with hauling away debris for various departments.
- They have also been working on snow stake placement and resetting parking ties.
- The garbage truck is only running twice a week.

## **Manager of Facilities, Trades and Grounds**

- There were 14 after-hours calls: 9 code issues, 1 plumbing call, 1 HVAC call, 1 electrical issue, 1 trash question, and 1 miscellaneous call.
- Premier Communications installed an additional camera and monitor was added at the Weisser Park Community center.
- Jack Laurie was hired to do the annual clean of the multipurpose floor at the downtown Community Center.
- Lan-Con Electric was hired to install two new outlets for the kilns at the downtown Community Center.
- Mompar Insulation spray foamed the exterior wall at the Rea Building to prevent the sprinkler system from freezing again this year.
- Verkada sent a new camera replacement for Camp Caine.
- The Resultant did a refresh at both Foster and Shoaff golf courses, as well as at Lawton Park.

## **Main Trac Coordinator**

- Main Trac Entries: 2,647 for the month.
- We have had 10, 311 calls this month.
- Busy entering time sheets, gas tickets, and contracted invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Chucks Recreation Staff.
- Nicole is still working with many different people to see if it is possible to get out of the dark ages on how hours are put into MainTrac. Nicole has looked into GIS, Survey 123, and our Main trac system, trying to find the best one.
- Nicole and Forestry have been working on collecting the last of the payments for the Citizen Match Tree Program.

## **Lawton Garage/Operations Manager**

### **Garage Operations Highlights:**

- 106 work orders were scheduled this month, 17 of which were services.
- The last truck from the 2023 lease, a Ford F250 regular cab was delivered and will be set up for Landscape.
- The 2022 equipment lease was officially closed by the controller's office. They were able to move some purchases from 2023 to the 2022 lease so the Parks Dept. wouldn't lose any of our equipment funding.
- The last of the 2022 equipment was finally delivered. This includes 2- Toro 7210 mowers for the Grounds and a Toro polar trac for the Promenade.
- Garage staff conducted a training session for Landscape and Promenade staff on the use of the new Toro Polar Trac unit.
- The first Landscape golf cart cab was installed. Garage staff assisted the Landscape working leader on the project.
- Mechanics finished the process of converting the Toro 7210 mowers to polar tracks with help from the Grounds staff.
- Change orders are being prepared regularly to keep the unleaded and diesel tanks filled until the 2024 budget begins in January.
- Quotes are still coming in for 2024 equipment purchases to allow for budgeting for what each division needs.
- Option sheets for 2024 vehicle purchases have been filled out with various dealers to allow the parks to get vehicles equipped as we require them.
- New Kenwood radios for the Conservatory were delivered to the radio shop and are in the process of being programmed so they will work with the existing radio system.
- Work began on a department-wide equipment audit. A list was submitted to each area to verify that all of the vehicles and equipment on that list are present and accounted for. This allows internal audit to spot-check our inventory without any issues.
- Truck 14 was delivered to H&H in Hometown so that in January the existing utility body can be removed and installed on one of the new facilities route trucks. Power lift gates and running boards will also be installed on new trucks in January.
- Van 44 was taken out of service due to an exhaust issue. The replacement parts have been on order from the dealer for some time and have not arrived yet.
- Grounds transported truck 159 to Kalida Truck Equipment to have the new snow plow installed on that truck.
- Snow plows and salt boxes have been checked for proper operation as they have been installed and several pieces of Landscape equipment were winterized for seasonal storage.
- The Promenade pontoon boat was winterized and stored in the Rea building.

### **Storeroom and Property:**

- Storeroom staff began the yearly process of doing inventory. This requires counting every piece of inventory in stock. This is verified by the controller's office by handpicking several items to spot-check the quantity listed in the Main Trac system.
- The storeroom helped prepping multiple backpack blowers and power tools for both Landscape and Grounds.

- Storeroom staff has continued the process of going through all of the old stock of supplies to clear out expired items and materials no longer used by the department.
- 15 passenger vans were prepared and used by the recreation to transport children around to look at Christmas lights.

**Property Transactions:**

23 Ford F250	P230	Added into Inventory
23 Stihl BT45 Auger	P230	Added into Inventory
23 Toro 7210 Polar Trac	P230	Added into Inventory
23 MB snow blade	P230	Added into Inventory
23 MB snow broom	P230	Added into Inventory
23 Toro 7210s (2)	P240	Added into Inventory
23 Stihl BR600 blowers (4)	P240	Added into Inventory

**2022 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update: Closed**

Toro Polartrac	Delivered
Toro 7210 Zero Turn Mower (3)	Delivered
Toro Groundsmaster 4000 Mower	Delivered
Ford F750 Chassis	Canceled
Chip Body for Above	Canceled
Ford F150 Pickup	Delivered
Ford Transit 250 Van	Delivered

**2023 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update:**

Club Car enclosed cabs (2)	Delivered
Replacement Plow for truck 159	Delivered
John Deere 835M Gator	Delivered
Ventrac 4520z Tractor	Delivered
Phillips FRx AEDS (8)	Delivered
Dump Trailer	Delivered
Tilt Trailer	Delivered
Equipment Trailers (2)	Delivered
John Deere greens mowers	23121200
John Deere Aercore 800	23121213
Ford F250 Pick-Ups (4)	Delivered
Motorola Replacement radios	Submitted
Toro Dingo loader	Delivered

**Safety**

- The Parks & Rec. The Safety Committee did not meet this month due to the holidays.
- 2 vehicle crashes were reported for this period.
- 2023 Statistics: 14 total crashes
  - 10 preventable
  - 4 non-preventable
- 2 employee injuries were reported during this time.
  - 2023 Statistics: 46 total injuries

- 27 treatable injuries
- 358 restricted days
- 1 lost day
- 2 CPR/FA classes were held. 11 employees were certified.
- Park yearly AED inspection/ updates are complete.
- The review of Parks Safety SOPs continues.

## Alec Johnson, Deputy Director of Planning & Development,

### Forestry, Landscape & Horticulture, Riparian and the Planning Report – March 2024



- The Franke Renaissance construction project continues on-schedule. Cranes being used for bridge construction have moved off-site, as construction of its major components concludes. We will see bridge railing installation in the coming weeks. Work on the pavilion continues, including roofing, masonry, and window framing. Except for gas, all other major utility connections are complete. Interior HVAC and electrical work are in-progress. We can expect to see site work pick back up in the coming months.
- Riverfront Phase II design and permitting carries on; we are currently contending with conditions outlined in the IDNR Construction in a Floodway permit as they relate to FEMA requirements, in addition to waiting on our ACOE 408/IDEM 401 permits. Coordination with the private development at the former Schaab site continues, as well.
- Final construction document reviews are being completed for Brewer Park Redevelopment; the project will go to bid in April.
- A 95% construction document set for Packard Park Redevelopment was received in late March; we will be reviewing these drawings in the coming weeks, and anticipate bidding in late spring/early summer.
- 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.
- The Foster Park Entrance Design contract has been tentatively awarded to Earth Source, Inc.; we will seek approval from the City Council in April, with the project to kick off soon afterward. We hope to see design completion next winter, with bidding and construction to begin in early 2025.
- Four bids were received for the Fourth Street Trestle Bridge Replacement project. We will seek approval for a construction contract with R.L. McCoy, Inc. for the removal and replacement of the existing bridge. We anticipate construction to take place in winter 2024-25.
- The staff took part in the Conservatory and Greenhouse Volunteer Celebration Dinner. The Botanical Conservatory staff planned and executed a very nice dinner and reception for a packed house of our valued volunteers at Promenade Park.
- The staff has been working with several interest groups, headed by Rivergreenways, on reviewing and making recommendations for an ordinance on the use of electric micro-mobility devices on our local trails.

