

Steve McDaniel, Director

- + **January:** We continue to work on our amenities map for the app. The base map has had a lot of data installed on it that will be the basis of showing amenities within our parks. The Parks team along with our IT partner have really made some progress in the last few months. I can't wait to see the final product.
- + Our design team has been meeting with the Browning team to develop the Treeline district's public space. This will continue for the next few months as we define what will be in this space.
- + The River Activation Master Plan (RAMP) group met to discuss what would be included in the updated scope with the consultant that was selected from a request for proposals. The team is working on that now and we hope to have something soon.
- + The team met with a representative of Easterseals Arc to discuss possible partnerships for the future to include volunteering and possible employment for some of their clients.
- + Chuck and I met with HR, Risk, and our provider who does part of the hiring processes to identify the challenges we have each year with hiring 350-500 seasonal employees. We hope to identify each barrier in the process and determine ways that we can remove those barriers to retain those we are hiring. Several things were identified for solutions that we will implement this season.
- + We have promoted Rhonda Berg to Deputy Director of Finance and Theatre this past month. Rhonda will do great in her new role. We are also in the process of backfilling her position and have started the interview process.
- + Several public meetings happened this month where we sought out public input. The first was for the Treeline District's public space. The second was for the entrance to Foster Park with a couple of options to discuss. Several of the staff also attended neighborhood association meetings to relay up-and-coming things within the department.
- + Several of the staff are participating in training that our HR department is putting forth this year. This is geared towards those who manage individuals. Our HR department will be having these classes each quarter of 2025.
- + Lynda Heavrin, Manager of our Greenhouse, retired from the department after several years with the department. We want to congratulate her and wish her well as she looks to the future. Thank you for all that you have done for the department and the City.
- + The Old Fort continues to rehabilitate the buildings at the Fort. They have almost completed working on the DR Quarters building and plan to move to the Commander's Building next. Keep up the good work.
- + We have submitted several items for the Mayor's State of the City address related to Parks and Recreation. The address is scheduled for February 19th at noon located at the Grand Wayne Center.

- + **December:** We started the month with the **71st Wassail** at the Jennings Center. This was very well attended with a ton of songs, poetry, and a strong message of community.
- + Two committee meetings took place with board members and staff. One meeting covered the topic of golf while the other focused on the theatre. This gave the committee members opportunities to discuss several aspects of these two operations.
- + I had a good discussion with a property owner who is looking toward the future and wanted to gauge if Parks and Recreation would have an interest in acquiring their land. This discussion will continue into the new year.
- + We have received a few preliminary sketches of the Foster Park entrance designs. This has led to discussions on budget vs. cost estimates. We will continue to explore how this will shape up into 2025.
- + I was able to show off Promenade Park and Riverfront Development to a representative of Terre Haute's park system. They are starting on riverfront development and wanted to learn from our successes.
- + I met with the Deputy Mayor and other divisions to discuss Riverfront Activation Master Planning (RAMP). This was looked at a few years ago but didn't take the next steps. I think it is wise to start looking at what should happen

- along our rivers. The city will determine the costs and look at the various departments for funding.
- + A few of our staff were honored by Mayor Tucker for their years of service to the city. Those who had 25, 30 and 35 years of service were given a certificate at a special awards ceremony.
 - + Staff met early in the month to discuss seasonal wages for the 2025 season. This is a twice-a-year meeting that has a good discussion amongst all the staff.
 - + The team is exploring a new lock system for our buildings and pavilions. The system we have now for some of our buildings is going to be obsolete in a few years. The team is exploring several options to determine what will be our best approach moving forward.
 - + We have started meeting regularly with the developer looking at the Pepsi site just north of Promenade. Part of that development is expected to have public space and our design team is meeting with them to identify what that should look like and how the space will be programmed in the future.
 - + The team completed the 2024 employee performance evaluations in accordance with the City's Human Resources department.
 - + Several programs happened throughout the month tied to holiday celebrations. This included events and several parks and facilities.
 - + The team and I are looking forward to all the adventures that 2025 will bring.

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

+ Golf - December

- Bryan Keister reported that Dunigan Construction (Foster Park/Big Dig) met with him to discuss where they would be tying in on hole number six. They will start fencing off the area once they are ready.
- Gary Whitacre reported that he has been meeting with sales representatives to get the merchandise orders placed for the 2025 season.

+ Golf - January

- Bryan Keister reported that Dunigan Construction (Foster Park/Big Dig) has fenced off the area on hole number six for the open cut. With the placement of the fence, it doesn't appear that the hole will be significantly disrupted and will be playable as a par four.
- Bryan Keister informed Jason Smith and Steve McDaniel of his official retirement effective February 14, 2025. He has served the city for nearly 35 years and has been a tremendous asset to the Parks and Recreation Golf Operations and the City.
- Jason Smith reported that the Golf Course Superintendent position has been posted on several turf management websites and other platforms. Once applications are received, qualified candidates will be selected for interviews.

+ Pools - December

- Daryn Schwartz reported that the new lifeguard chairs were received at Lawton, and the Maintenance Techs are assembling them. The chairs will be delivered to the pools before the season starts.

+ Pools - January

- Daryn Schwartz reported that the aquatic job postings are live, and applications are being received.
- Daryn Schwartz stated that he is working on recertifying the department's Ellis Lifeguard trainer to ensure that lifeguards are highly trained, prioritizing patron safety.

Community Center - December and January

- Caleb attended a webinar on maximizing space and facility use for teams.
- Caleb will be joining another webinar on retaining and recruiting coaches for athletics.
- Caleb signed up for “Anchored,” a platform for sharing problems, suggestions, and ideas for youth and adult athletics.
- Josh and Caleb attended the WorkOne Hiring Event on January 16 at Electric Works, securing 3-4 strong leads for summer seasonal positions. They also registered for the February and March events.
- Caleb and Mary met with Daryn to explore alternate summer locations for athletics.
- Josh, Brice, and Mary attended a virtual training session for the new volunteer portal with Galaxy Digital.
- Joni Schmalzried, CPO of the AWS Foundation, toured the Sensory Clubhouse on January 15. She was impressed with our “hidden gem” and expressed interest in promoting it through contacts and potential grants. A meeting with Joni and marketing is planned soon.
- Linda is offering Drop-in Tai Chi this winter, with 14 participants attending the first session. A Tai Chi class will be offered in the spring.
- Linda and Mary attended Dartball at Trinity Lutheran Church to explore incorporating it into Senior Games.
- The Winter Carnival on January 25 was a resounding success, attracting 750 attendees. Activities included crafts, a scavenger hunt, the popular candy luge with 200 participants, a snowball guess contest, mini golf, and scenic carriage rides. The modest weather contributed to the event’s success. The Warm Heart Market featured 26 registered vendors, with 24 in attendance. We had 11 volunteers from Homestead Key Club and 13 regular volunteers, with Miss Fort Wayne also volunteering. LC Nature Preserve and Century Link participated as non-profit booths, enriching the event with community-focused initiatives. The Winter Carnival concluded with a live ice carving, which drew enthusiastic engagement from attendees. To keep everyone cozy, 250 cups of hot cocoa were distributed.

McMillen Park Community Center - December 2024 and January 2025

- The McMillen Park Community Center Youth Toy Giveaway was held on December 20, 2024, with every child receiving several high-quality gifts.
- The holiday season allowed staff to spend quality time with children during 9-5 days over winter break. Over 40 children received gifts from the Angel Tree, where they listed their clothing sizes and two desired toys on angel-shaped decorations. In addition to receiving gifts, children made clay sculptures as gifts for their parents, which they painted beautifully.
- Flag Football has returned as a Tuesday sports program. For younger kids (ages 5-7), the games serve as a teaching program, covering basics such as the line of scrimmage, downs, and touchdown points.

- Over winter vacation, children enjoyed a skating outing on the last day of winter break, which was a huge hit with both kids and parents. Many children brought their own roller skates, and the day concluded with pizza back at the center.
- We had 801 Pickleball participants in December and January.

Weisser Park Youth Center - December and January

- Fort Wayne Community Schools were closed for Winter Break from December 23, 2024, to January 6, 2025. Weisser Park was closed the week of Christmas and reopened on December 30, 2024. During the six days open over winter break, average attendance was 12 Youth per day, with a peak of 20.
- Turner Chapel AME Ubuntu Learning Lab: On January 9, 2025, youth participated in a discussion about healthy eating, focusing on balanced diets, portion control, and the benefits of good eating habits. They also learned to make English Muffin Pizzas, incorporating grains, protein, vegetables, and dairy.
- Allen County Public Library (ACPL): On January 8, 2025, youth created framed stained-glass windows using wax paper, markers, and colored pencils, showcasing their art in the windows.

Jennings Youth Center - December and January

- The center registered one new youth, averaging 14 daily attendees, with a peak of 17.
- Jennings Center youth visited McMillen Community Center for a friendly dodgeball game, with plans to continue this activity monthly.

Outreach - December and January

- On November 26, Supervisor of Community Outreach Neil Miller presented at Allen County Purdue Extension on collaboration opportunities.
- Following the cancellation of the Toys for Tots program in 2024, children at Community Youth Centers received gifts from Parks Staff, Lions Club, and Optimists Club members. Jennings Center held a gift-giving event with a Lions Club Santa on December 18. Weisser Park students enjoyed a magic show on December 19, and McMillen attendees selected their own presents on December 12.
- Planning for Winterval 2025 continues. Scheduled for January 25, 2025, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation will collaborate with community partners, including Heartland Mushers and Fort Wayne Curling Club, for a day of winter activities. The Amazing Winterval Race returns for its second year, challenging teams of two with physical and mental tasks across Fort Wayne.
- On January 25, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation hosted Winterval. Highlights included the Winter Carnival and Warm Hearts Market at the Community Center, Winterval Polar Plaza, Amazing Race, and events at the Botanical Conservatory. The Supervisor of Community Outreach oversaw Winterval Polar Plaza, attended by approximately 300 people. School of Rock provided live music, and attendees enjoyed an inflatable slide, food trucks, and four ice sculptures along W Wayne Street.

Cooper Youth Center - December and January

- New cabinets and countertops have been installed, enhancing storage and workspace for cooking. The kitchen was thoroughly cleaned and organized.

- A freezer malfunction caused an odor issue due to leftover food, but it has been emptied and cleaned. Outdated food was also removed from the refrigerator.
- Upcoming programming includes legal and financial seminars, healthy eating and cooking sessions, and plans for exercise programs. Advertisements for new programs will launch in April, with one-time programs starting in March.

Salomon Farm Park - December

- Christmas on the Farm took place on December 7, 2024, featuring live music, letters to Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, kids' crafts, holiday vendors, and blacksmith demonstrations. Volunteers from the University of Saint Francis softball team assisted, and the event drew 1,285 attendees, slightly fewer than last year.
- Summit City Music Theatre concluded its final performance of A Christmas Carol on December 15, 2024. The season featured eight sold-out shows, three fewer than the previous year, with new discounted senior and youth rates.
- The Winter Solstice Walk & Ride on December 21 featured a flashlight-lit walk and a festive 6.5-mile bike ride. Participants enjoyed a bonfire, hot chocolate, and pizza, with 60 attendees, about 90 fewer than the previous year, possibly due to the solstice falling on a Saturday.

Salomon Farm Park - January

- Farm Camp positions, including Farm Camp Counselors and Assistant Supervisors, are now posted on the City of Fort Wayne website. Vicki Marquart is expected to return as Farm Camp Supervisor for her ninth season.

Lindenwood Nature Preserve - December

- Lindenwood participated in the Winter Solstice celebration with a guided hike on December 21, attracting 40 participants.

Lindenwood Nature Preserve - January

- Lindenwood joined the 14th Annual Winterval on January 25, offering a self-guided hike and a warming fire, with 82 participants.
- Lindenwood's new volunteer program proved beneficial, with volunteers Bryce and Linda assisting with the Winterval Hike, demonstrating the positive impact of a dedicated volunteer group.

