

RECREATION Staff Reports Submitted May 8, 2025

### **Steve McDaniel, Director**

- 4 The month started with several projects in full swing. This included Riverfront Phase 2, Headwater's fountain, Mechanic Street, Brewer, Packard, Foster Golf, etc.
- 4 Flooding was an issue with the spring showers. With the high waters also came clean up once the waters have receded. This happened in several parks.
- 4 We continue to be part of the team with the city reviewing all the city policies. This has spurred us to look at Parks and Recreation policies, and we will begin the process of reviewing and updating as necessary.
- 4 I held a monthly Drop-In with the Director session on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Once a month, I set a time when employees can stop in and discuss any topic they would like to talk about. I am trying to move around the locations to make it easier for employees to connect. This month, I was at Weisser Center.
- 4 Rhonda, Rick, and I met with one of our promoters for the Theatre. We had a lengthy discussion on brainstorming and coming up with ideas that would help the facility for the future.
- 4 This month, we received notice from Rick Kinney that we would be leaving to start a new adventure. The team worked on filling the position and has found a great addition to the staff with tons of theatre and concert experience. When you get a chance, please welcome Jarin Hart to the team.
- 4 I attended the monthly meeting of the ATC with regards to the Zoo's application for a Civic Center permit. I attended as the Board of Park Commissioners owns the land where the zoo resides. The ATC approved their application.
- 4 Chad, Stacy, and I attended several meetings regarding the design of the Treeline district, specifically the Treehouse. We will continue to meet and work through the design elements as well as develop operational protocols as this project moves forward.
- 4 Golf courses have been open for a little over a month. We have encountered some rain and colder temperatures over that time, but overall, I see the courses are doing well. Chris, our new Golf Superintendent, is learning about our courses and bringing in fresh eyes that will help us evaluate all three locations.
- 4 Our latest edition of the Parks Podcast is with Riley talking about all the great festivals and activities planned this season at Headwaters Park. The podcast is available to be download and listened to.
- 4 The Mother's Day Plant sale is just around the corner. We are very excited about the number of plants and the great quality of the materials. The team and volunteers should be proud of all that they have grown.

### 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

- <del>4</del> Salomon Farm Park\_
  - Salomon Farm Park hosted its annual Garden Volunteer Orientation on Monday, April 21, 2025, from 9:30-10:30 AM. Volunteers are a vital part of Salomon Farm Park's operations. These garden volunteers help plan and prepare beds, plant, weed, maintain tools, perform minor maintenance, and manage unwanted pests. The volunteer group meets every Monday and Thursday morning from April through September and also runs a booth at the Wednesday night Farmers Market. Five potential new volunteers attended this year's orientation. Typically, the park benefits from the support of approximately 10 dedicated garden volunteers throughout the season.



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- Registration for the 2025 Farmin' Fun Day Camp is now open, with limited availability remaining in the 4–5 years, 6–11 years, and CIT (Counselors in Training) age groups. The FIT (Farmers in Training) program is fully booked. Based on staff feedback and a desire to provide a more personal experience, the child-to-counselor ratios have been adjusted:
  - o Ages 4–5 reduced from 10:1 to 8:1
  - Ages 6–11 restored to the previous 10:1 ratio (from 12:1)
  - o FIT and CIT ratios remain unchanged
  - The total weekly camp capacity has increased from 177 to 181 campers, assuming all weeks reach full enrollment. Camp runs from Monday, June 9, through Friday, July 25, 2025, with a one-week break from Monday, June 30, to Friday, July 4, 2025.
- Interviews for the Salomon Farm Park Supervisor position were conducted on Thursday, April 11, and Tuesday, April 15, 2025. Following the interview process, DeAnna Harris was promoted from full-time Program Coordinator to Supervisor of Salomon Farm Park. DeAnna has been with the Parks Department for over four years, originally starting at Salomon as a seasonal rental coordinator. She has proven to be an invaluable team member and is expected to thrive in her new leadership role.
- Soil testing for the Salomon flower fields was completed in March, with fertilizer applied in April. With assistance from the Tri-State Antique Tractor Club, the fields were also cultivated in April in preparation for planting. The two-acre field in front of the property will once again be planted with sunflowers, while the six-acre field on the west side will also feature sunflowers, with a quarter of it dedicated to a mix of specialty flowers.
- Significant effort has been dedicated to promoting Salomon Farm Park rentals from December through March, commonly referred to in the industry as "engagement season." Staff increased social media marketing and promoted rentals at the February Bridal Extravaganza by placing brochures in attendee goodie bags. Amanda Scherschel, Salomon Farm Park's Rental Coordinator, has also been updating marketing materials with support from the Parks marketing team. New brochures have been created for each facility (the Old Barn and Learning Center), and a rental follow-up survey has been launched to collect testimonials for the website.
- Looking ahead, the team is exploring additional advertising opportunities, including FW Magazine and potentially a billboard campaign. So far, efforts have shown results:
  - o Old Barn bookings: 31 (compared to 25 at this time last year)
  - o Total rentals booked: 125 (compared to 94 at this time last year)
- Due to the increase in demand, there is an urgent need for an additional seasonal rental coordinator. The position has been posted, and interviews will begin as applications are received. May is fully booked with weekend rentals, and staff are preparing for a busy rental season.

#### <u>Sweet Breeze Canal Boat</u>

• The staffing plan for the 2025 season is nearly complete, with 14 of the 15 staff members returning from last year. All positions have been successfully filled, and the team is excited to welcome three new members for the upcoming season.