- The staff has been working on the development of a three-year staffing strategy in hopes of bolstering our various divisions so that we can strengthen and improve our level of service to the community through Parks.
- The staff took part in the Inclusion Institute’s trail accessibility discussion at AWS. This meeting offered the opportunity for differently-abled citizens to offer their perspectives on challenges and opportunities for trail use in our parks and beyond.
- 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, including the replacement of a section of pathway in the Tropical House, improvements to the Tropical House linkway, and painting of various meeting rooms.

#### **Horticulture and Landscape Report- March 2024**

- Landscape staff cleared mud off the docks after a large flood event at Promenade Park.
- Landscape staff completed the spring cleanups and mulching at the Foster, McMillen, and Shoaff golf clubhouses before the courses opened.
- Staff began focusing on high visibility areas for spring cleanups, which include any or all of the following: tree/shrub pruning, bed edging, bed cleanups, preemergent treatments, and mulching. Areas of work in March included multiple beds in both Foster and Lakeside Park, Little Turtle Memorial, Headwaters, Freimann, Franke, Promenade, Franklin, Moody Park, the Swinney and Bluffton Road Letter beds, and the Northside main office.
- The staff over-seeded natural areas where Honeysuckle had been removed during the prior season with native seed mixes. These areas included the Headwaters river banks, as well as Old Fort Park. Native over-seeding was also done to supplement native plantings in Promenade Park and Buckner Park.
- Pre-emergent herbicide treatments are in the process of being completed at Lakeside Park and Foster Park.
- Lakeside staff began cutting rose canes down.
- Liriope groundcover beds in multiple parks were mown for aesthetics.
- Some poor weather has resulted in greenhouse work (transplanting, seeding, etc.) being completed by landscape staff.
- Per the contract, MJK Total Lawn Care did a spring leaf cleanup of all turf and landscape beds in Headwaters Park. Leaves have been removed in anticipation of the April mulch installation and the beginning of the mowing season.
- Pride Landcare completed all contracted spring landscape maintenance that included bed edging, mulching, and pre-emergent applications in March. Parks completed were Franke-Pavilion 1, Franke-Pond Pavilion, Salomon, Northside-PSI OTE Upper and Lower Pavilions, Shoaff-Riverlodge Pavilion, Indian Village-Sears Pavilion, Jennings Center, Powell Park, McMillen Community Center, Weisser Center, and McKinnie Commons.
- Visionscapes completed all contracted spring landscape maintenance that included partial bed cleanups, bed edging, mulching, and pre-emergent applications. Parks completed in March were Downtown Community Center, McMillen Pool, Northside Pool, Nuckols Park, Freimann Square, Courthouse Green, and the Main Street Medians.
- Triscap completed their mulching contract at Promenade park.
- Lawnganics began their organic turf fertilization and weed control contract. Applications to the turf were made at Promenade, Headwaters, Foster, Lakeside, Courthouse Green, Freimann, Community Center, Foellinger Theatre, Main Street Medians, McMillen Pool, Northside Pool, and Meyers Park.

- Heartland Restoration Services contract was renewed for the maintenance of the park’s native plantings, rain gardens, bioswales, etc. areas located at Salomon Farms, Kreager Park, Buckner Park, Lakeside Park, Reservoir, and the Thomas Nature Sanctuary.
- Triscape was awarded the spring landscape maintenance at Headwaters Park East and West. Weather depending, bed edging, pre-emergent applications, and mulching will be completed the first week in April.
- Myers Plant Health Care will be treating several select trees at Promenade, Lakeside, Freimann, and Foster for insects, fungi, and improved tree health.
- Pfister Sprinkler Systems was awarded a PO to do emergency repairs to all irrigation systems. This work will be done as needed this season in Promenade, Freimann, Community Center, Main Street Medians, Courthouse Green, Meyers, Northside Park, Foellinger Theatre, McKinnie Commons, Riverfront IIA, and Lakeside.
- Sarah Colter was promoted from the Lakeside Gardener Helper position to the Lakeside Gardener Position in March. Sarah has worked at Lakeside as the Gardener Helper for over two years. The vacant Lakeside Gardener Helper position has been posted.
- Beth Krill received her Ornamental Pest Management License by completing the 3A Pesticide Examination in March. Beth’s responsibilities include overseeing all the landscape maintenance within Promenade Park, as well as, assisting the rest of the downtown team with maintenance at all the downtown parks.
- Volunteers worked 317.75 hours in the greenhouse.
- 29,500 seeds were planted in the greenhouse for the Mother’s Day Plant Sale, Parks and Botanical Conservatory Showcase.
- The greenhouse sent 681 plants to the Home & Garden Show of which 458 were sold.

#### **Riparian Management Report- March 2024**

- Two seasonals began work in the second week of March.
- Completed forklift training and certification.
- Assisted with silt removal on South and North Dock after a recent flood.
- Cleared and treated honeysuckle along the river near Orff Park/Thieme Drive. Approx. 1.5 tons.
- Cleared logs from Van Buren and Ewing bridges. Approx. 1,520 pounds (6.26 tons).
- Began clearing log jams on Spy Run Creek in the Brookview neighborhood and at Lawton.
- Continued scouting for geese nest signs for upcoming egg addling season. Addled one nest with four eggs. Scouting will continue into next month.
- Submitted this year’s Idle Speed Zone permits for Guldlin, Lawton, and Headwaters.
- Repairing Shoaff dock from last season’s damage.
- Sweet Breeze was uncovered for the upcoming season. Spring Commissioning began.

#### **Forestry Report- March 2024**

- Collaborated with the risk management division to clarify Forestry’s after-hours storm response protocols and expectations. Tree work is the most dangerous job in America. This work becomes exponentially more dangerous during low light conditions and following storm events. We view this as a crucial first step in ensuring the safety of both personnel and the public.
- Met with the City Utilities division to discuss the value of trees as they relate to the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP). Prioritizing trees within environmental resilience plans enhances their effectiveness, while also providing multiple co-benefits for communities and ecosystems.
- Worked with the Northside Neighborhood Association and the Spy Run Neighborhood Association to identify strategies for re-growing lost tree canopy within their neighborhoods. Our Citizen Match Tree

Planting Program is one of the opportunities that they are expected to take advantage of over the next few years.

- This year's Arbor Day Celebration will be held on April 26<sup>th</sup>, at Northside Park. Arbor Day is celebrated to promote environmental awareness, encourage tree planting and care, and inspire collective action towards building a greener, more sustainable future.
- During March, forestry crews completed 229 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.
- 28 high-priority trees were removed by in-house crews this month. 10 of these were located within our parks. 2 were a result of vehicle damage.
- This month crews responded to 9 storm-related fallen/hanging limbs and 1 tree was a privately- owned tree that had fallen in the right-of-way.
- Forestry staff responded to and resolved 35, 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

### **Botanical Conservatory Report – March 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 March 2024 including the Great Train Connection (March 8 – 10), Volunteer Appreciation Dinner (March 18), and Bunny Tales in the Garden (March 29 – 30). Staff are gearing up for Color in Motion: Live Butterfly Exhibit (Opening April 16), and several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month. Current vacancies include Camp ACTiVenture Counselors (2) (selected applicants in screening process), and Conservatory Maintenance Seasonal (selected applicant in screening process). Seasonal Maintenance, Emma Amos, separated from employment.

### **Botanical Conservatory KPIs**

March 2024 wrapped up the first quarter of 2024 with increased attendance and great revenue figures. During the quarter, the Botanical Conservatory observed increases in attendance of 18.21% and membership revenue of 27.95% to the same period in 2023. Conservatory Shop revenue continues to climb, with an impressive 3.96% increase Q1-over-Q1 to 2023 (which previously was a record-breaking year for the Conservatory Shop). Rental sales have slowed year-over-year, as availability for 2024 is very limited and Saturdays in 2025 are mostly sold through. Overall, a compelling exhibit theme and inspired execution have continued to drive traffic in the first quarter of the year. March total revenue is greater than an average month, which is attributable to the 2024 Park Foundation distribution totaling \$160,940.00.