Riverfront - December 2024

- December Riverfront activities included Kickboxing and Yoga on the Riverfront, Songs of the Season Concert, Mad Anthony's Christmas Party Rental, Skate it Off at Headwaters Ice Rink, Holiday Cheer Night, and Popular Pop Night.
- Promenade programming in December featured Kickboxing with 9Round and Yoga on the Riverfront, attracting 45 attendees on December 8. The American Legion Band performed the Songs of the Season concert, with 60 attendees. Promenade Park hosted six rental events, drawing 595 attendees for holiday celebrations and parties.
- Headwaters Park Ice Rink saw high attendance in December, with new programming and six rental events at the Park Foundation Pavilion. Concessions revenue totaled \$13,269, with hot chocolate being the top seller (2,307 cups sold, generating \$6,921).
- Thursday Theme Nights were introduced at Headwaters Park Ice Rink, featuring 80's Night, Skate it Off, Holiday Cheer, and Popular Pop Night, designed to boost midweek attendance and keep programming fresh and exciting.

Riverfront - January 2025

- January featured a mix of fitness, fun, and community engagement, including Kickboxing with 9Round, Yoga on the Riverfront, a new Open Mic Jam Session, and Winter Cozy: Fire and Ice.
- A total of 964 attendees visited Promenade Park for these programs. Winter Cozy: Fire and Ice attracted 800 attendees in its first year, sponsored by Fire and Ice: Heating and Cooling, which contributed \$2,500 to make the event free for the community.
- Riverfront hosted a public meeting in January to gather community feedback on the new Treeline District public space addition.
- Headwaters Park Ice Rink welcomed over 6,650 visitors in January, 1,500 more than in January 2024. Thursday Theme Nights continued with events like Skate into the New Year, Sports Jersey Night, Broadway Night, and Rockin' the Rink, featuring a live performance by We Are Checkmark for skaters.

Rhonda Berg – Deputy Director of Finance & Theatre

Budgets, Payroll and Commercial Vouchers, Trust Fund Donations, Foellinger Theatre, Registrations, Rentals, Tickets, Customer Service, Accounts Payable and Receivable.

Payroll and Accounts Payable:

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 202 employees (137 full-time and 85 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending December 28th, and paid on January 3rd, 2025.
- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing or in the process of being hired, as of January 31st, 2025 :
 - Heavy Equipment Operator (Fund 121)
 - Manager VI – Grounds (Fund 121)
 - Relief Person – Facilities (Fund 121)
 - Program Coordinator – Neighborhood Programs – Jennings (Fund 121)
 - Program Coordinator – Neighborhood Programs – McMillen (Fund 121)
 - Forestry Grounds Person x 2 (Fund 121)
 - Working Leader – Grounds (Fund 121)
 - Manager V – Park Office (Fund 121)
 - ~~Program Coordinator – Riverfront (Fund 121)~~ removed to reorganize into Supervisor – Riverfront Programs (Fund 121)
 - Superintendent – Golf Greens (Fund 439)
 - Park C – Headwaters (Fund 439)
 - Supervisor – Salomon Farm (Fund 439)
 - Gardener – Riverfront (Fund 451)
 - Riparian Maintenance Technician (Fund 451)
 - Security Person (Fund 451)
- As of December 15th, we have been fully digital with the Time Management System – Attendance on Demand.
- We have worked with Payroll, Resultant, and our IT Department to ensure that our payroll exports are set up exactly how our Payroll Department downtown needed them to be set up. While this took a little bit of back and forth between

our departments and TMS's technicians, I am happy to report that our payroll reporting processes are solidly in place and in the proper format for MUNIS.

- Our last payroll from pay week ending January 25th, 2025 went quite smoothly and we were able to move the project from software building/training/implementation to customer support service. We still have the same support staff available to us to reach out to.
- We will still need to work on getting seasonal locations like the pools, golf course Pro Shops, Franke Day Camp, and Lifetime Sports Academy set up with rented time clocks. We do have one rented time clock out at Headwaters currently for the Ice Rink.
- We are gearing up to begin seasonal hiring very soon. We have a large percentage of our seasonal positions posted on the City website and on our Parks website.
- We have been working on reorganizing the department and adding additional part-time and Regular part-time positions for our year-round locations as HR is strictly enforcing seasonal employees only working 9 months out of the year and having a 90-day/three-month separation period. These positions allow us to maintain our current staff without the budgetary impact of additional full-time staff.
- In December we processed 19 purchase requisitions, numerous change orders, 49 P-card statements, two payroll periods, and 663 invoices.
- In January we processed 45 purchase requisitions, 49 P-card statements, three payroll periods, and 312 invoices.

Customer Service:

- Held an open house at the new McMillen Family Pavilion in Franke Park. It was very well attended and everyone was amazed at how beautiful it is. We currently have 23 reservations for 2025. Maxine and I were there to answer any rental questions.
- Met with Chad Shaw and other park staff to view the options for the new entrance at Foster Park. Front office staff's interest is in the wedding area and pavilion access.
- In January we began selling 2025 dog park memberships. We have already sold 134 memberships!
- The classes for spring registration were entered into our software system.

Foellinger Theatre:

- Tickets are currently on sale for:
 - Fort Wayne Philharmonic – Dolly Parton's Threads – Saturday, May 17, 2025
 - Tommy James and The Shondells – Saturday, June 28, 2025
 - Trace Adkins – Friday, August 22, 2025
- Working with FWPD marketing staff and external marketing partners to implement a Foellinger Theatre venue-focused marketing campaign to increase the visibility of the venue in our region.
- Working with promoters and renters to communicate financial information regarding individual show revenue, ticket sales, security details, patron issues, areas of needed improvement, and ways to grow revenue in 2025.
- Completed public bidding process and PO for new stage lighting system.

Steve Schuhmacher – Deputy Director of Park Maintenance, **Facilities, Technicians, Grounds/Heavy Equipment, MainTrac, Projects, Storeroom, Administration, Safety Compliance**

January 2025 - Facilities Supervisor: Greg Reith

- Pavilion rentals totaled: **109** for January. This is **down** from **168** in December.
- Annual cleanings were completed at: Franke Park Day Camp, Albert G. Jennings Recreational Center, and Weisser Park Recreation Center. This consists of a top-to-bottom cleaning of the facilities including everything from changing light bulbs to stripping and waxing floors.

Maintenance Technician Supervisor: Mike Cremeans

- The portable ice rink at Lakeside Park was installed on the 2nd. The water had frozen by the 6th and remained conducive to skating through the rest of the month.
- Work continued on the kitchen remodel at the McMillen Park pavilion.
- Installation of footbridges and step pods for the winter showcase at the Botanical Conservatory took place the week of the 6th.
- Props for the downtown Winterval were constructed and delivered to the downtown community center on the 24th.
- Demolition of the Conjure Coffee café area at the Botanical Conservatory was completed. This included the removal of countertops and cabinets, wall coverings, and plumbing fixtures.

Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment: Rob Schenkel

- River greenway trails were serviced twice a week to remove snow, sticks, debris, and flood damage.
- Winter service on equipment continues at both Lawton Park and Kreager Park maintenance shops.
- Crews have plowed, shoveled, and salted snow-covered walks, parking lots, and roads in parks and community centers many times this month.
- Ice safety equipment at park ponds was checked weekly. This included verifying that the red light was on, and the red flag was up as well as ensuring the safety ladder and rescue pole were in place.
- The heavy equipment crew transported the train from the Fort Wayne Zoo to their maintenance facility.

Superintendent: Mike Gore

- Approve and record invoices for materials used and applied in grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Overseeing a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance.
- Working on 2024 playground inspections still.
- Working on River Greenway inspections still.
- Wrapping up 2024 monthly MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks.

Storeroom and Garage: Travis Roth

- Storeroom staff completed their yearly inventory audit successfully with the staff from the City's internal audit department.
- Staff has started ordering cleaning and paper supplies to stock up for the upcoming spring season as demand increases.
- All of the blanket purchase orders for the storeroom and garage were completed with the exception of the P.O. for Kenney Machinery. The purchase order will be taken to the City Council for approval due to the amount being over \$100,000.
- A new Mini Split heating and air conditioning unit was installed in the storeroom. The Lawton storeroom has never had heat and this upgrade is a much-needed improvement.

Garage Operations Highlights:

- The first batch of new Motorola APX handheld radios were assigned to the maintenance tech shop, the storeroom, the garage, and the Lawton office management staff. The second order should be arriving early in 2025 with the last purchase order to be written next month.
- Bandit Industries presented a wood chipper maintenance and service class to the garage mechanics, forestry employees, and selected grounds staff as well. This class covered the correct maintenance procedures to repair and service Bandit wood chippers as well as operation.
- Work this month has focused on the winter service of golf course mowers, landscape equipment, and the rebuilding of Toro 7210 and 580 mower decks.
- Work began on repairing the Toro 1200 pull-behind mower decks at the golf courses.

Project Administration: Dave Weadock

- Botanical Conservatory Boilers Replacement – NIPSCO energy efficiency incentive program in progress.
- Brewer Park Construction – Pavilion foundation completed, site utility construction and trail development in progress.
- Buckner and Kreager Park Site Furniture – Project completed.
 - Foellinger Theatre Lighting Components Package – Vendor and theatre manager coordinating delivery of products.
 - Franke Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
 - Hanna Homestead Lighting Project – Contractor is scheduled to begin work late March 2025.
 - Headwaters Park Fountain – Awaiting beginning of construction.
 - Indian Village Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
 - Jehl Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress. Project start date, mid-March.
 - Lakeside Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress. Construction planned for early April 2025.
 - Lawton Park Trestle Bridge – Construction in progress.
 - McCormick Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
 - Packard Park Redevelopment – Construction in progress.
 - Waynedale Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress. Worked planned to begin mid-February 2025.

Safety: Tony DeVido

- The Parks & Rec. Safety Committee met on Jan. 28.
- 1 vehicle crash was reported for this time period.
- 2 employee injury was reported this time period.
- A *Chipper Blade Use & Maintenance* class was completed for Forestry, Grounds, and Garage employees.
- 1 CPR/FA classes were held. 7 employees were certified
- Plans for both a Cleaning Products use class and Forklift Safety class have been finalized.
- Began composition of a new SOP addressing Avian flu.

December 2024 - Maintenance – Greg Reith

- Pavilion rentals totaled: **168** for December. This is **down** from **174** in October.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Swinney Park, Martin Luther King Bridge, Lawton Park Skate Park, and Bloomingdale Park.
- Vandalism occurred at the following locations: Bloomingdale Park Swinney Park, McCormick Park, Martin Luther King Jr. Bridge, Wells Street Bridge
- Facilities Crew has begun annual cleanings at a variety of facilities in the park system.
- Work is ongoing to prepare the McMillen Family Pavilion at Franke Park to ensure it will be available to rent in January 2025.

Maintenance Technicians – Mike Cremeans

- The current electrical/key shop at Lawton Park is being vacated due to the Riparian divisions' expansion. Renovations are taking place to relocate those areas into the carpenter shop also at Lawton Park.

- A leaking roof was repaired at the Gump Road property.
- Work began for the winter showcase at the Botanical Conservatory. Props for the upcoming show include step pods and platform bridges.
- Picnic tables from various park locations are being brought in for repairs. New or refurbished tables are put in place during this process.
- The McMillen pavilion renovation has begun. This will restore the kitchen to its original location at the southwest corner of the building where the current storage room is located. The outside storage room will be converted into the new inside storage room with access from the existing kitchen area.
- Repairs were completed at the Lindenwood Nature Preserve Trillium trail boardwalk.
- The sanitary drain at the Foster Park golf pro shop was repaired.
- Work began in the Lawton Park carpenter shop to repair the stormwater drain and repair the damaged concrete as a result of the severed line.
- There were a total of **13** calls to the on-call person this month. **3** of which were lock issues, **2** were calls from dispatch regarding alarms, and **8** were miscellaneous issues.

Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment

- Rob Schenkel was hired as the new Grounds Supervisor.
- Mowing crews continue to mulch and blow leaves throughout the larger parks and continue to remove sticks and debris.
- Snow stakes placed along roads and sidewalks at various park locations and community centers to aid in snow removal.
- The garbage truck is running twice a week and as requested as well.
- A pull-behind blower was used to remove leaves from the trail system 1-2 times per week.
- The Botanical Conservatory and Lakeside Park compost bins have been emptied several times this month.
- Mowing equipment not being used has been transported to Kreager for winter service.
- The Heavy Equipment crew graded the Foellinger Theatre overflow lot for Fantasy of Lights.
- Parking blocks have been straightened or replaced at various parks.
- Sidewalks, parking lots, and roads were treated for ice buildup in various park locations as needed.

Main Trac Coordinator: Nicole Roth

- Main Trac Entries: 4,419 for the month.
- We have had 21, 311 calls this month.
- Busy entering time sheets, and contracted/sales invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Chucks Recreation Staff.
- Nicole and KayeC continued with the training on the new volunteer program website. Nicole and KayeC have spoken with Kath Pargmann about adding it to our Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation website once it is ready.

Superintendent: Mike Gore

- Approve and record invoices for various materials used and applied in grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Overseeing a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance.
- Going back over inspections of the Parks and doing new ones.
- Filling in for missing staff.
- Wrapping up 2024 Evaluations.
- Working on 2024 playground, and River Greenway inspections, and completing 2024 monthly MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks.

Project Administration: Dave Weadock

- Botanical Conservatory Boilers Replacement – NIPSCO energy efficiency incentive program in progress.
- Botanical Conservatory Roof Glass Replacement – Planning in progress.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Design – Planning in progress.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Roof Replacement – Planning in progress.
- Brewer Park Construction – Pavilion foundation completed, site utility construction in progress.
- Buckner and Kreager Park Site Furniture – Awaiting installation of new furniture.
- Community Center Parking Lot Control Gate – Specification definition in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Improvements – Revised bidding options in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Components Package – Purchase order issued. Coordination with vendor in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Restoration Plan – Awaiting completion of utility work on golf course.
- Foster Park Golf Course Irrigation – Bids received. Awaiting for approval from leadership.
- Franke Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Franke Park Pond Pavilion Renovation – Planning in progress.
- Hanna Homestead Lighting Installation – Purchase order acquisition in progress.
- Hanna Homestead Lighting Product Purchase – Purchase order acquisition in progress.
- Headwaters Park Fountain – Awaiting purchase order issuance.
- Headwaters Park Service Buildings Roofing – Planning in progress.
- Indian Village Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Jehl Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Jehl Park Playground Border – Project completed.
- Kreager Park Soccer Fields Irrigation – Construction in progress.
- Kreager Park Softball Fence Replacement – Construction in progress. Completion is planned for the end of 2024.
- Kreager Park Tennis Courts – Net posts reconstruction and surface recoating planning in progress.
- Lakeside Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Lawton Park Trestle Bridge – Construction in progress.
- Lions Park Tennis Courts – Recoating plans in progress.
- McCormick Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Mechanic St. Bridge Construction – Work in progress. Painting of the bridge halted due to temperatures. Completion is planned for April 2025.
- Northside Park Psi-Ote Pavilion Lower Updates – Planning in progress.
- Old Fort Bridge Renovation – Planning in progress.
- Packard Park Redevelopment – Contract approval in progress.
- Parks 2025 Paving Projects – Planning in progress.
- Parks 2025 Pavement Renovations Project – Planning in progress.
- Ronald G. Repka Memorial Park Boardwalk Renovation – Planning in progress.
- Salomon Farm Animal Barn – Planning in progress.
- Shoaff Park Riverlodge Roof Replacement – Planning in progress.
- Waynedale Park Playground Equipment – Purchase order issued. Coordination in progress.
- Waynedale Park Playground Border – Project completed.

Storeroom and Garage: Travis Roth

- Storeroom staff has started doing their official inventory count. This requires them to visually inspect and count every item on the shelves in the storeroom and make sure inventory numbers match MainTrac report numbers.
- 6 Fuel Lock fuel management computers were delivered to Lawton Park. After January 1st, these will be installed at Lawton Park, Kreager Park, Foster Golf, Shoaff Golf, and McMillen golf courses.
- A purchase order was submitted for the purchase of two (2) John Deere fairway mowers for Foster and McMillen golf courses. This purchase was approved by the Park Board on 12/12/24.

2024 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update:

Ford F250 Route Trucks (4)

Delivered

Ford F350 Chassis	Delivered
Ford Maverick Pick-up	Canceled
Chevy 1500 Pick-up (2)	Delivered
IPC Floor Machines (4)	Delivered
Chevy Equinox	Delivered
John Deere Gator	Delivered
Ventrac Tractor with Ball Diamond Attachment	Delivered
Bobcat Stump Grinding Attachment	Delivered
JLG Electric Scissor Lift	Delivered
Motorola Replacement Radios	P.O. Complete
Gravely Remote-Control Mower	Delivered
Toro Pull Behind Blower	Delivered
Scag Ride-On Blower	Delivered
Ford E450 Step Van (used)	Delivered
Tommy Gate for Headwaters	Delivered

Garage Operations Highlights:

- 101 work orders were scheduled this month, 23 of which were services.
- The first batch of new Motorola APX handheld radios were delivered to the radio shop and programmed. These 28 radios are now in the storeroom and will be assigned to various divisions as needed. The second order should be arriving early in 2025 with the last purchase order to be written in the spring of 2025.
- The riverfront Pontoon boat and workboat were both winterized and placed into storage in the Rea building.
- An employee from the grounds has been assisting in the garage by rebuilding mower deck tires to prepare for the winter maintenance of those machines.
- Mechanics moved several more items to the Rea building to clear out room in the shop for more equipment. These tools are used irregularly and it makes more sense to keep them stored off-site to save space in the work areas.
- Work continues renovating the older Zamboni ice machine purchased by the department. Parts are on order and will be installed when they arrive.
- Truck 1516, which was involved in an accident this summer was finished by Bob Thomas Ford's body shop and returned to service. New city decals and numbers had to be installed on the replacement door and fender.
- Various golf, grounds, and horticulture mowers are having winter service performed on them and then will be moved to seasonal storage locations.
- A Fort Children's Zoo dump truck had to have major fabrication performed on the rusty bed. One of the mud flaps became too rusty to stay attached and new metal had to be welded onto the bed to provide a solid mounting location for a new mud flap and bracket.
- A Forestry bucket truck is out of service due to a hydraulic issue with the boom. Hoff Mobile Bucket Truck Repair is rebuilding the lift cylinder to get the truck back into operation. A large crack was discovered in the dump bed frame of truck 1511 (International 7600 dump truck). Hoosier Truck Equipment can repair the crack and make the truck safe to use again. This repair will be performed in January of the new year.
- A storage room above the forklift bay has been given to the garage and storeroom by the maintenance techs. This area will be used to store Toro parts and serve as a central storage location for large and cumbersome Toro mower parts that usually take up room in the garage.

 **Safety – Tony DeVido -** The Parks & Recreation Safety Committee did not meet this (December) month due to the Christmas/New Year holidays.

- 0 vehicle crashes were reported for this (December 2024) period.
- 1 employee injury was reported during this period.
- *Mandatory Compliance Training* was completed.
- 1 CPR/FA class was held. 8 employees were certified
- The General Safety Training for 2025 Landscape seasonal employees was finalized.
- Proceeding with plans for Cleaning Products and Forklift Safety classes.

Chad Shaw, Deputy Director of the **Planning & Development, Forestry, Greenhouse, Landscape & Horticulture, and Riparian**

Planning Report – January 2025

- The McMillen Family Pavilion is open for rentals. The department hosted a public open house in January. Contractors are completing a few punch-list items for the pavilion and the broader Franke Park Renaissance, Phase I project.
- Staff coordinated details of the construction plans for Riverfront Phase II with the adjacent development, Schaab Riverfront Plaza, to ensure pedestrian circulation works well between both projects. Submittals continue to come through as Hagerman gears up for construction to start in earnest in early March.
- Construction at Packard Park and Brewer Park continues as part of each of those parks' redevelopment. Demolition is complete, with the installation of utilities continuing at both parks. Our team continues to meet with the project contractors (Hamilton Hunter and Schenkel) regularly.
- The Lawton Park/Fourth Street Pedestrian Bridge project is moving along, with the demolition of the old bridge complete. The bridge is scheduled for delivery in early February.
- A public input meeting was held for the Foster Park Entrance project. Two major concepts were presented (one keeping the entrance close to its existing location, another considering a move south to Branning). The comment period is open until February 7th. The design team will then review all the comments and proceed with design development of the preferred concept, taking into consideration the various comments.
- Staff has continued to meet with the Treeline District team. A public meeting was held to determine what elements are desired in the public park portion of the development. Staff is working with the design team on the conceptual layout of this space and will continue to work through the final design to ensure it aligns with the department's goals and that it is integrated with the adjacent Riverfront designs.
- Public Works has started construction of the Bluffton Road Bridge Improvements project. The staff has prepared an MOU for Park Board approval that ensures any impacted areas within Indian Village Park will be restored upon completion of their project.
- Staff attended the Inclusion Institute's quarterly meeting. Discussion was focused on how the Parks Department can improve the website and apps to make them more inclusive, specifically for the deaf, hard of hearing, blind, and visually impaired communities.
- Staff met with representatives from the Wildwood Park Community Association to discuss the Wildwood Park and Rockhill Park Historic Landscape Study and Guidelines project that was recently awarded a grant from the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Parks' staff is working on a Request for Proposals for the project.
- The final Accessibility Assessment for the Botanical Conservatory was received from Skulski Consulting. This information will inform all upcoming improvements at the conservatory.
- Staff began working on a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Botanical Conservatory Exploration Garden and Terrace Garden design. The redesign of these spaces will not only bring opportunities for new uses but also improve the visitor's experience, universal accessibility, maintenance operations, and sustainability.

Horticulture and Landscape Report- January 2025

- There were 22,514 seeds sown in the greenhouse for Parks, SCFVA, Conservatory Showcase, and Mother's Day Plant Sale.
- Approximately 1,550 Iresine cuttings have been taken thus far for the SCFVA.
- Volunteers worked approximately 279.75 hours in the greenhouse.
- All landscape staff helped install the winter showcase at the Botanical Conservatory following the removal

of the Holiday show. This year's theme is "Floor is Lava".

- All landscape staff assisted in snow removal and salting at Lawton Park, Promenade Park, Lakeside Park, Headwaters Park, and Foster Park during winter weather events.
- The Lakeside Park team focused on daily litter pickup, leaf removal, and perennial bed cleanups. Staff cut down and cleaned up the native grass vegetation around the ponds. They do 1/3 of the pond every season to help control weed trees/shrubs. The remaining vegetation is left up to provide wildlife habitat for overwintering.
- The Foster Park team focused on daily litter pickup, leaf removal, perennial garden cleanup, and pruning.
- The Downtown Team continued to pick litter daily or as weather allowed in the downtown parks. They also worked on the cleanup at Promenade Park and pruning at Little Turtle Park.
- The City Team cleaned up beds at Nuckols Park, Lawton Skate Park, and Northside Pool. They pruned trees at Williams Park, Hamilton Park, Memorial Park, and the REA building.
- Cleanup, organization, and equipment maintenance began in the Landscape Horticulture shop.
- Landscape staff continues to assist in the greenhouse as the weather dictates.
- Landscape staff continues to help the greenhouse with seeding.
- Staff performed a tool inventory in their shops and trucks. Any replacements needed are being ordered before spring.
- Five landscape staff members were signed up for online training that will prepare them for taking their test to be Category 3A or RT herbicide licensed this spring.
- The 2025 Landscape Staffs master schedules were completed.
- The annual pesticide report was completed.
- Renewal of landscape maintenance contracts began.
- After 41 years of service to the parks department, Lynda Heavrin retired on January 31st. An event was held at the Botanical Conservatory on January 30th to celebrate her legacy. Camille Schuelke shadowed Lynda through the month of January and has now taken the position of the new Horticulture Supervisor.

Riparian Management Report- January 2025

- The onboarding process for the basics of the new volunteer management software is nearly completed.
- Began volunteer recruitment, networking, and planning for the year.
- Began finalizing the presentation for the River Management Society's Symposium as well as designing a poster to accompany the presentation.
- Existing training modules for department in the process of getting revamped as per Risk Management to be more comprehensive and more easily tracked for the future.
- Applications gathered and sorted for open full-time positions. (Interviews will begin in February)
- Attended Advanced Chipper Maintenance Training.
- Attended River Management Society's Roundtable discussion titled: "Strategies for Managing Rivers with 'Less'".

Forestry Report- January 2025

- The 2024-25 Street Tree Removal Project is underway. R&T Tree Experts is expected to complete the removal of 153 street trees by April 26th. Mudrack Tree Service will be removing the remaining stumps. Five additional street tree removal contracts were offered in January. These contracts were much smaller and represented all of the remaining trees identified as high-priority candidates for removal during our summer tree risk assessment.
- Six members of the Forestry team attended the Indiana Arborist Association 78th Annual Conference in Indianapolis on January 21st-23rd. This conference continues to prove invaluable for professional

development.

- We are tremendously thankful for the support of Director McDaniels, the Board of Park Commissioners, the City Council, and the Mayor's office in approving the Forestry Division for two additional full-time team members. Ruban Gutierrez Saucedo and James Willis have accepted these positions and are expected to begin work during the first week of February.
- In January, Forestry crews completed 42 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to facilitate buses, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.
- In-house crews removed 76 trees in January. 1 of these was storm-related and 3 were the result of vehicle damage.
- Crews responded to and cleared 7 storm-related broken/fallen/hanging limbs.
- Completed 10 tree damage appraisals for trees that had been stuck by vehicles. These appraisals resulted in \$5,750.00 in damages to City-owned trees.
- Responded to and closed (18) 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

Botanical Conservatory Report – January 2025

- ‘Gnome for the Holidays’ at the Botanical Conservatory continued to captivate visitors with its festive charm, bringing warmth and cheer through its January 5 finale. Following a week of dedicated teamwork and seamless transformation, Floor is Lava opened to eager guests, inviting them into a playful, nostalgia-filled setting that reimagines the childhood thrill of leaping from couch to armchair—elevated within a breathtaking tropical display.
- The Botanical Conservatory hosted several well-received events in January 2025 including Winterval at the Conservatory (January 25), and the unveiling of the Innovative Abstractor art display by Lisa Heintzman (Opened January 11). Staff are gearing up for the Sweetheart Orchid Display (Opening February 1), Orchid Show (February 1-2), Lisa Heintzman Artist Reception (February 9), Home and Garden Show (February 27 – March 2), and several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month.
- Current vacancies include Conservatory Gardener (pre-requisition phase), two Camp ACTIVenture Counselors (candidates have been selected and are awaiting clearance by Human Resources), and Rental Receptionist (interviewing candidates).

Conservatory KPIs

- The Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory began 2025 with extraordinary growth across all major metrics, setting a strong foundation for the year ahead. Attendance surged by 75.52% compared to January 2024, with 9,468 visitors enjoying the Conservatory’s exhibits and programs. Total revenue saw a remarkable 76.74% increase, reaching \$89,544.24. Admissions revenue climbed by 66.33%, while membership revenue rose by 56.34%, reflecting continued community engagement and support.
- The Conservatory Shop experienced an outstanding 79.45% growth in sales, and rental and catering revenue increased by 10.07%. Other revenue sources, including activity enrollments and donations, contributed significantly, bringing in \$12,548.68 compared to just \$1,628.18 in January 2024. These record-breaking gains highlight the Conservatory’s expanding impact, drawing more visitors and increasing participation in its diverse offerings.
- **Attendance**

January 2024:	5,488 visitors
January 2025:	9,468 visitors

An increase of 3,980 or +75.52% to 2024

Admissions Revenue

January 2024: \$20,199.00

January 2025: \$33,597.00

An increase of \$13,398 or +66.33% to 2024

Membership Revenue

January 2024: \$7,964.00

January 2025: \$12,451.00

An increase of \$4,487.00 or +56.34% to 2024

Conservatory Shop Revenue

January 2024: \$11,491.82

January 2025: \$20,622.56

An increase of \$9,130.74 or +79.45% to 2024

Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

January 2024: \$9,380.00

January 2025: \$10,325.00

An increase of \$945.00 or +10.07% to 2024

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

January 2024: \$1,628.18

January 2025: \$12,548.68

Conservatory Total Revenue

January 2024: \$50,663.00

January 2025: \$89,544.24

An increase of \$38,881.24 or +76.74% to 2024

Conservatory Business Development

- Botanical Conservatory staff submitted a request for a grant form to Steel Dynamics for the Desert House Improvements Project. If the request is approved, we will receive the grant application from SD to submit our proposal.
- Botanical Conservatory staff submitted a grant to 3 Rivers Federal Credit Union Foundation for the Desert House Improvements Project.
- Botanical Conservatory staff submitted a grant to the Ian and Mimi Rolland Foundation for the Desert House Improvements Project.
- Botanical Conservatory staff submitted the final sponsorship reports to PBS Fort Wayne and Majic 95.1 for their support of the 2024 Gnome for the Holidays Exhibit and Santa and Reindeer Days. These reports enable us to approach these media for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.
- Botanical Conservatory staff provided Majic 95.1 information for the promotional spots for the 2025 Bunny Tales in the Garden, Mother's Day in the Garden, and Mother's Day Plant Sale.

- Botanical Conservatory staff sent a corporate sponsorship appeal to 10 additional corporations for support of our 2025 events.
- Botanical Conservatory staff completed the Winter 2025 Member ENews – it was sent on January 24th.

Conservatory Public Programs and Events

Winterval (January 25)

During the 14th annual Winterval event in collaboration with the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department, the Botanical Conservatory offered a challenge for the 2nd Amazing Winterval Race, a spider plant give-away, and the opportunity to craft a lava-bead bracelet. A live ice carving was also presented during which a steaming volcano was sculpted to celebrate “The Floor Is Lava!” winter exhibit. In addition, Sunbeam the Clown provided balloon twisting services while proving to be very popular with the youngest attendees. Winterval experienced a 48% increase in attendance with 1,048 guests as compared to 710 in 2024. Adult attendance increased 52%, youth attendance was up 39%, and member attendance increased 5% with 15% of overall attendance being members (157).

Education

- Continuing Tai Chi (January 14-February 4)
 - Sandy Gebhard offered a 4-week morning class while instructing a winter session for her first time in seven years. Running with 13 registrants, this year’s morning T’ai class had a slight increase in attendance over the 11 who registered last year. As a popular returning instructor, Sandy continues to offer sessions throughout the year.
- T’ai Chi for Relaxation (January 14-February 18)
 - Liz Monnier returned to instruct a 6-week evening class, which maintaining momentum and surpassed minimum registration with 11 registrants. A twelfth attendee has even enjoyed the drop-in option at a slightly higher-class fee for the freedom of participating in single sessions. Overall, T’ai Chi enthusiasts seem to enjoy an evening opportunity during the winter months.
- SCFVA, School Children’s Flower & Vegetable Association
 - Education staff at the Botanical Conservatory have officially taken on coordination of this 99-year-old program. In the month of January, distribution of the 2025 Chairperson Booklet occurred, and two different school committee meetings were hosted with 19 chairpersons in attendance. Contact with over 70 schools is being tracked while school order forms are now being received for program participation come the end of summer into fall.

Youth Field Trips

-  The Botanical Conservatory hosted 279 students from 6 groups in January 2025, by comparison, there were 2 groups totaling 170 students in January 2024.

Exhibits & Displays

The Floor is Lava (January 11-April 6)

The new year’s first showcase exhibit is one for the books, as it is the hottest garden around. Conservatory guests of all ages find themselves in awe of unique elements such as a creatively assembled volcano that is surrounded by vibrant coleus and a variety of other meaningful plants. Plant interpretation is included along with an imaginative scavenger hunt and fun, colorful obstacles nearby. This winter play exhibit even features volcanic smog and a mud pit, which it wouldn’t be complete without realistic sound effects

and adventurous background music. Watch your step, and don't fall in... The Floor is Lava!

Lisa Heintzman: Innovative Abstractor (January 11-April 5)

Abstract artwork by artist, Lisa Heintzman is on display in the Gallery Hallway where it is being enjoyed by guests coming and going at the Botanical Conservatory. The medium is primarily epoxy and alcohol ink with some sea-themed objects included. Coming up, is Lisa's Public Artist Reception on February 9th from 1-3 pm.

Volunteers/Staff

- January 2025 events and offerings were well supported by volunteers! At the Front Desk, 30 shifts were covered by 8 volunteers, and 41 shifts were covered by 11 volunteers in the Gift Shop. Three volunteers helped move a sales section of the Gift Shop to prepare for Café renovation; 2 of these volunteers and an additional fourth continued ongoing regular service with plant grooming, garden care, and gift shop merchandising. Easterseals Northeast Indiana has also continued their weekly service of tidying paths and dusting window sills.
- In addition, individual volunteers supported the Botanical Conservatory's exhibits and events. The 2024 holiday showcase was dismantled and décor was stored via the assistance of 9 different volunteers. A total of 8 different volunteers supported Winterval by assisting with a pot-a-plant plant give-away, offering a bracelet craft, and attending to the Winterval Amazing Race. During the month of January, volunteers logged at least 379 hours at the Botanical Conservatory alone.

Upcoming

- January 11-April 5: Innovative Abstractor, art display by Lisa Heintzman
- January 11-April 6: The Floor is Lava, winter play exhibit
- February 1-March 2: Sweetheart Orchid Display
- February 1 & 2: Orchid Show
- February 9: Public Artist Reception with Lisa Heintzman
- February 27: 4-H Club Meeting
- February 27-March 2: Home & Garden Show at the Memorial Coliseum
- March 9: Three Rivers Orchid Society Meeting
- March 14-16: The Great Train Connection
- March 17: Volunteer Celebration Dinner, 2024 active service
- March 27: 4-H Club Meeting
- March 29: Bonsai Club Private Workshop

Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

- The show change from "Gnome for the Holidays" to Floor is Lava was completed. All Holiday décor was stored.
- Mutton Party & Tent Rental installed tent sides for the 20'x 30' upper tent on the Terrace Garden so that tables, chairs, and other essential basement items were moved up and stored in the tent in preparation for the elevator replacement

- American Elevator has commenced the elevator replacement. So far, the demolition has been completed and the new materials have been delivered. The majority of rudimentary control components have been installed to allow for construction functions.
- Lawton MT's and Botanical Conservatory staff have started to clear the Café space as a remodel of the area is set to take shape.
- New mission statement frames were hung throughout the facility and the aged units removed.
- Allied Mechanical is making repairs to a failing pump for the Hot Water system. Allied Mechanical also made repairs to the water loop refill valves. Lochinvar representatives returned to the facility to make adjustments to the new boilers under the warranty coverage.
- The new hot water loop filtration system has arrived and is awaiting installation by Allied Mechanical.

Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

- January saw the conclusion of the Gnome for the Holidays Showcase display. Garden guests still visited to enjoy in the warmth and whimsy of the gnomes in all forms in the Showcase House during the final week of the holiday display.
- This month Botanical Conservatory and Lawton staff installed the 2025 Winter Showcase garden, Floor is Lava. In this showcase, garden guests are immersed in the sights and sounds of lava. The poinsettia tree frame was left in place from the Gnome for the holiday display and was transformed into a living volcano with the use of brightly colored coleus to mimic the color and texture of flowing lava. A smoke machine was installed with a pipe placed in the middle of the 'volcano' frame to create the effect of smoke coming from the center of the volcano. The addition of a speaker system creates rumbling sounds to provide the effect of a volcano getting ready to erupt. Lawton MT's assisted the Botanical Conservatory in building the platforms and ramps installed into the Showcase House to provide an obstacle course-like experience for visitors with varying levels of challenge and play.
- Sycamore Tree Care started their yearly pruning in the Tropical House and began their work by pruning the Indian Laurel Fig. Their careful pruning cuts help to keep the glazing and vents free of plant material while also preserving the health of the plants. They will continue to prune into the next couple of months.
- In addition to pruning in Tropical, Sycamore Tree Care assisted with hanging hardware in Tropical to enable Botanical Conservatory staff to hang plants to display. The hardware they hung was utilized to incorporate hanging baskets of orchids as part of the annual Sweetheart Orchid Display.
- This year the Sweetheart Orchid Display incorporates hanging baskets of orchids and the addition of kokedama. Kokedama is the art of cultivating plants in balls of soil-wrapped moss and bound with string. Orchids were placed in these balls of moss and hung on the string to display throughout the month of February.
- Work has begun on renovating the space around the Family water feature located in the Atrium. Conservatory staff and the artist disassembled the water feature. Botanical Conservatory staff have excavated the soil and rock underneath the water feature to install new stone and a pond liner.

Botanical Conservatory Report – December 2024

“Gnome for the Holidays” has welcomed visitors to a whimsical holiday display full of stunning poinsettias, large-cut evergreens, and a large variety of other thematically appropriate plant material. “Gnome for the

Holidays” has been very well received by visitors and is poised for a strong closing to its run as staff prepare to deinstall “Gnome for the Holidays” after close of business on January 5 to make way for “Floor is Lava!” opening on January 11.

The Botanical Conservatory facilitated several well-received events and programs in December 2024 including Gnome for the Holidays (Opened November 23), \$1 Night Light Display (Thursdays & Fridays through December 20 from 5 pm – 8 pm), Santa & Reindeer Saturdays (December 7, 14 & 21), Member/Volunteer Holiday (December 11), and several pre-registered programs and workshops. Staff are gearing up for Floor is Lava! (Opening January 11), Winterval (January 25), Sweetheart Orchid Display (Opening February 1), and the Orchid Show (February 1 & 2), as well as several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month.

Botanical Conservatory KPIs - In 2024, the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory achieved a remarkable milestone with an annual attendance of 113,784 visitors, marking its second-highest attendance in history and surpassing 2023 by 7.76%. This brings the Botanical Conservatory closer to achieving its highest annual attendance record of 120,347 set in 1984. December 2024 alone saw a 17.60% increase in visitors compared to December 2023.

Admissions revenue for 2024 grew by 6.79% year-over-year, reaching \$413,990.80. Membership revenue also experienced a 10.25% increase, totaling \$96,367 for the year, a record for Annual Membership at the Botanical Conservatory. The Conservatory Shop had an exceptional performance, with revenue up 16.18%, contributing \$320,547.80 to the total. December 2024 was particularly strong for the shop, with a 29.11% increase over December 2023.

While rental and catering revenue saw a 17.74% decline for the year due to a number of factors including a shifting landscape in special event industry trends, other revenue sources, including activity enrollments and donations, slightly increased to \$423,185.19. The overall total revenue for 2024 reached \$1,336,030.79, reflecting a 5.68% increase compared to 2023, solidifying 2024 as a banner year for the Botanical Conservatory.

Attendance

December 2023:	12,690 visitors
December 2024:	14,923 visitors
An increase of 2,233 visitors or +17.60% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Attendance:	105,587 visitors
2024 Attendance:	113,784 visitors
An increase of 8,197 visitors or +7.76% to 2023	

Admissions Revenue

December 2023:	\$43,568.00
December 2024:	\$40,753.34
A decrease of \$2,814.66 or -6.46% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Admissions Revenue:	\$387,661.24
2024 Admissions Revenue:	\$413,990.80
An increase of \$26,329.56 or +6.79% to 2023	

Membership Revenue

December 2023:	\$11,519.00
December 2024:	\$12,289.00
An increase of \$770 or +6.68% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Membership Revenue:	\$87,406.26
2024 Membership Revenue:	\$96,367.00
An increase of \$8,960.74 or +10.25% to 2023	

Conservatory Shop Revenue

December 2023:	\$30,399.29
December 2024:	\$39,250.02
An increase of \$8,850.73 or +29.11% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$275,905.89
2024 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$320,547.80
An increase of \$44,641.91 or +16.18% to 2023	

Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

December 2023:	\$6,332.50
December 2024:	\$1,750.00
A decrease of \$4,582.50 or -72.36% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Rental Revenue:	\$99,606.00
2024 Rental Revenue:	\$81,940.00
A decrease of \$17,666.00 or -17.74% to 2023	

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

December 2023:	\$25,740.41
December 2024:	\$40,417.37

YTD Comparisons

2023 Other Revenue:	\$413,697.80
2024 Other Revenue:	\$423,185.19

Conservatory Total Revenue

December 2023:	\$117,559.20
December 2024:	\$134,459.73
An increase of \$16,900.53 or +14.38% to 2023	

YTD Comparisons

2023 Total Revenue:	\$1,264,277.19
2024 Total Revenue:	\$1,336,030.79
An increase of \$71,753.60 or +5.68% to 2023	

Botanical Conservatory Business Development

The Conservatory was awarded support from these area foundations:

\$4,500 from the Wilson Foundation for 2024 Gnome for the Holidays Exhibit; \$10,000 from PNC Charitable Trusts for the 2024 Gnome for the Holidays Exhibit and the 2025 the Floor is Lava Exhibit; \$5,000 from the Magee-O'Connor Foundation for the 2025 The Floor is Lava! Exhibit and \$10,000 from the English Bonter Mitchell Foundation for the 2025 Showcase Garden Exhibits.

The Conservatory received support of \$4,261 from the Marva and Marvin Komisarow Foundation for general trust support. Mrs. Komisarow has given funds to the trust for five consecutive years now. Now retired from active service, she served as a Conservatory volunteer at special events and at Lawton Park Greenhouse for many years, starting in 1987.

Staff submitted final sponsorship reports to English Bonter Mitchell Foundation, Sycamore Tree Care, WANE 15 and Majic 95.1 for the 2024 Raise a Glass! Exhibit. These reports will enable us to approach these agencies for continuing support of upcoming exhibits.

Promotional and complimentary tickets were distributed to 103.9 Wayne FM for the 2025 the Floor is Lava! exhibit. Provided information for the station's promotional spots.

PHP has agreed to sponsor the 2025 Botanical Brew with a \$1,500 corporate sponsorship.

Aunt Millie's Bakeries has agreed to sponsor the 2025 Mother's Day in the Garden with a \$1,000 sponsorship.

Staff sent a second request appeal to 25 local corporations on possible interest in our 2025 corporate sponsorships. Staff also completed online requests to 4 additional corporations and mailed requests to 23 additional corporations.

Staff completed the follow-up email to our 2024 Fall Annual Appeal to our members – it was sent December 23.

Staff completed the Holiday 2024 Member ENews – it was sent December 4th.

Conservatory Public Programs

Events

String Jams Holiday Concert (December 5)

Believe in a Dream's youth orchestra returned to perform their holiday concert on a Thursday evening during the \$1 Night Light Display. With \$1 admission, guests enjoyed a 1-hour set of holiday-themed music delivered by 27 young, performing artists. To account for increased audience size from the previous year, seating was increased by more than 10% to 145. Plans are underway to bring the budding musicians back for a spring concert in 2025.

PFW Holiday Carolers (December 13)

A quartet of carolers from the PFW School of Music enveloped guests with the melodic sounds of a capella holiday carols. The quartet delighted guests on the third of four Friday evenings during the \$1 Night Light Display. While technically a quartet, the group often performed songs as an octet with newer vocalists in training for next year.

Suzuki Strings Holiday Performance (December 15)

Ranging in age from 6 years old to high school, 31 student musicians performed for families and guests visiting on a Sunday afternoon. Over 130 people enjoyed a 45-minute set of holiday favorites. This year, carols were

printed and provided to those in attendance to sing along with the music of the young performers.

Santa & Reindeer Saturdays (December 7, 14 & 21)

Returning for three Saturday afternoons in December, professional Santa Mike (“the best Santa in Fort Wayne,” per a local social media influencer) and Animal Grams reindeer, Nutcracker delighted guests of all ages. This event was made possible by 2-3 event volunteers each weekend. Sponsor AirXray was on-site for two of the three occurrences. December 7th saw 899 guests, December 14th brought 999 guests, and December 21st was the busiest Saturday with 1,155 guests!

Education

- Breakfast with Santa (December 7)

This popular program ran with 42 participants registered, 22 youth and 20 adults (40 max). Of these, 36 attended a private breakfast with Santa who greeted tables and read his version of *A Night Before Christmas*. The youth also enjoyed a craft and received a special gift bag. Lastly, they were allowed to relay their Christmas wish and take a photo during an exclusive visit with Santa.

- Succulent Christmas Tree (December 8)

This favorite pre-registered program did not run due to a suspected electronic glitch resulting in low enrollment. It certainly has the potential to return come 2026 for its sixth year.

- Evergreen Centerpiece (December 12 & 14)

This holiday program concluded with 10 registered participants on Thursday morning and an additional 21 registered participants on Saturday morning. Professional florist, Dennis Bowman returned for his 18th year of teaching this crowd-favorite class, which continues to garner high praise from survey cards.

- Youth Field Trips

This month, 8 groups brought 156 students to the Botanical Conservatory on field trips. There were 8 groups totaling 225 students in December 2023; 4 groups totaling 217 children in 2022; no visits in 2021 or 2020; 8 visits totaling 150 students in 2019; and 7 groups that brought 180 students in 2018.

Exhibits & Displays

- \$1 Night Light Display (November 27-December 20)

This seasonal display was emphasized as part of special holiday hours when the Botanical Conservatory was open late from 5-8 pm on Thursdays and Fridays from Thanksgiving up until Christmas. Only \$1 admission, there were 8 different dates to choose from when the gardens in light were best seen at night! They were enjoyed by 2,510 guests, which aligns with last year given that 2023 had an additional holiday weekend. Among the guests were 652 children and 185 members.

- Gnome for the Holidays (November 23-January 5)

Gnome is where the garden is! A variety of poinsettias play a prominent role as part of this holiday exhibit alongside other plants to create whimsical forms and offer seasonal interest. Also featured this year is a new Santa bench, retro-colored lights, gnome home vignettes, and topiary gnomes. Such playful touches offer guests something fun and unexpected this holiday season.

- Ben Klinger: Down on Main Street (November 23-January 5)

A Fort Wayne native, Ben is a visual artist whose preferred mediums include ink and acrylic paint. He enjoys paying homage to his hometown and the Hoosier state with bright colors and bold lines, as Ben has always been

drawn to bold fonts, neon signs, and historic architecture. His original work is available for purchase at shop.botanicalconservatory.org and prints are also available in the Conservatory Shop.

Volunteers/Staff

Volunteer & Member Holi-Day Open House (December 11)

During this annual holiday appreciation event for volunteers, members, and their guests, each received a complimentary pastry & beverage from Conjure Coffee. They also received a discount in the Conservatory Shop. From 11 am-3 pm, all were invited to decorate a mini-frame ornament in which they could place a polaroid picture taken on-site. Evening hours were again extended to 8 pm exclusively for volunteers and members during which PFW carolers sang holiday favorites in the Gnome for the Holidays showcase exhibit. Specifically, volunteers were gifted a specially designed lapel pin by Felix Duarte, a graphic design student at Anthis.