#### **Attendance**

March 2023:	7,710 visitors
March 2024:	11,418 visitors
An increase of 3,708 or +48.09% to 2023	

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Attendance:	20,342 visitors
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2024 Attendance: 24,046 visitors  
An increase of 3,704 or +18.21% to 2023

**Admissions Revenue**

March 2023: \$32,512.00  
March 2024: \$48,244.00  
An increase of \$15,732.00 or +48.39% to 2023

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Admissions Revenue: \$82,681.00  
2024 Admissions Revenue: \$96,506.00  
An increase of \$13,825.00 or +16.72% to 2023

**Membership Revenue**

March 2023: \$8,980.00  
March 2024: \$11,032.00  
An increase of \$2,052.00 or +22.85% to 2023

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Membership Revenue: \$25,352.06  
2024 Membership Revenue: \$32,438.00  
An increase of \$7,085.94 or +27.95% to 2023

**Conservatory Shop Revenue**

March 2023: \$22,578.02  
March 2024: \$24,707.23  
An increase of \$2,129.21 or +9.43% to 2023

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Gift Shop Revenue: \$68,480.85  
2024 Gift Shop Revenue: \$71,189.43  
An increase of \$2,708.58 or +3.96% to 2023

**Rental & Catering Fee Revenue**

March 2023: \$10,825.00  
March 2024: \$7,145.00  
A decrease of \$3,680.00 or +34.00% to 2023

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Rental Revenue: \$33,017.50  
2024 Rental Revenue: \$24,952.50  
A decrease of \$8,065.00 or -24.43% to 2023

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

March 2023: \$199,684.61  
March 2024: \$220,147.62

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Other Revenue:	\$214,083.90
2024 Other Revenue:	\$222,903.01

**Conservatory Total Revenue**

March 2023:	\$287,895.39
March 2024:	\$311,275.85

An increase of \$23,380.46 or +8.12% to 2023

**YTD Comparisons**

2023 Total Revenue:	\$423,615.31
2024 Total Revenue:	\$447,988.94

An increase of \$24,373.63 or +5.75% to 2023

**Botanical Conservatory Business Development**

- Staff is finishing the full application for \$20,000 support of the Desert House Improvements Project to the Olive B. Cole Foundation. The request will be submitted the first week of April to the Cole Foundation.
- The Do it Best Foundation declined support for the Desert House Improvements Project, citing numerous requests and a lack of available funds to support all projects.
- Youth in Philanthropy declined to support the 2024 Live Butterfly Exhibit, citing numerous requests and a lack of available funds to support all projects.
- Staff submitted final media reports to US 93.3 for the 2024 Great Train Connection; and to PBS Fort Wayne and Majic 95.1 for the 2023 Timeless Tradition Exhibit. These reports will enable us to approach these media for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.
- Promotional and complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to FOX55 and Majic 95.1 for the 2024 Bunny Tales in the Garden. Provided information for the stations' promotional spots.

**Botanical Conservatory Public Programs**

**• Events**

The Great Train Connection (March 8, 9 & 10)

Attendance Day 1: 433 total visitors; 285 in 2023

Attendance Day 2: 1,304 total visitors; 1,204 in 2023

Attendance Day 3: 801 total visitors; 595 in 2023

Event attendance continues to climb from 2,084 visitors in 2023; to 1,408 visitors in 2022; and 1,437 visitors in 2021. Up to 2,538 visitors in 2024, that's a 22% increase in one year! There are 7 different train groups and/or individuals who signed up to participate; this does not include the Botanical Conservatory's event contributions such as the G-Scale Garden Display, goody bags, and crafts. This popular recurring event continues to thrill enthusiasts of all ages.

Bunny Tales in the Garden (March 29 & 30)

Attendance Day 1: 1,538 total visitors; 1,490 in 2023

Attendance Day 2: 1,714 total visitors; 1,223 in 2023

With a total attendance of 3,254 visitors from 10 am to 3 pm, this favorite public event returned on the Friday and Saturday before Easter Sunday. Event attendance continues to climb from 2,713 visitors in 2023; to 1,821 visitors in 2022; and 1,398 visitors in 2021. Families followed a spring-themed story tale throughout all three indoor gardens and both outdoor gardens while visiting a craft station, live Animals from Indiana WILD, a pot-a-plant station, a goody bag station, and finally a visit with the Easter Bunny where they also received candy eggs on their way. Indiana WILD was a new vendor for this year, and their presentations, various animals, and staff received high praise.

## Education

- Bones for Life® (March 5-26)
- Canceled having not met minimum registration.
  
- Pysanky Eggs (March 14)
- In this popular workshop taught by mother/daughter duo Carol Ann and Karen, 23 participants learned Ukrainian methods of decorating eggs with wax and dye. It reached capacity and earned high reviews from guests who especially enjoyed the opportunity for egg decorating before Easter.
  
- Epiphytic Plant Mount (March 16)
- In this new program, 14 guests learned about epiphytic plant relationships (where examples can be found in the Conservatory's Tropical Garden) and created their epiphytic mount of staghorn fern on natural cork bark. Participants were excited about their plant art, and surveys were positive. Similar programs continue to be requested by the public.
  
- Youth Field Trips
- A total of 668 students visited from 12 field trip groups this month. That is certainly an increase reflecting over previous years! There were 10 groups totaling 166 students in 2023; 8 groups totaling 144 students in 2022; 1 youth field trip totaling 13 students in 2021; 4 groups totaling 59 students in 2020; and 13 groups totaling 368 students in 2019.
  
- Adult Groups
- One adult group brought 22 guests this month and received group admission.

## 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.
- 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 pleasant blooms showing off vibrant color, intricate detail, and a trailing fragrance.

#### Plant Societies

Fort Wayne Bonsai Club Repotting (March 16)

At least 16 members of the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club, including several new members, gathered in the Magnolia Room to transplant Bonsai specimens. The session allowed participants to receive assistance on larger repotting projects and to offer instruction to newer members. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to share their passion with others who also enjoy the art of Bonsai.

#### Volunteers/Staff

- Volunteer Celebration Dinner (March 18)
- This year’s annual volunteer recognition event expressed gratitude to 157 active volunteers who graciously gave their time in 2023. Held at Promenade Park, Conservatory and Greenhouse volunteers attended with their guests to enjoy a celebration with staff as well as dinner by Shigs in Pit, beverages by Teds at Promenade, and dessert by Purple Mountain Cheesecakes. Each volunteer received the recently updated Volunteer Orientation Handbook and was presented with a new badge and lanyard along with the opportunity to order complimentary volunteer apparel. A collection of 12 gift baskets were raffled plus volunteers were invited to take home blooming-bulb centerpieces. Overall, those in attendance seemed to thoroughly enjoy the evening when many thanks were exchanged.
- In March, 9 new volunteers completed orientation with Engagement Coordinator, Kim Hartman! At the Front Desk, 8 volunteers covered 34 shifts while 10 volunteers filled 37 shifts in the Gift Shop. A single garden volunteer continues with spring cleanup in the outdoor beds, and a primary plant groomer continues tending to the Gift Shop plants. CAS students volunteered 15 hours in which they assisted with spring preparation including mulching trees on the Terrace and in the Exploration Garden in addition to removing an impressive amount of euonymus. Veteran volunteer, Judy Doell officially retired this month.
- The Botanical Conservatory benefited significantly from event-specific volunteerism this month:
- Home Show (February 29-March 3) – 8 volunteers filled 21 shifts.
- The Great Train Connection (March 8-10) – 12 volunteers filled 16 shifts; 1 setup.
- SCFVA Seed Packaging (March 13 & 27) – 12 volunteers participated.
- Bunny Tales Goody Bag Prep (March 21 & 22) – 18 volunteers assisted.
- Bunny Tales in the Garden (March 29 & 30) – 15 volunteers filled 15 shifts while additionally, 9 pageant winners supported the event.