December sustained a lot of volunteer activity in support all the holiday festivities at the Botanical Conservatory! Over the course of three Santa & Reindeer Saturdays, 7 different volunteers supported the event, and on the first Saturday, 5 volunteers assisted during the well-received Breakfast with Santa. Eight different volunteers helped cut and prepare fresh evergreens for two Evergreen Centerpiece Workshops. At the Front Desk, 7 volunteers covered 29 shifts while 10 volunteers covered 36 shifts in the Gift Shop. A garden volunteer continues grooming in the Atrium, Showcase, and Tropical House on Tuesday mornings.

CAS students finished their semester with 12 hours in December having removed ivy in the Tropical House as well as collected litter and debris from the street side garden and Salon Plaza. This semester's program was smaller with only 5 students and 3 staff participating. The program continues to carry great value for the students, as their sense of accomplishment is clearly expressed by their smiles! In addition, Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana wrapped up the year with plans to develop this new volunteer program after a trial period with 15 clients and 6 staff who contributed their time in 2024.

Upcoming

November 23-January 5: Gnome for the Holidays, garden exhibit

November 23-January 5: Down on Main Street, art display by Ben Klinger

January 11-April 5: Innovative Abstractor, art display by Lisa Heintzman

January 11-April 6: The Floor is Lava, winter play exhibit

February 1-March 2: Sweetheart Orchid Display

January 1: CLOSED New Year's Day

January 5-10: Showchange Week

January 11: Opening Day of The Floor is Lava

January 14-February 4: Continuing T'ai Chi, pre-registered program

January 14-February 18: T'ai Chi for Relaxation, pre-registered program

January 25: Winterval at the Botanical Conservatory

February 1 & 2: Orchid Show

February 9: Public Artist Reception with Lisa Heintzman

February 27-March 2: Home & Garden Show at the Memorial Coliseum

Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

Poinsettias in the Showcase House have performed remarkably well throughout this holiday showcase through careful watering and care of the Botanical Conservatory gardening staff and through the more consistent temperatures produced by the new boilers installed earlier in the year.

Beneficial insects were ordered and released throughout the Botanical Conservatory to combat pest insects in each of the Houses. Mealybug destroyer larvae have been found in the Tropical House prior to releasing current batch of insects, a positive sign of a sustaining population.

Pruning and two applications of insecticides have been applied to largest Queen Sago palm to combat an emerging population of mealybugs.

J&A Ford Tree Care will complete additional high-pressure systemic insecticide soil injections next year with a target date of late February prior to the start of spring growth. A targeted application performed earlier this year was highly successful and kept major pests at bay for many months.

All the remaining outdoor bulbs were planted, including a few hundred donated tulips and remaining white tulips from other Parks which were planted in the Terrace pond beds.

Several new plant species have been procured and will be added to our collection including a Cannonball Tree, Moreton Bay Chestnut, and Sausage Tree. These will add considerable interest to the permanent collection with each tree having showy and fragrant flowers.

Botanical Conservatory Facility Maintenance

Staff installed new stair tread grips to increase safety in the Tropical House.

Heat Power Engineering will be providing a new feeder loop filter system (on order), it will be installed in early 2025 by Allied Mechanical. This filter will protect the life span of the new boilers by maintaining proper water quality.

Carter Window Cleaning was completed quarterly cleaning of Atrium Vestibules and Connector.

A variety of new power tools were purchased to facilitate building maintenance and showcase prop construction. A new vacuum was purchased to replace an end-of-life unit.

A receiving area has been established to streamline package deliveries, complete with signage and staging carts for deliveries.



Once again, String Jams packed the room during a holiday concert



A young visitor on 1 of 3 Santa Saturdays this year



PFW Holiday Carolers sweeten the sounds of the garden with holiday cheer



*Suzuki Strings entralling
guests on a Sunday afternoon*



*Santa reading a story during a
special breakfast program*



*Participants assembling a lovely
Evergreen Centerpiece for the
holiday*



*The Tropical House lit up as
part of the \$1 Night Light
Display*



*Guests enjoying the Gnome for
the Holidays 2024 holiday*



*Volunteers and staff enjoying their
annual Holi-Day together*



*Easterseals Arc volunteers
tidying the pathways in
Showcase*



*A CAS student and instructor
clearing ivy in the Tropical House*

Planning Report – December 2024

In December, we celebrated the grand opening of the McMillen Family Pavilion along with the completion of the broader Franke Park Renaissance, Phase I project. A few outstanding items continue to be wrapped up as we move into 2025, but rentals have begun on this new 400-person capacity pavilion.

The contract has been finalized for Riverfront Phase II, and submittals have begun coming through. We anticipate construction to begin in mid-February, as Hagerman continues to mobilize and finalize their contracts with subcontractors.

Construction at Packard Park and Brewer Park continues as part of each of those parks' redevelopment. Demolition is complete, with the installation of utilities continuing at both parks. Our team continues to meet with the project contractors (Hamilton Hunter and Schenkel) regularly.

The Lawton Park/Fourth Street Pedestrian Bridge project is moving along, with the demolition of the old bridge complete. McCoy has constructed a causeway into Spy Run Creek and will begin driving piles for the construction of bridge foundations early in 2025.

We continue to work with the design team on the Foster Park Entrance project. Two major concepts are under consideration (one keeping the entrance close to its existing location, another considering a move south to

Branning), with major cost differences between each. The team is preparing graphics for an additional public input session, to be held in January, before moving forward with design.

The Staff has continued to meet with the Treeline District team; the project timeline, program, and team continue to be assembled.

We welcomed Stacy Haviland to Parks' staff late in the month. Stacy has been hired as the Superintendent of Planning and Development; her background in landscape architecture and community development will be a true asset to the department.

A grant report was completed for AWS in response to the grant received for the Accessibility Assessment, recently completed for the Botanical Conservatory.

Staff continues to meet regularly with Conservatory management to discuss various agreements, staff training, marketing, showcase, and facility operations. We continue to explore and implement ways to improve the physical facility and visitor experience.

Horticulture and Landscape Report- December 2024

There were 14,678 seeds sown in the greenhouse for parks, SCFVA, Conservatory Showcase and Mother's Day Plant Sale and 4,000 Spider Plant cuttings were taken for the SCFVA.

Volunteers worked 186.75 hours in the greenhouse.

The Lakeside Park team focused on daily litter pickup, stick/limb cleanup, light pruning, removing spent perennials and fall cleanups in landscape beds. Staff continued to pick up leaves both on the grounds and in the reflecting ponds. Rose's hilling was completed. Staff began cutting down and cleaning up the native grass vegetation around the ponds. They do 1/3 of the pond every season to help control weed trees/shrubs. The remaining vegetation is left up to provide wildlife habitat for overwintering.

The Foster Park team focused on daily litter pickup, regularly removing tree debris from the tennis courts, leaf pickup, blowing off pathways, fall bed cleanup, and removing spent perennials/cleanup in the perennial gardens.

The Downtown Team continued to pick litter daily in the downtown parks. Staff finished marking pathways with snow markers for future plowing. All equipment, tools, and materials that were stored at the Wedge were moved to the Antil building. Downtown staff salted Headwaters, Riverfront IIA, and Promenade after some winter weather came through. Fall cleanups to landscape beds were finished at Headwaters and Riverfront IIA, while Promenade's cleanup began. Poinsettias were also delivered to the Community Center for an event.

The City Team continued to focus on fall cleanups. In December they finished Bass, Jennings, Buckner, Shoaff, Kreager-Taylor's Dream, Franklin, Gren, Lawton, the Rea Building, Swinney Homestead/Tennis Center signs, Rivergreenway beds, and Zeiss. Staff spent a lot of time at the Foellinger Theatre cleaning up beds and pruning shrubs.

During times of poor weather, the landscape team spent time helping with greenhouse work, doing their annual tool inventories, and deep cleaning the shop and breakroom.

Shade Trees Nursery planted 59 trees across 17 parks this month. Once the Packard and Brewer Park construction is finished, they will complete their contract, planting an additional 147 trees between these two parks.

CL&S regraded recreation space around the north dock at Promenade Park. Sedimentation since the park was built had raised the grade several inches in the area surrounding the docks. The additional soil was removed to allow an easier/safer transition to the kayak dock.

Our last seasonal employees were separated on December 20th.

2025 staff evaluations and goals were completed.

Leaf Cleanups were completed at Headwaters Park by MJK Total Lawn Care as per the contract.

Pride Landcare completed its 2025 Maintenance Contract. Leaf cleanups were finished this month, as needed.

Riparian Management Report- December 2024

River levels dropped on December 2nd. Crew scouted along the river to mark hazardous debris otherwise unseen at normal river levels. The crew observed changes in river depths at high-traffic areas appropriate for river safety. Promenade docks were assessed for safety and silt removal.

Addressed beaver activity and damage at Swinney West along Junk Ditch Creek.

Completed honeysuckle removal at Old Fort, totaling approximately 0.26 tons of debris. Re-cut previously cut trees and honeysuckles to prevent trip hazards within the river's edge.

Honeysuckle removal continued at Shoaff, removing 2.44 tons of invasives.

Attended River Management Society's "Managing Rivers in the Face of Extreme Weather Events".

Forestry Report- December 2024

Much of this month was spent reflecting on the many challenges and opportunities presented over the past year. We look forward to continued growth and applying the lessons learned in 2025.

This year's fall tree planting project is complete. The remaining trees scheduled for planting within our parks are expected to be planted in the spring following the completion of Brewer and Packard Park improvements.

The 2024/2025 Street Tree Removal Project is underway. R&T Tree Experts is expected to complete the removal of 153 street trees by April 26th. Mudrack Tree Service will be removing the remaining stumps.

We are tremendously thankful for the support of Director McDaniel, the Board of Park Commissioners, the City Council, and the Mayor's office in approving the Forestry Division for two additional full-time team members. We are currently accepting applications and anticipate conducting interviews soon after the holidays.

In December, Forestry crews completed 32 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to facilitate buses, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.

In-house crews removed 70 trees in December. 2 were the result of vehicle damage. The rest were removed as a result of an inspection.

Crews responded to and cleared 17 storm-related broken/fallen/hanging limbs. 7 of these were privately owned trees impacting the right of way.

Responded to and closed 28, 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

Kathryn Pargmann – Manager Lead of Marketing

- ✚ January - www.RiverfrontFW.org had 8,697 hits to the site this month and the Promenade Park link had 2,862 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 1,306 hits in January.
- ✚ Marketing team assisted with various marketing tasks including social media, videography and photography on Winterval event day (January 25).
- ✚ Marketing Team worked on various tasks related to the release of the Spring Fun Times (February 5).
- ✚ Marketing Team assisted with a very successful Open House for the McMillen Family Pavilion at Franke Park on January 22. Approximately 60 people attended.
- ✚ **Web Statistics:** Users: 36,013 Hits: 116,882
- ✚ 38 design projects created.
- ✚ Various marketing pieces/promos created for: Winterval (signage, social posts, brochures printed and distributed).
- ✚ Created 10 signs for Hurshtown Reservoir and Johnny Appleseed Campground.
- ✚ Working on and submitting grant applications for Lifetime Sports Academy.
- ✚ Connected program teams with sponsorship leads (Community Center, Salomon, Conservatory, Headwaters Rink, and Youth Centers)
- ✚ Social media promotions for: Headwaters Park Ice Skating Rink, Floor is LAVA!, Winterval, Treeline Open Space meeting, Foster Park Entrance meeting, McMillen Family Pavilion in Franke Park Open House posts among others.
- ✚ Arranged for 22 media interviews with select staff. January Media Mentions: 120.
- ✚ Social Media Totals for January:

FB Followers	99,540
FB Reach	806,911
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,962
Instagram Followers	27,379
- ✚ December - www.RiverfrontFW.org had 2,162 hits to the site this month and the Promenade Park link had 2,346 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 830 hits in December.
- ✚ The Marketing Team worked on various tasks related to the McMillen Family Pavilion at the Franke Park Press Conference (12/4). The Marketing Team is planning along with the Front Office an Open House on January 22 from 3-6 pm for the public to view the pavilion.

- ✚ Continuously worked on Engage site. Currently at 25 projects now.
- ✚ **Web Statistics:** Users: 32,921 Hits: 103,021
- ✚ 43 design projects created.
- ✚ Various marketing pieces/promos created for: McMillen Family Pavilion at Franke Park, Winterval/Winter Cozy, and the Travel program.
- ✚ Finalized \$5,000 FW Pickleball Association donation for Senior Games Pickleball.
- ✚ Completed Tree City Award application.
- ✚ Arranged billboard ad for Headwaters Rink.
- ✚ Social media promotions for: McMillen Family Pavilion at Franke Park, Headwaters Park Ice Skating, Gnome for the Holidays, and various Winterval posts among others.
- ✚ Arranged for nine media interviews with select staff and December **Media Mentions**: 42.
- ✚ **Social Media Totals for December:**

FB Followers	98,748
FB Reach	381,933
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	14,013
Instagram Followers	27,136

Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations

- ✚ The 2025 golf season is nearly upon us! The new year promises many changes while we continue to ride the wave of increased golfing activity. Last year, play increased by 10% over an extremely busy previous year and there is no reason to believe that trend will change shortly. Courses are anticipated to open on or near March 15, weather permitting.
- ✚ Changes are in store for 2025. Long-time Golf Course Superintendent Brian Keister is retiring as of February 14. Brian has done a fantastic job over the years and will be missed. A search is underway for his successor and hopefully will be completed in early spring.
- ✚ The Deep Rock Tunnel project continues to affect play at Foster Park. The work has moved from the entrance area to the south end of the golf course near the ball diamonds. This will affect play on the easternmost nine, which this year will play as the back nine. The traditional back nine will be the front nine in 2025. The course will play to par 35-35/70. The (now) 13th hole will play to a provisional green.

- ✚ As plans are being discussed for the new entrance to Foster Park, care should be taken as to how this intersects with the already approved new course design. It appears that one of the prospective entrance plans comes very close to moving into part of the prospective new course.
- ✚ If the new course is to move forward, this will be a pivotal year. Assuming an 18-month construction/grow-in period, work would need to begin by the second half of 2026 to be ready for a 2028 opening to coincide with the Foster Park 100th anniversary. Planning and funding would need to be in place by the end of this season.
- ✚ Seasonal jobs were posted in late January, and the response has been very good. A meeting was held with all of the Golf Course Supervisory staff, and it appears nearly all of the key people are returning. We also have an excellent pool of new applicants, many with golf course experience. Staffing does not appear to be a problem.
- ✚ Merchandise will start arriving at the Golf Shops at the end of March. No major changes in merchandise are upcoming. We will continue to stock golf staples (balls, tees, etc.) that will keep inventory numbers down and product turnover high.
- ✚ An estimate for additional new carts will be gotten as we continue to upgrade and expand the cart fleet to meet demand. We will start out the season in decent shape with carts, but are always looking to stay ahead. There is every reason to be optimistic about golf in 2025!

Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



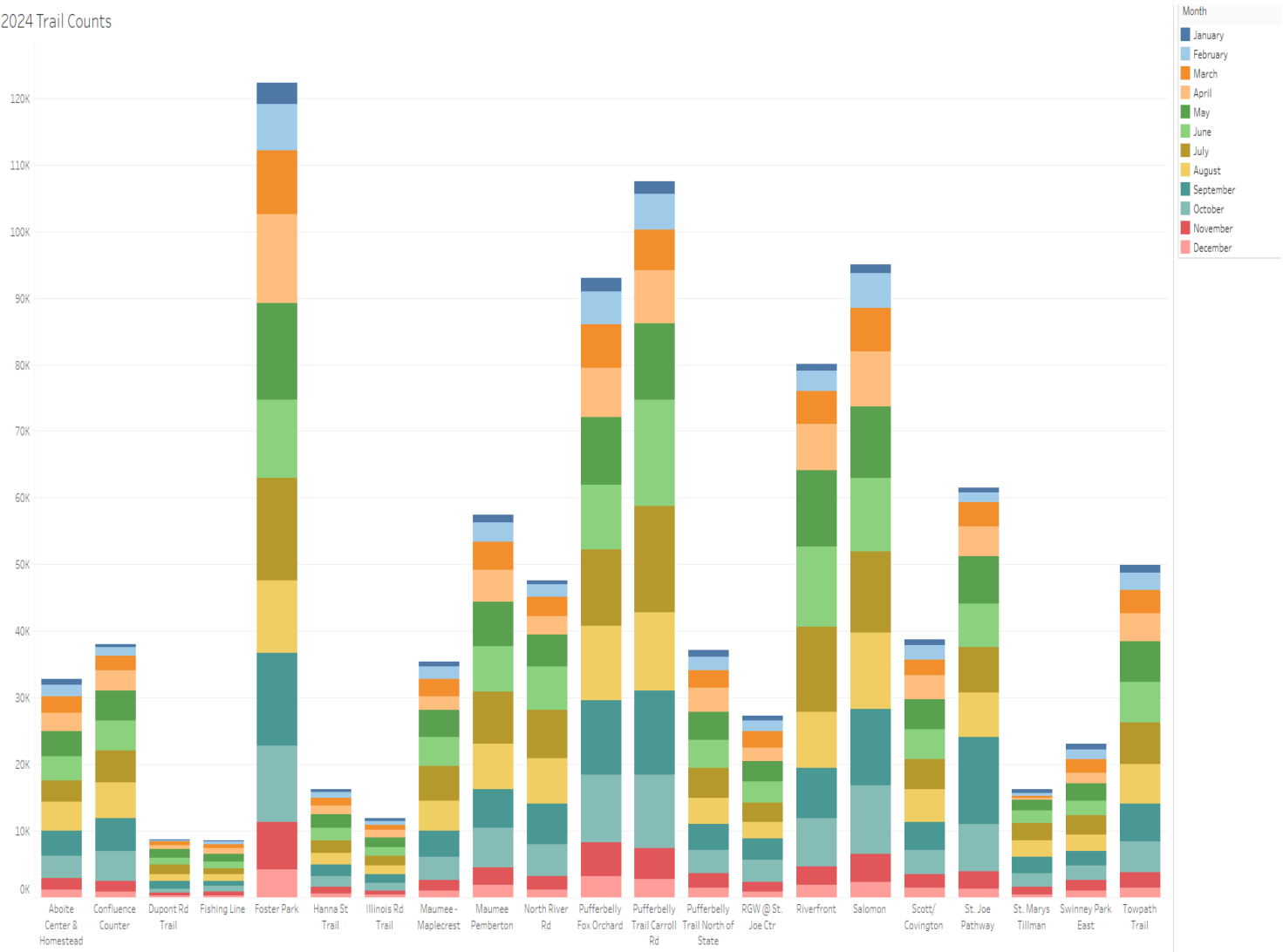
FW PUBLIC WORKS
**Greenways
& Trails**
In Your Neighborhood

- ✚ Trail counts for 2025 on the City's trails were 1,008,243. This is the first time we have surpassed 1 million trips. We have 21 infrared cameras spread out on the City's 107 miles of trails. The area trail network (including trails outside the City limits) is up to 153 miles.
- ✚ We opened four bids for the Wheelock Rd Trail: Stellhorn Rd to Jefferson Middle School on January 30th. Fleming Excavating was the low bidder. We'll get approvals from the Board of Works, City Council and the Redevelopment Commission in February. The construction could begin in March.
- ✚ We will have a public information meeting for the Stellhorn Road Trail: Maplecrest Rd. to Wheelock Rd. at the Arlington Park Clubhouse on February 27th at 6:30 p.m. The trail is in the preliminary design phase. Construction is expected in 2027.
- ✚ Dawn attended Trails Day at the Statehouse on February 5th.
- ✚ We will begin working on the next phase of the 6-mile Creek Trail along Tillman Road from Lemar Drive to Chadwick Drive (0.94 miles). Survey and design will begin in 2025 with construction in 2028.

- ✚ The Ardmore Avenue Road Widening project from Covington Road to Lower Huntington Road has begun and will include a trail on the west side. The project is federally funded and is 3 miles long. The first phase of construction will begin in 2032.
- ✚ We recently met with the donor for the Vann Family Crossing (Pufferbelly Pedestrian Bridge) over Coliseum Blvd and reviewed the 30% plans and renderings. The donor was happy. So, we will now submit the plans to INDOT for their review. Then, we will begin land acquisition. The plan is to bid next winter with 2026 construction.

	2024												Grand Total
	Q1			Q2			Q3			Q4			
Name	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	
Aboite Center & Homeste..	819	1,867	2,324	2,768	3,857	3,607	3,192	4,389	3,752	3,256	1,838	1,121	32,790
Confluence Counter	465	1,311	2,160	2,990	4,475	4,596	4,762	5,412	4,860	4,469	1,663	849	38,012
Dupont Rd Trail	109	199	558	689	1,174	1,153	1,331	1,054	1,106	688	441	241	8,743
Fishing Line	197	472	615	795	1,133	1,013	969	927	824	871	537	267	8,620
Foster Park	3,173	6,938	9,555	13,414	14,539	11,694	15,424	10,789	14,042	11,449	7,104	4,154	122,275
Hanna St Trail	448	907	1,152	1,320	1,939	1,845	1,943	1,761	1,754	1,525	1,033	607	16,234
Illinois Rd Trail	384	615	731	1,173	1,406	1,349	1,406	1,427	1,252	1,217	555	393	11,908
Maumee - Maplecrest	730	1,842	2,677	2,016	4,019	4,382	5,208	4,511	3,903	3,472	1,665	959	35,384
Maumee Pemberton	1,160	2,922	4,257	4,801	6,617	6,839	7,768	6,906	5,807	5,856	2,685	1,849	57,467
North River Rd	572	1,884	3,001	2,756	4,709	6,557	7,258	6,772	6,088	4,916	1,963	1,160	47,636
Pufferbelly Fox Orchard	1,952	4,927	6,507	7,499	10,155	9,661	11,490	11,123	11,192	10,203	5,007	3,232	92,948
Pufferbelly Trail Carroll Rd	1,835	5,406	6,092	7,958	11,514	16,001	15,829	11,747	12,624	11,038	4,668	2,779	107,491
Pufferbelly Trail North of ..	950	2,055	2,661	3,598	4,191	4,154	4,508	3,935	3,930	3,441	2,240	1,429	37,092
RGW @ St. Joe Ctr	675	1,672	2,384	2,134	3,011	3,138	2,851	2,594	3,185	3,294	1,414	900	27,252
Riverfront	880	3,051	5,040	6,866	11,448	12,172	12,670	8,377	7,563	7,298	2,766	1,883	80,014
Salomon	1,295	5,291	6,457	8,323	10,611	11,096	12,140	11,441	11,481	10,319	4,268	2,288	95,010
Scott/Covington	923	2,123	2,360	3,571	4,505	4,463	4,559	4,977	4,096	3,658	2,093	1,412	38,740
St. Joe Pathway	687	1,584	3,513	4,551	7,053	6,528	6,832	6,758	12,976	7,096	2,671	1,288	61,537
St. Marys Tillman	473	456	379	299	1,601	1,873	2,511	2,537	2,505	1,920	1,139	505	16,198
Swinney Park East	781	1,461	2,066	1,658	2,496	2,241	2,894	2,449	2,195	2,200	1,513	1,086	23,040
Towpath Trail	1,123	2,621	3,428	4,244	6,074	6,053	6,221	5,955	5,659	4,720	2,232	1,522	49,852
Grand Total	19,631	49,604	67,917	83,423	116,527	120,415	131,766	115,841	120,794	102,906	49,495	29,924	1,008,243

2024 Trail Counts



Division News and Media Coverage:

WANE, City Council recap – Portland Loo

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/the-portland-loo-280000-bathroom-set-for-downtown-fort-wayne/>

WANE, City offers tips on how to recycle properly

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/are-you-recycling-correctly-city-offers-tips-advice-for-recycling-in-fort-wayne/>