#### Upcoming

January 13-April 7: Botanical Speedway Showcase Exhibit

January 13-April 7: Kelly Bremer Art Exhibit: *The Octane Collection*

April 7-15: Showchange Week

April 16-June 23: Color in Motion Live Butterfly Exhibit

April 16-June 22: Dani Kiefer Art Exhibit: *Wild and Free*

April 10: Volunteer Seed Packaging for the Mother's Day Plant Sale

April 13: YMCA Volunteer Group

April 13: Bonsai Club Workshop

April 14: Three Rivers Orchid Society Meeting

April 16-May 7: Bones for Life®, pre-registered program

April 20: Cottage Core Moss Mirror, pre-registered program

April 23-May 28: T'ai Chi, pre-registered program

May 4: Bonsai for Beginners, pre-registered program

May 5: Three Rivers Orchid Society Meeting

May 9-12: Mother's Day Plant Sale at McMillen Community Center

May 11 & 12: Mother's Day in the Garden

May 14-18: National Public Gardens Week

May 18: Spring Bonsai Show

May 26: Iris Flower Show

#### Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

- Horticulture staff have nearly completed the spring cleanup activities in the outdoor garden areas. Shrubs have been thinned and deadheaded, perennials cut back, and leaves cleaned up.
- Center for Academic Success (CAS) students worked diligently with Horticulture staff to perform spring cleanup of the Terrace Garden which included mulching, in preparation for Bunny Tales in the Garden. CAS students also made significant headway in the removal of invasive wintercreeper currently found growing throughout the Exploration Garden.
- Tree work bids were received, contractors selected, and preliminary work dates were set to complete the scoped work. Tree/shrub removals and indoor pest treatments have been finalized and have been scheduled for early April in preparation for the Butterfly Exhibit in mid-April.
- Conservatory staff have installed the seasonal display of forced bulb flowers in the Showcase House. Several hundred pots of tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils are currently on display through the first week of April with the final shift of bulbs to be installed the first week of April.
- The Horticulture Staff installed a fragrant, seasonal display of tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, boxwood, forsythia, and heather for Bunny Tales in the Garden. The shrubs will be permanently planted on site this spring.
- The Botanical Conservatory has acquired several new species for the permanent collection. Some of the species include two cultivars of Asian persimmon, two cultivars of American persimmon, Sichuan pepper, and trifoliolate orange. The persimmons and hardy oranges will be planted outdoors to enhance the diversity of the outdoor plant collection. Other acquisitions will be planted within the glass houses.
- Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance
- Staff installed a new key lock box. This box contains all spare and essential keys.
- Certa-Pro Painters completed their work removing wall paper, repairing the walls, and repainting the Kessler and Jaenicke Rooms, in addition to repainting the designated areas in the Magnolia room.

- S&E Construction finished hanging a new drop ceiling in the Magnolia Room service area.
- Allied Mechanical removed Magnolia Room ductwork and installed a new Duct Sock. The new duct greatly improves the airflow in the room, adds a more appealing appearance in the rental space, and is much easier to clean and maintain.
- Shannon Concrete completed work on the South Tropical Pathway, both improving ADA accessibility and appearance.



*Sunday during the  
Great Train Connection*



*Families enjoying Bunny  
Tales in the Garden*



*Children racing around  
the "Botanical  
Speedway!"*



*Sweetheart Orchid Display  
in the Tropical House*



*Staff Remarks during the 2023  
Volunteer Celebration Dinner*



*A new volunteer assisting with  
Pot-A-Plant in the Tropical Garden*

## **Kathryn Pargmann – Manager Lead of Marketing**

- [www.RiverfrontFW.org](http://www.RiverfrontFW.org) had 8,560 hits to the site this month and the Promenade Park link had 2,505 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 1,319 hits in March.
- Completed the following evaluation reports: Winter Preschool classes at the Community Center and Winter Adult Special Interest Classes at the Community Center.
- The Marketing Team working with the Main Office staff on a new Registration app.
- The Marketing Team worked on finalizing the Annual Report and the Executive Summary. Documents were distributed in March.
- **Web Statistics:**  
**Users:** 53,536  
**Hits:** 162,748
- Completed 60 Design projects.
- Finalized overall sponsorship brochure.
- Confirmed PBS Fort Wayne as a 2024 TV sponsor for Foellinger Theatre Free Community Concerts.
- Confirmed Federated Media as a 2024 Radio sponsor for Salomon Sunflower Fields.

- Media promotions for rental for the Community Center, mourning posts for Mayor Tom Henry, Citizen-match Tree Program, Day Camp and PODS registration, Golf Course openings/closings, and more.
- March Media Mentions: 75
- Social Media Totals for **March**:

FB Followers	90,739
FB Reach	337,719
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,926
Instagram Followers	25,373

*Please note, that FB Followers for February was misprinted. It was 89,205, not 80,205.*

**Web Statistics:**

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

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

	<b>January</b>	<b>February</b>
FB Followers	88,062	<b>89,205</b>
FB Reach	336,521	230,472
 Twitter Followers	13,854	13,881
 Instagram Followers	25,192	25,262

## **Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations**

- ✚ McMillen Park and Shoaff Park golf courses opened for the season on Tuesday, March 12. Foster Park opened the following day, Wednesday the 13<sup>th</sup>. This is about a week earlier than projected, and it was done to take advantage of a few days of excellent weather. The courses when opened were able to run golf carts and have the ranges available. In contrast to last year, we were not able to run carts or open the ranges till mid-April because of conditions.
- ✚ Weather is always the biggest factor driving rounds and revenue, and this is especially amplified in the spring. Although the weather shifted back from the opening days to a more typical Indiana month of March in fairly short order, the revenue numbers shown below are indicative of the effect the weather has on golf:

<u>MARCH</u>	<u>FOSTER</u>	<u>MCMILLEN</u>	<u>SHOAFF</u>
2023 REVENUE	\$2,594	\$1,573.25	\$5,117.25
<b>2024 REVENUE</b>	<b>\$13,166</b>	<b>\$12,452</b>	<b>\$25,698.50</b>

- ✚ What the early results do tend to show is that excitement is still high for golf, and the excitement for the new season is justified. Early April has returned to a more normal weather pattern, and early cold and wet weather has interrupted play at all of the courses.
- ✚ Still to be determined is how much disruption there will be to activity levels at Foster Park, as the Deep Tunnel project has affected several holes on the golf course. The work has also affected the walking trail around the northwest part of the park. These closures and re-routing of the walking trails have pushed walkers closer to the golf course. Fencing and signage are in place to try and mitigate the exposure.
- ✚ As we swing into mid-April, high school and middle school golf is starting back up. Once again, there are a total of seven area schools that utilize the Parks courses. Leagues will start up mid to late April, and all the leagues that utilize Foster have been made aware of the golf course situation.
- ✚ Merchandise is arriving, and the golf courses are fairly well stocked already. The emphasis continues to be on staple, high-turnover items to keep inventory down and turn rates high. Inventory is gradually expanding into some new areas, including Men’s and Women’s shirts.
- ✚ Staffing levels are good, with a nice mix of new and returning help. Once again, the amount and quality of people applying for seasonal jobs was tremendous.
- ✚ Early indicators are good, and we are looking forward to a great season!

## Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



FW PUBLIC WORKS  
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& Trails**  
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- ✚ Rick Zolman is the new Greenways & Trails Program Manager. Rick started on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Rick will primarily focus on the 45+ events that we manage over the next six months.
- ✚ Fort Wayne Trails, Inc., our non-profit partner, will have a new Executive Director beginning in early May.
- ✚ We will have our first-ever dedicated seasonal position for the trails starting the week of April 22<sup>nd</sup>. We are hiring the City’s retired Street Commissioner, Brad Baumgartner, as a part-time seasonal employee. Brad will proactively check the trails for maintenance and safety issues. He’ll take care of minor maintenance tasks. For more major maintenance items, he’ll work with Public Works and Parks Staff. If a contractor is needed, Brad will help put the scope of work together and help us manage the contractor.
- ✚ The construction of the Covington Road Trail between Hadley Rd. and Getz Rd. will begin in early April.
- ✚ The Electric Micro Mobility Device Working Group will be working on revisions to the City’s motor vehicle ordinances about trails, parks, and sidewalks in early April.
- ✚ The Greenways Foundation of Indiana’s annual luncheon in Indianapolis will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Dawn will be attending.

- ✚ The League and Anthony Wayne Services hosted an Inclusion Institute for trials on March 27<sup>th</sup>. Chad Shaw, Dawn Ritchie, and Rick Zolman were three of five city employees who attended and listened to feedback from people with disabilities on how we can make our trails more accessible.
- ✚ The League will be hosting an all-day Accessible Transportation Symposium at the Grand Wayne Center on April 25<sup>th</sup>. Rick Zolman will attend.
- ✚ We did not receive the \$17 million grant from the US DOT through the Neighborhood Access & Equity grant program for the 6-mile Creek Trail.
- ✚ We are investigating a new grant opportunity called the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) through the US DOT. It's super competitive as they only have \$45 million to award nationwide. Dawn will attend a webinar with the US DOT on April 9<sup>th</sup> to learn more. The grant is due in June. We may apply for the 6-mile Creek Trail. We are also looking at a planning grant for the Poka-Bache Connector.
- ✚ Dawn has submitted the Pufferbelly Trail Pedestrian Bridge over Coliseum Boulevard into the READI 2.0 grant portal. She will attend a webinar on April 16<sup>th</sup> to learn more about READI 2.0.
- ✚ Trek the Trails and Tread the Trails will kick off on April 30<sup>th</sup> with a Trail Celebration Event at Promenade Park. After the ride and the walk/run, we'll have a gathering with food & music, and we'll present 2024 construction updates to the group. April 27<sup>th</sup> is National Celebrate Trails Day. We do not have an event scheduled for that day, but we do consider our Trails Celebration on April 30<sup>th</sup> to be our National Celebrate Trails Day event.
- ✚ We have been trained on the City's new outreach website called, "Engage Fort Wayne." We'll eventually include all 2024 trail construction projects and our events on this website.
- ✚ Dawn will also be trained on eCivis, which is a grant management system, and cost allocation cloud-based software.
- ✚ We will have our annual meeting with the volunteer Greenway Rangers (more than 100 Rangers!) on April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ Dawn will be filming the "Public Works" television show with John Perlich on April 24<sup>th</sup>. We'll be discussing 2024 trail construction projects and events.
- ✚ The Three Rivers Horse Trails group will have their annual meeting at PBS on May 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. They will elect a new board and officers.
- ✚ The County, the DNR, and Three Rivers Horse Trails will have the ribbon-cutting for the equestrian trails on May 16<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. at the trailhead off Paulding Rd, west of Adams Center Rd.
- ✚ Bike to Work Day will be held on May 17<sup>th</sup>. We'll have four locations: The Porch off Calhoun, the Rivergreenway in Johnny Appleseed, the Hanna St Trail at Weisser Park, and the Rivergreenway in Swinney Park.

## Division News and Media Coverage:



### **Country Music Award Recipient Lee Brice to play at Foellinger Theatre**

*General and in-person sales begin Friday, April 12, at 10:00 a.m.*

Fort Wayne, Ind – Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation announces that Fort Wayne's Foellinger Theatre will host Lee Brice on Thursday, August 8, 2024.

When Curb Records recording artist, Lee Brice, isn't selling out arenas, writing and recording songs, or building new brands like American Born whiskey, you'll find the family man with his wife Sara, two young boys, and a daughter. Meanwhile, with over 3.7 billion on-demand streams, and over 4 billion spins on Pandora, Brice continues to enjoy massive success at country radio, digital streaming services, and on the road.

He has reached the #1 spot on Country Radio with Platinum-selling “Memory I Don’t Mess With,” which consecutively follows three prior #1 songs: ASCAP’s 2021 Country Song of the Year and three-time Platinum track “One of Them Girls,” “I Hope You’re Happy Now” with Carly Pearce, and the four-time Platinum hit “Rumor,” which was nominated in the category Single of The Year at the 55th Annual ACM Awards. One of the most-played country artists of all time on Pandora, he was the second country artist behind Keith Urban to receive the Pandora Billionaire plaque.

Lee is also a GRAMMY nominee, a CMA and ACM award winner, and he's taken nine radio singles to Number One: "A Woman Like You," "Hard to Love," "I Drive Your Truck," "I Don't Dance," "Drinking Class," "Rumor," "I Hope You're Happy Now," "One of Them Girls," and "Memory I Don't Mess With." Garth Brooks, Jason Aldean, Kenny Chesney, and others have recorded his songs, and he's performed on numerous TV shows, including NBC's Today, ABC's The Bachelor, NBC's The Voice and FOX's Miss USA 2018. Lee performed as part of the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song honoring Garth Brooks, which aired on PBS in March of 2020. At the 54th Annual CMA Awards, Lee took home the prize for Musical Event of the Year for his song with Carly Pearce, "I Hope You're Happy Now." At the 56th ACM Awards, "I Hope You're Happy Now" won Single of the Year and Music Event of the Year, and Lee and Carly Pearce performed the song live. Lee's latest album, Hey World, has been certified Platinum and features several multi-platinum-selling hits. In 2024, Lee is kicking off the year with a special acoustic tour, *Me & My Guitar Tour*, and is releasing a collaboration track with Australian group King & Country, "Checking In," which will be featured in their upcoming biographical film, *Unsung Hero*.

Local pre-sale tickets will be available from 10:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 11, with code COUNTRY at <https://www.ticketmaster.com/event/05006088A74017A6>

All general and in-person sales at the Parks and Recreation Department (705 East State Blvd.) begin Friday, April 12, at 10:00 a.m. For more information, visit [FoellingerTheatre.org](https://www.foellingertheatre.org).

WPTA, Friends of late Mayor Tom Henry continue to honor his life  
<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/04/09/friends-late-mayor-henry-continue-honor-his-life/>

WFFT, Feature on acting mayor Bandemer  
[https://www.wfft.com/news/city-s-longest-tenured-deputy-mayor-wants-to-remain-in-that-role/article\\_c7799f16-f6c2-11ee-a047-ef14b948e331.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/city-s-longest-tenured-deputy-mayor-wants-to-remain-in-that-role/article_c7799f16-f6c2-11ee-a047-ef14b948e331.html)

WFFT, Community Development holds meeting in Oxford neighborhood  
[https://www.wfft.com/news/neighborhood-association-president-challenges-city-of-fort-waynes-redevelopment-plans/article\\_f132f436-f6ec-11ee-babc-a35f62d4c3ef.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/neighborhood-association-president-challenges-city-of-fort-waynes-redevelopment-plans/article_f132f436-f6ec-11ee-babc-a35f62d4c3ef.html)

WFFT, Crandall announces mayoral candidacy  
[https://www.wfft.com/news/top-stories/stephanie-crandall-announces-mayoral-candidacy/video\\_40dbf3f0-adb4-5ba0-8c91-24563e44d7e0.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/top-stories/stephanie-crandall-announces-mayoral-candidacy/video_40dbf3f0-adb4-5ba0-8c91-24563e44d7e0.html)

WANE, Paving projects receive Council approval  
<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-paving-projects-get-approval-from-city-council/>

WANE, DORA for Electric Works passes  
<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/ordinance-to-add-outdoor-drinking-area-at-electric-works-passes/>

Input FW, Feature on The Lofts at Headwaters Park

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

### **Color in Motion: Butterfly Exhibit**

**April 16 - June 23, Public hours**

Live butterflies have landed at the Botanical Conservatory bringing with them an array of natural beauty and wonder. Watch in awe, their wings in flight, as they flash with color pigments and refracted light. Observe exotic butterflies emerging from their chrysalides right before your eyes! An epic display of multicolored flowers and foliage elevates this annual spring exhibit. Sponsored by: the English Bontar Mitchell Foundation, "In memory of Jo Ann and William Wyatt," the Fort Wayne Park Foundation, 97.3 WMEE and 21Alive.