FW Bus Weekly, Board member hopes to see TRF rebuilt

https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article_3ca35f56-21fa-5737-b162-fc700226bdbc.html

WANE, TRF cancellation and bankruptcy recap

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/three-rivers-festival-passes-motion-to-file-for-bankruptcy-canceling-festival-for-2025/>

WFFT, Southeast Strategy update

https://www.wfft.com/news/local/new-digital-format-provides-interactive-guide-on-southeast-strategy-update/article_71aebaf0-e7ec-11ef-8a92-6b324414c0f7.html

Adams Radio Group, City recaps public safety from last year and plans for 2025

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/01/23/city-recaps-public-safety-last-year-and-plans-for-2025/>

FW Bus Weekly, Fort Wayne receives \$250k grant to prevent childhood obesity

https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article_7e3a7246-d8b0-11ef-948b-136695ef7333.html

City TV, 'Public Works in your Neighborhood' program with Brent Spindler and Barry Marquart as guests discussing the Avenue of Autos project

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=obyG1LiNwgLNqMjn>

WOWO, Mayor McMichael on the proposed casino

<https://wowo.com/new-haven-mayor-provides-insights-into-proposed-casino/>

WOWO, Rep. Judy discussing Gov. Braun's proposed budget

<https://wowo.com/breakdown-of-governor-brauns-proposed-budget/>

WANE, Changes coming to Leesburg Road

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/major-changes-coming-soon-to-leesburg-road/>

WANE, More than 1 million people explored the city's greenways and trails in 2024

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/more-than-1-million-people-explored-fort-wayne-trails-in-2024-city-officials-say/>

WPTA, Winter Cozy Preview – Winterval at Promenade Park

https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/01/22/winter-cozy-brings-fire-ice-promenade-park-winterval-celebration/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=organicclicks&tbref=hp

WPTA, Fort Wayne leaders discuss transparency in police shootings

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/01/22/fort-wayne-leaders-discuss-transparency-police-shootings/>

WFFT, City officials provide public safety update

https://www.wfft.com/news/city-officials-highlight-public-in-recap-as-they-look-ahead-to-this-year/article_8cdb008c-d93b-11ef-9da6-fb169737fe50.html

WBCL, Fort Wayne healthy eating program receives national recognition and grant

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/fort-wayne-healthy-eating-program-receives-national-recognition-and-grant>

Whatz Up, Feature on Winterval – Parks and Recreation

<https://whatzup.com/winterval-has-carved-out-a-niche/>

WBOI, City announces public meeting for Foster Park entrance plans

<https://www.wboi.org/government/2025-01-22/city-announces-public-meeting-for-foster-park-entrance-plans>

City TV, Mayor Tucker's "City Beat" program for Jan. 2025

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=kZfe0Iz96W5IdK87>

WOWO, State Sen. Johnson on casino plan

<https://wowo.com/senator-johnson-responds-to-bill-that-allows-casinos-move-to-new-haven/>

WANE, City encourages neighborhoods to apply for improvement grant

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/city-of-fort-wayne-encourages-neighborhoods-to-apply-for-improvement-grant/>

WANE, Immigration Center approved

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/i-think-the-facts-prevailed-the-refuge-approved-despite-backlash/>

WANE, Grocery store plan for southeast Fort Wayne

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/grocery-store-slated-to-takeover-medical-clinic-in-southeast-fort-wayne/>

WPTA, Public safety grant for FWPD and FWFD from Norfolk Southern

<https://www.21alivenews.com/video/2025/01/17/fwfd-fwfd-receive-15000-grant-norfolk-southern-corporation/>

WFFT, City hosting public meeting for Leesburg Road project

https://www.wfft.com/news/local/city-hosting-public-meeting-for-leesburg-road-extension-project/article_486f811a-d432-11ef-9d1b-9f506d0a8ccc.html

Sweetheart Orchid Display - February 1 – March 2, Public hours

Be allured by the colorful mystique of Orchids on display in the Botanical Conservatory's Tropical House. Experience captivating, long-lasting blooms in an intimately devoted space that mirrors the everlasting love shared with those closest to you. Orchids and other noteworthy plants are available for purchase in the Conservatory Shop. The display is included with general admission.

<https://online.fliphtml5.com/krtil/rhit/#p=27>

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[Home | National Recreation and Park Association](#)

[February 2025 – Parks & Recreation \[Intro - Cover1\]](#) and click the right arrow to read the Magazine

[February 2025 – Parks & Recreation \[8 - 9\]](#)

[February 2025 – Parks & Recreation \[28 - 29\]](#)

[February 2025 – Parks & Recreation \[48 - 49\]](#)

In light of current events, this week's message comes to you from NRPA President and CEO, Kristine Stratton.

I wanted to acknowledge the uncertainty caused by the recent Executive Orders, the impact on our work in parks and recreation, and how NRPA is managing this uncertainty. Thank you to those who have reached out with specific requests for resources, guidance and support.

NRPA is continuously monitoring this fluid situation and is hard at work pulling together resources. We will be sharing information along with a schedule of online learning sessions in the next few weeks. Thank you for your support and commitment to serving communities and ensuring parks and recreation is for everyone.

Kristine Stratton (she/her)
NRPA President and CEO

An individual studies on a laptop. Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock.

Level Up With the Enhanced Parks and Recreation Marketing Certificate

NRPA's Professional Development team is proud to present the newly updated [Parks and Recreation Marketing Certificate](#).

Updates include a step-by-step workbook to build out a marketing and communications campaign, a breakdown of best practices for different media types, and a module dedicated solely to social media marketing skills. This five-module certificate was designed for professionals who work at agencies of all sizes and budgets. It is worth 1.0 Continuing Education Unit (CEU).

[Learn More](#)

NRPA This Week is brought to you by:

CAPRA Accredits 11 New Agencies in 2024

During the 2024 review period, NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) evaluated and granted first-time accreditation to 11 new agencies. Learn about three of these agencies' CAPRA journeys.

A Choice Career: Parks and Recreation

We are proud to share a new career development video, in collaboration with the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration and the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, to introduce high school and college students to parks and recreation as a viable career choice. A Choice Career: Parks and Recreation offers an interview-driven, "real people, real stories," approach to highlighting the diversity of meaningful and fulfilling careers in parks and recreation.

Park and Recreation Stories: Changing Habits

Jill Geller, the director of parks, recreation and libraries for Roseville, California, recounts a story of a community member's entire physical health journey changing because of one special park and recreation event. Learn more about our [Park and Recreation Stories video-storytelling project](#).

Nominate an Individual for the 2025 Robert W. Crawford Young Professional Award

The Robert W. Crawford Young Professional Award is presented to an individual who has shown qualities and skills needed to attain positions of leadership in the field of parks and recreation through their contributions to advancing the field, their creativity in creating or managing programs, and their participation in professional organizations, such as NRPA. Nominate a deserving individual by **March 28**.

Encouraging Girls in Sports

Young people who participate in youth sports reap immediate and long-term benefits — from enhanced mental and physical health to improved academic performance and career success. It is known that the rate of girls continuing to play sports through their teenage years is lower than that of boys. Park and recreation agencies strive to lessen this gap through increased access to girls-only sports, involving youth in program design, training staff to more effectively communicate with girls of all ages, and more.

[Learn More](#)

STAFF PICKS

Mission to the Stars, Leveraging NASA Resources for Military Recreation Programs

“The NRPA Armed Forces and Recreation Network (AFRN) is hosting a webinar on **February 26**, titled “Mission to the Stars, Leveraging NASA Resources for Military Recreation Programs.” Guest speaker Anita Dey, will lead this special event.”

– Hayley Herzing (she/her), NRPA Director of Membership

Grant Opportunity: Advance Healthy Aging Through Parks and Recreation

“NRPA, with the support of the RRF Foundation for Aging, formerly the Retirement Research Foundation, is pleased to announce a grant opportunity to provide funding, training and technical assistance to develop and advance strategies to increase social and intergenerational connectedness and improve healthy aging. Four awarded agencies will receive \$17,500 coupled with training and technical assistance to implement one or more eligible strategies in NRPA’s Healthy Aging Framework and participate in an evaluation and grantee cohort throughout a six-month project period. Applications are due by **March 5**.”

– Natalia Ospina (she/her), NRPA Senior Program Manager

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

February Premier: Cultivating Leadership Excellence

In this session, we will discover parks and recreation’s importance in community well-being. We will explore hurdles and address common challenges in parks and recreation, highlighting how the profession contributes to leadership growth. We also will outline practical strategies to help hone leadership skills.

Four-Part Culture, Communication and Conflict Clinics

As a workplace leader, navigating conflict is part of the role — whether it's managing egos, resolving disputes or addressing limited resources. The National Conflict Resolution Center developed the “Culture, Communication and Conflict Clinics” workshop series to help leaders foster positive, inclusive workplace cultures through practical, interactive sessions designed to equip them with effective conflict management strategies. These clinics will be held **every Thursday in February**.

2025 Monthly Virtual Learning Subscription

The 2025 Monthly Virtual Learning Subscription will include 12 on-demand education Talks — one per month — and is free to Premier Members. These on-demand Talks will be released on the first Monday of the month unless otherwise noted. The full 2025 Monthly Virtual Learning Subscription is worth a total of 1.2 CEUs.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK

Elkhart (Indiana) Parks and Recreation recently hosted ice skating lessons that were full of smiles, wobbly first steps and lots of progress!

Photo courtesy of [Elkhart Parks and Recreation on Facebook](#).

Tag us in your social posts or [send us your favorite photos or videos here](#) throughout the week for a chance to see your photo or video in next week's newsletter.

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BOTANICAL Showcase
CONSERVATORY **Exhibit**
January 11 - April 6
Public hours

Sponsored by:
English-Bonter-Mitchell Foundation
103.9 Wayne FM
PNC Charitable Trusts
Magee-O'Connor Foundation
Fort Wayne Park Foundation

Headwaters Ice Rink Wednesday – Friday, 4:00 – 9:00 p.m. Saturday & Sunday, 12:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Headwaters Park, 333 South Clinton Street

The rink has switched to new hours of operation. Admission will be \$6 for skaters age three and above, free for age two and below. Skate rental will be \$3. An array of special programming is planned at Headwaters Ice Rink for the season includes **Thursday Theme Nights**, live music for Rockin' the Rink in mid-January, skating demonstrations and a meet and greet with a very special guest character. Thanks to a donation by Marcia Crawford and Grant Crawford, reduced admission skating and skate rental opportunities will be available on Thursday nights in late January and February to celebrate the memory and community service of Dr. John Crawford, a physician and radiation oncologist and 20-year member of the Fort Wayne City Council. Discover all of the details in the Winter edition of the Fun Times activity guide. For the latest parking map, please go to www.fortwayneparks.org and search Headwaters Park. Ten-punch skating passes will be available to purchase at the rink, located at 333 South Clinton Street in downtown Fort Wayne, during normal operation hours. Stay up to date on Facebook pages for @HeadwatersParkFW and @FortWayneParks. Headwaters Park ice rink sponsored by: WANE 15, Loud 103.3 and Hot 107.9.

Sweetheart Orchid Display February 1 – March 2, Public hours

Be allured by the colorful mystique of Orchids on display in the Botanical Conservatory's Tropical House. Experience captivating, long-lasting blooms in an intimately devoted space that mirrors the everlasting love shared with those closest to you. Orchids and other noteworthy plants are available for purchase in the Conservatory Shop. The display is included with general admission.

Lisa Heinzman: Innovative Abstractor January 11 – April 5
Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory, 1100 S. Calhoun Street

See paintings inspired by the energy and emotions that Lisa Heintzman experiences. Heintzman is very observant of how one motion affects the next and how simple daily life has so many moments all compiled into one day. The artist paints abstract art with these emotions and perfect imperfections of each moment. Time is suspended in the paintings. Heintzman believes beauty is necessary and the intent and purpose is to help view the imperfect world by bringing calmness, joy and serenity of the movements in the paintings.