WFFT, New deputy fire chief sworn in

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/new-fort-wayne-deputy-fire-chief-sworn-in/article\\_dd13af1c-f5f3-11ee-989b-ab5eec7b1348.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/new-fort-wayne-deputy-fire-chief-sworn-in/article_dd13af1c-f5f3-11ee-989b-ab5eec7b1348.html)

WPTA, Free parking locations for late Mayor Tom Henry's visitation and funeral announced

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/04/08/free-parking-locations-late-mayor-tom-henrys-visitation-funeral-announced/>

WOWO, 3<sup>rd</sup> congressional district debate to be held

<https://wowo.com/previewing-the-3rd-congressional-district-congressional-debate/>

Adams Radio Group, FWFD leadership changes

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/04/09/77295/>

Adams Radio Group, Oxford residents invited to preview neighborhood improvements

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/04/08/oxford-residents-invited-to-preview-neighborhood-improvements/>

### **Dani Kiefer: Wild and Free**

**April 16 - June 22**

**Public Reception: May 19, 1:00-3:00 p.m.**

Dani Kiefer is a teacher, graphic designer, illustrator, and fine artist. She received a Bachelor of Arts in graphic design and photography from the University of Saint Francis in 1999. Upon graduation, she moved to Chicago and began designing exhibits and marketing materials for the Field Museum of Natural History. She continued her career in Chicago at the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Lincoln Park Zoo where her brand design for the Pritzker Family Children's Zoo was awarded first place by the American Association of Museums. She currently teaches part-time at Concordia Lutheran High School, leads art workshops in her home studio, and designs communication materials and illustrations for a variety of clients. "I'm drawn to wildflowers. They thrive in the most unlikely of circumstances. They are strong, resilient, patient, trusting, wild and free."

WFFT, Leadership changes at FWFD

[https://www.wfft.com/news/top-stories/leadership-changes-scheduled-for-fort-wayne-fire-department/article\\_e1a6a108-f37b-11ee-a8fc-9bccf81cb7c6.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/top-stories/leadership-changes-scheduled-for-fort-wayne-fire-department/article_e1a6a108-f37b-11ee-a8fc-9bccf81cb7c6.html)

WPTA, Conservatory feature

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/04/05/botanical-conservatory-welcomes-back-live-butterfly-exhibit/>

WBCL, Bluffton Road Bridge project public meeting

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/public-invited-to-bluffton-road-bridge-project-open-house>

### **Slightly Used Bulb Sale    April 4 – April 30, Public hours**

#### ***Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory, 1100 South Calhoun Street***

This annual sale features *slightly used* tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths from the Botanical Conservatory's winter exhibit. Located in the outdoor Sales Garden, bulbs are \$1.95/pot and are ready to plant in preparation for next year's bloom! Purchases are made through the Conservatory Shop while supplies last. Admission is not required to shop.

WFFT, Acting Mayor Bandemer to sign sexual assault awareness month proclamation

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/acting-mayor-bandemer-to-sign-sexual-assault-awareness-month-proclamation/article\\_ac4eb418-f2be-11ee-80aa-d76b9d9acb92.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/acting-mayor-bandemer-to-sign-sexual-assault-awareness-month-proclamation/article_ac4eb418-f2be-11ee-80aa-d76b9d9acb92.html)

WFFT, Oxford St. improvements open house to be held

[https://www.wfft.com/community/oxford-street-improvements-open-house-to-be-held-tuesday/article\\_81f2442e-f29a-11ee-9f21-e73bf34d4ae4.html](https://www.wfft.com/community/oxford-street-improvements-open-house-to-be-held-tuesday/article_81f2442e-f29a-11ee-9f21-e73bf34d4ae4.html)

#### **Yoga on the Riverfront**

**Sunday, April 14, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

#### ***Park Foundation Pavilion***

This free, relaxing one-hour flow yoga class is designed for all skill levels and led by the owner of Discover Yoga, Chelsea Vona. Bring your yoga mat to Promenade Park or borrow one for the class.

WFFT, Conservatory feature

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/bulbs-on-a-budget-foellinger-freimann-botanical-conservatory-kicks-off-slightly-used-bulb-sale/article\\_6c37d5fc-f2e2-11ee-a9cf-abb31acc89d9.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/bulbs-on-a-budget-foellinger-freimann-botanical-conservatory-kicks-off-slightly-used-bulb-sale/article_6c37d5fc-f2e2-11ee-a9cf-abb31acc89d9.html)

WPTA, TinCaps to honor late Mayor Henry

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/04/03/fort-wayne-tincaps-honor-late-mayor-tom-henry-opening-day/>

WANE, Feature on Acting Mayor Bandemer

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/mayor-karl-bandemer-on-henry-legacy-role-of-deputy-mayor/>

#### **Sunday Heritage Concert Series    Sunday, April 14, 2:00 – 3:00 p.m.    *Park Foundation Pavilion***

Musician Joy Bell returns with a combination of acoustic folk, pop, and rock. The concert is free and open to all ages. Seating will be on a first-come first served basis.

WANE, Fort Wayne uses parks, and city design to fight floods

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-uses-parks-city-design-to-fight-floods-as-high-waters-persist/>

WELT, 'Investing in the City of Fort Wayne' program with guest host John Felts interviewing Yusanda Blackmon from United Front    <https://soundcloud.com/mayorfw/united-front>

City TV, 'City Beat' program with a tribute to Mayor Henry; video from the MLK Bridge unveiling of new plaques; and video from Innovative Housing Showcase

<https://acpl.viebit.com/player.php?hash=9BAGc7MsOVfcrdAD>

WANE, What are caucus voters looking for in a mayor

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/who-votes-in-the-caucus-for-mayor-what-are-they-looking-for/>

Mayoral candidates update:

WANE

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/councilwoman-announces-mayoral-candidacy-intends-to-honor-henrys-legacy/>

**Kickboxing with 9Round Sunday, April 14, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. Park Foundation Pavilion**

Kick and punch your way through a great workout at this free monthly exercise class. Instructors will lead participants in a calorie-burning journey like no other.

WFFT, Street Dept. spring collection of leaf bags underway

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/brown-biodegradable-bag-collection-has-begun/article\\_de8e9f10-f061-11ee-b520-73f2b46d702c.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/brown-biodegradable-bag-collection-has-begun/article_de8e9f10-f061-11ee-b520-73f2b46d702c.html)

WPTA, Lt. Gov. weighs in on Mayor Henry's passing

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/04/01/suzanne-crouch-weighs-mayor-henrys-death/>

WANE, Multiple candidates announce for mayor

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/councilwoman-announces-mayoral-candidacy-intends-to-honor-henrys-legacy/>

WBOI, Allen Co. kicks off bicentennial celebration

<https://www.wboi.org/news/2024-04-01/allen-county-kicks-off-bicentennial-celebration>

WOWO, Remembering Mayor Henry

<https://wowo.com/remembering-the-life-and-legacy-of-mayor-tom-henry/>

**Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body**

**Monday, April 15, 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.**

***FWPR Community Center, 233 West Main Street***

Keep your brain and body healthy as you age. In this free seminar, you'll learn about research connecting the health of the brain and the body. It will include blending the recommendations into a plan for healthy aging. Please call 260-427-6460 to sign up.

WPTA, Street Dept. spring collection of leaf bags begins

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/31/fort-wayne-begin-spring-collection-brown-biodegradable-leaf-bags/>

WPTA, Steve Gillette remembers Mayor Henry officiating his wedding

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/31/husband-shares-memories-wedding-officiated-by-late-mayor-tom-henry/>

WPTA, Artist expresses the losses of Mayor and Cindy through work

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/30/fort-wayne-artist-expresses-losses-late-mayor-tom-henry-wife-cindy-henry-through-work/>

WPTA, Former reporter Jeff Neumeyer reflects on Mayor Henry’s career

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/29/former-21alive-reporter-jeff-neumeyer-reflects-late-mayor-tom-henrys-career/>

WPTA, Swearing in of acting mayor

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/29/watch-karl-bandemer-sworn-in-acting-fort-wayne-mayor/>

WANE, Bandemer steps in as acting mayor

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/karl-bandemer-steps-into-deputy-mayor-role-after-tom-henry-hospice-care-announcement/>

WFFT, Remembering the Life of Mayor Henry

[https://www.wfft.com/community/its-been-a-great-run-remembering-the-life-and-legacy-of-fort-wayne-mayor-tom/article\\_6de66ff6-ee2f-11ee-807f-970f86f95edc.html](https://www.wfft.com/community/its-been-a-great-run-remembering-the-life-and-legacy-of-fort-wayne-mayor-tom/article_6de66ff6-ee2f-11ee-807f-970f86f95edc.html)

### **Slightly Used Bulb Sale**

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The Mayor Tom Henry Podcast with Chief Scott Caudill as a guest

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-111-fort-wayne-police-chief/id1453992173?i=1000650506679>

WFFT, City Council to consider Public Works’ neighborhood paving plan

[https://www.wfft.com/community/city-council-to-consider-public-works-neighborhood-resurfacing-plan/article\\_2e941a22-eb84-11ee-8383-771a9128917e.html](https://www.wfft.com/community/city-council-to-consider-public-works-neighborhood-resurfacing-plan/article_2e941a22-eb84-11ee-8383-771a9128917e.html)

WFFT, DORA update for Electric Works area

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/city-of-fort-wayne-looks-into-putting-an-additional-dora-act-in-place-at-electric/article\\_23b7f228-eae8-11ee-8e88-8be5a6c9edfc.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/city-of-fort-wayne-looks-into-putting-an-additional-dora-act-in-place-at-electric/article_23b7f228-eae8-11ee-8e88-8be5a6c9edfc.html)

WANE, Concerns expressed about Parker Service’s agreement with the city

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/15-finds-out-why-doesnt-fort-wayne-bid-out-its-towing-contract/>

Input Fort Wayne, Affordable housing feature

<https://www.inputfortwayne.com/features/FHLBank-AHP.aspx>

WANE, FWCS board supports renaming Calhoun St.

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fort-wayne-community-schools-joins-fight-to-rename-calhoun-street/>

### **Children’s Book Swap & Sale**

**April 2 – 4, 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.**

**Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Community Center, 233 West Main Street**

From pop-ups to paperbacks and every book in between, there's something to please every child and teen. Youth may swap up to five books or purchase unlimited books at affordable prices. Book sales are open to the public and feature books starting at 25¢ up to \$1 and DVDs for \$1. Other items such as magazines, cards, CDs, and puzzles are also available. Donations of these items are accepted year-round.

WPTA, MLK Club wants Calhoun St. renamed

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/25/fort-wayne-mlk-club-urges-renaming-calhoun-street-fwcs-recognizes-potential-change/>

WFFT, Historic NE neighborhood plan

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/new-neighborhood-development-plan-is-being-introduced-to-city-council-tuesday/article\\_3dc2ae9c-eaf2-11ee-a4d8-0789382391ac.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/new-neighborhood-development-plan-is-being-introduced-to-city-council-tuesday/article_3dc2ae9c-eaf2-11ee-a4d8-0789382391ac.html)

WPTA, Upcoming activities through Parks and Recreation

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/24/registration-opens-fort-wayne-parks-recreations-2024-summer-day-camps-activity-pods/>

WFFT, New plaques on MLK Bridge

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/replacement-plaques-on-mlk-bridge-unveiled-today/article\\_17e65316-e87e-11ee-b24d-134bec90141c.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/replacement-plaques-on-mlk-bridge-unveiled-today/article_17e65316-e87e-11ee-b24d-134bec90141c.html)

WPTA, Citilink's Southgate Plaza stop to remain

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/21/citilinks-southgate-plaza-stop-remain-unchanged-following-concerns-riders-property-owner/>

WPTA, Riverfront Fort Wayne event

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/21/walk-park-riverfront-fort-wayne-host-birds-bugs-blooms-event/>

WANE, Mayors of Evansville and Lawrence speak in Fort Wayne

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/allen-county-democratic-party-hosts-third-obama-dinner/>

### **Registration begins March 25, for Summer Day Camps**

Choose your adventure at the classic *Franke Park Day Camp*, *Farmin' Fun Day Camp* at Salomon Farm, *River Camp*, or *Camp ACTiVenture* at the Botanical Conservatory. Download the brochure from [https://www.fortwayneparks.org/images/PDF/Camps/Day\\_Camp\\_2024.pdf](https://www.fortwayneparks.org/images/PDF/Camps/Day_Camp_2024.pdf) for all the details. Online registration begins at 12:01 a.m. on March 25. In-person registration is also available at the Parks office, 705 East State Blvd. during regular business hours.

### **Registration begins March 25, for Summer Activity PODS**

The Positive Outdoor Days of Summer (PODS) morning and afternoon sessions are designed to keep your child active and engaged in a fun and safe environment. Choose one session or pair a morning with an afternoon for a full day of themed exploration. Download the brochure from [https://www.fortwayneparks.org/images/PDF/PODS/PODS\\_Brochure\\_24.pdf](https://www.fortwayneparks.org/images/PDF/PODS/PODS_Brochure_24.pdf) for all the details. Online registration begins at 12:01 a.m. on March 25. In-person registration is also available at the Parks office, 705 East State Blvd. during regular business hours.

WPTA, Riverfront Fort Wayne up for USA Today 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Award

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/19/riverfront-fort-wayne-up-usa-today-10best-readers-choice-travel-award/>

WFFT, City to receive \$1.17 million grant to buy flood-prone properties

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/fort-wayne-to-receive-1-17-million-grant-to-buy-flood-prone-properties/article\\_913adb64-e609-11ee-8fe3-13d4e4a60afb.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/fort-wayne-to-receive-1-17-million-grant-to-buy-flood-prone-properties/article_913adb64-e609-11ee-8fe3-13d4e4a60afb.html)

WANE, How the city decides which road paving projects to work on each year

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/how-the-city-of-fort-wayne-decides-which-road-resurfacing-projects-to-work-on-each-year-projects-for-2024-moving-toward-approval/>

WANE, the City's vehicle equipment lease cost exceeds \$13 million

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/city-of-fort-waynes-vehicle-equipment-lease-cost-exceeds-13m/>

WANE, Proposed pawn shop ordinance could reduce crime in Fort Wayne

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/proposed-pawn-shop-ordinance-could-reduce-crime-in-fort-wayne/>

WANE, City to receive \$1.17 million grant to buy flood-prone properties

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/city-to-demolish-4-flood-prone-properties-with-1m-grant/>

## **City of Fort Wayne to Receive \$1.17 Million Grant to Purchase Flood-Prone Properties**

*FORT WAYNE, Ind.* – Mayor Tom Henry and Public Works Director Shan Gunawardena announced today that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded the City's Public Works Division \$1.17 million through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The grant will help with the City's ongoing efforts to purchase flood-prone properties to better serve and protect the public.

"This grant award speaks to the importance of collaboration and teamwork between the City of Fort Wayne and our partners at the state and federal levels. Together, we're committed to making lasting and meaningful changes to help residents and neighborhoods," said Mayor Henry. "Our proactive efforts over the past several years have led to many flood control improvement projects throughout Fort Wayne. The work has included storm pipes, earthen berms, flood walls, more green space, and the purchase of more than 200 homes prone to flooding over the last 30 years."

Four properties will be acquired and demolished with the funding - three in southwest Fort Wayne and one northeast.

Demolition is expected to begin later this year.

WPTA, Award for Habitat in partnership with the City on housing initiative

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/19/habitat-gfw-receives-best-equity-inclusion-award/>

Indiana Lawmakers program with a review of the Indiana General Assembly's recent session

<https://www.wfyi.org/programs/indiana-lawmakers/television/session-review-with-caucus-leaders>

Primetime 39 program with a review of the Indiana General Assembly's recent session

<https://www.pbs.org/video/indiana-general-assembly-review-00fe5d/>

## **Fort Wayne UNITED’s Ten Point Coalition Receives Unsung Heroes Award**

*Fort Wayne, Ind.* – Mayor Tom Henry and Fort Wayne UNITED’s Executive Director Michael Patton, MNA, announced today that the Ten Point Coalition was honored with the Unsung Heroes Award on March 9. Each year, the Fort Wayne Chapter of the Indiana Black Expo honors individuals who consistently go above and beyond, making a significant impact on the lives of those around them without seeking recognition.

“The Ten Point Coalition is a fine group of community men and women who sacrifice themselves every day to make the Oxford Community a better place to live,” said Executive Director Patton. “These foot soldiers are key to the success of minimizing crime, creating a safer neighborhood, providing information, and meeting the felt needs of that community.”

Fort Wayne UNITED is a Mayoral initiative that places two national efforts, Cities United and My Brother's Keeper, under one umbrella. It is designed to answer the call to enhance opportunities, advance youth advocacy, and help create a safer city for all, but more specifically for Black men and boys. By bringing together a group of passionate and committed leaders, the initiative will educate, inform, and engage the community to make positive change.

Fort Wayne UNITED’s vision is for every Black male in Fort Wayne to be respected and valued with an opportunity to reach their full potential. The mission is to implement practices and programs to ensure that Black men and boys reach their full potential, neighborhoods are safe and hopeful, and leaders are empowered to build a more racially inclusive community.

WPTA, Feature on MYEC student as part of U.S. Senate program

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/15/homestead-student-first-indiana-delegate-united-states-senate-youth-program-fort-wayne-since-1986-shares-experience/>

WPTA, DORA update

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/03/15/city-fort-wayne-shares-update-designated-outdoor-refreshment-area-dora/>

WANE, Project aims to renovate historic Fort Wayne nursing school into apartments

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/project-aims-to-renovate-historic-fort-wayne-nursing-school-into-apartments/>

City TV, ‘News Around Town’ program with features on the Deep Rock Tunnel project update and Fort Wayne UNITED’s new executive director

<https://acpl.viebit.com/player.php?hash=nBaYeba7MHeKXJ6V>

Adams Radio Group, Clean Drains FW calls for artists

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/03/15/clean-drains-fort-wayne-calls-for-2024-artists/>

*"We're thrilled that we've received final approvals from the City Council and the State of Indiana for the Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) for downtown Fort Wayne, and we look forward to announcing an official starting date very soon. Currently, we're focused on ensuring that law enforcement and all public safety measures are in place, including providing specialized cups for all establishments in the approved zones, as well as installing specific recycling bins and signage that are easily distinguishable so that we can have a successful start to the DORA in our community. We're very excited about the long-term positive impact this will have on our downtown."*

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Elizabeth Lewis, Public Information Officer, [elizabeth.lewis@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:elizabeth.lewis@cityoffortwayne.org)

**Elizabeth Lewis**, Public Information Officer

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[fwcommunitydevelopment.org](http://fwcommunitydevelopment.org)



WFFT, Fort Wayne leaders brainstorm ideas to address homelessness

[https://www.wfft.com/community/fort-wayne-leaders-brainstorm-ideas-to-address-homelessness-crisis/article\\_bd5fde0c-e1b7-11ee-8f30-433ee21236f0.html](https://www.wfft.com/community/fort-wayne-leaders-brainstorm-ideas-to-address-homelessness-crisis/article_bd5fde0c-e1b7-11ee-8f30-433ee21236f0.html)

WANE, City breaks ground on a project aiming to revolutionize traditional housing

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/city-of-fort-wayne-breaks-ground-on-project-aiming-to-revolutionize-traditional-housing/>

**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	<a href="http://www.fostergolfcourse.com">www.fostergolfcourse.com</a>
McMillen Park Golf Course and Driving Range	427-6710	<a href="http://www.mcmillengolfcourse.com">www.mcmillengolfcourse.com</a>
Shoaff Park Golf Course and Driving Range	427-6745	<a href="http://www.shoaffgolfcourse.com">www.shoaffgolfcourse.com</a>

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](mailto: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.

## THE WEEKENDER

# Adding Fun To Everyday Life

For those who choose to undertake it, parenting is one of life's great pursuits. But if we're being honest, it's also one of the most challenging.

The past week in particular has been a doozy—my husband was away on business, leaving me to hold down the fort. It was one of those really busy school weeks with multiple dress-up days, book fair trips, and new long-term homework assignments. Staring down the week on Monday morning, all I could think about was my gigantic to-do list. How would I take care of all their stuff and still have time for work, grad school, the gym, etc., etc.?

But then I came across a series of Instagram posts from [tinygreenlearning](#) and [nj\\_parksharks](#). Both accounts dive deep into the importance of play. Be it hiking a local trail or climbing structures at a new playground, the

message is clear: kids need to have fun. It's vital not only for their enjoyment but also for their development. One quote posted by nj\_parksharks, from author Og Mandino, really resonated with me—"The greatest legacy we can leave our children is happy memories."

It was an a-ha moment. Yes, I'm responsible for feeding them healthy foods, ensuring they read, and teaching them life skills like fixing their beds. But that isn't all there is to parenting, for them or me. I decided to focus less on the to-do list and invest more time and thought in fun.

When I picked them up from daycare on Tuesday, I stopped by Dardenne Prairie City Hall Park and let them loose for a half hour. The joy on their faces! It was a chance to break free of our usual routine and get some fresh air. While they ran, played, and made new friends, I also realized how great it felt for me. I needed a break from the schedule, too.

On Wednesday, I surprised them with a cookie assortment from Twisted Sugar, and we chowed down on our favorites while playing a few rounds of Ferrule Game. And we played again on Thursday. I found myself plotting out what to do on Friday evening and over the weekend as well.

My kids need to have more fun, and so do I. Our means of recreation may evolve over the years, but there's always space for fun. And the next time I find myself bogged down by a massive to-do list or stuck in the parenting doldrums, the question shouldn't be, "What am I doing wrong?" It should be, "How can I make this more fun?" Whether or not you have kids, think about how you can add more fun to your weekend. You'll thank yourself come Monday morning. And if you need a little help unwinding, start with the social posts below. **Jefferey Spivey** - *Editor, Northstar Publishing*