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- Specialty tours and general public tours have been finalized for 2025. Ticket sales for all tour offerings will open on Thursday, May 1, 2025, with information available online. The team is looking forward to another great season on the water.
- Johnny Appleseed Campground Campground hosts returned to Johnny Appleseed Campground on Sunday, April 20, 2025, to begin preparations for the season opening on Thursday, May 1, 2025. This year, three campground hosts will be assisting with opening operations. We're excited to welcome one new hosting team, Tim and Marsha McDermott. With many years of hosting experience, Tim and Marsha are already settling in well and becoming a great addition to the team.

#### Hurshtown Reservoir

- Staff have been hired and are actively preparing for the season opening on Thursday, May 1, 2025. This year, three staff members are returning, and we are pleased to welcome one new team member.
- Both staff and management are especially excited about two key updates happening at Hurshtown this year. First, the property will be receiving a brand-new EZ-Dock to replace the older, worn-out, non-accessible dock. This upgraded dock will improve accessibility for all visitors, making it easier for everyone to enjoy the water, whether they're kayaking or using a rowboat. Second, the facility will now be open on Mondays, marking a shift from previous seasons when it was closed one day each week. Hurshtown Reservoir will now be open daily from 7:30 AM to 8:00 PM, providing more opportunities for the community to enjoy the park.

#### Franke Park Day Camp

- Staff have been hired and are actively preparing for the season opening on Thursday, May 1, 2025. This year, three staff members are returning, and we are pleased to welcome one new team member.
- Both staff and management are especially excited about two key updates happening at Hurshtown this year. First, the property will be receiving a brand-new EZ-Dock to replace the older, worn-out, non-accessible dock. This upgraded dock will improve accessibility for all visitors, making it easier for everyone to enjoy the water, whether they're kayaking or using a rowboat. Second, the facility will now be open on Mondays, marking a shift from previous seasons when it was closed one day each week. Hurshtown Reservoir will now be open daily from 7:30 AM to 8:00 PM, providing more opportunities for the community to enjoy the park.

#### <mark>↓ <u>Golf</u></mark>

- Jason Smith reported that the new Golf Course Superintendent, Chris Rudolph, started on Monday, April 7, 2025. He also stated that Chris hit the ground running since the courses had been open for a couple of weeks.
- Gary Whitacre reported that with the emerging warmer weather, the three golf courses are seeing a real increase in rounds played. He also stated that patrons are patiently waiting for the natural tees on the driving ranges to open. As always, when this happens, the amount of activity picks up even further.

#### <mark>↓ <u>Pools</u></mark>

- Daryn Schwartz reported that Spear Corporation would be doing the sand filter work at Northside Pool on the main and zero-depth pools. He also stated that once the project begins, it should take a couple of days, barring any unforeseen setbacks. This should still put the pool operation on track to open on May 7, 2025
- Daryn Schwartz stated that pool staffing is on target to be fully staffed for the season. Daryn was very excited about this due to having a couple of really difficult staffing summers in the past.



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• Jason Smith reported that the maintenance techs had done an outstanding job getting the leaves out of the pools. He also stated that the cleaning crews had power-washed the bottom of the pools. This will make a huge difference when cleaning the pools for opening weekend.

#### Riverfront

- April was an exciting and engaging month at Promenade Park with a variety of events and programs that brought the community together and welcomed guests of all ages to enjoy the park! Riverfront Fort Wayne welcomed two rental reservations. One was a wedding, reserving both the Park Foundation Pavilion and Wells Street Bridge, while the other was Fort Wayne Trails' annual Trek the Trails event, bringing the community together for an active, family-friendly experience. Together, these events brought a total of 350 guests to the park. In addition, Riverfront Fort Wayne hosted three programs during the month. Our popular monthly fitness programs, Yoga and Kickboxing, attracted 90 participants, with Yoga continuing to be the crowd favorite. We also held our annual Dig Day event, a dinosaur-themed program for children 4- 13. Young explorers had a blast digging for fossils in our dig bins, creating their dinosaurs, and enjoying a day filled with prehistoric fun.
- Festival season began at Headwaters Park on April 26<sup>th</sup> with the Michiana Wine Festival. The event had close to 3,000 people in attendance tasting wines from 20 different wineries around Indiana and Michigan. Food trucks and live music also filled the grassy area of Headwaters Park providing an atmosphere of great live music, wine, and food. This event continues to grow each year, and the Wine Festival will return for the Fall event on October 5<sup>th</sup> of this year. Overall, April was a successful month filled with events and activities that highlighted the versatility of Promenade Park and Headwaters Park, along with what Riverfront Fort Wayne provides the community. We look forward to continuing the momentum into May!

#### Community Outreach

- The Supervisor of Community Outreach is working with staff from the Mayor's office to create "Moving with the Mayor". This series of fitness classes and events will encourage City staff to join the Mayor for programs like Zumba, pickleball, bicycling, line dancing, and walking. The programs are intended to take place on various dates in May and June. The Parks Department has coordinated locations and instructors for four of the scheduled dates.
- On April 5<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, the Community Youth Centers joined Boys and Girls Clubs of Fort Wayne to host its second annual Tri-Star Basketball Skills Contest. Participants ranged in age from 6-13 and were challenged in dribbling, passing, and shooting, along with a knockout and a 3-point contest. Participants were also encouraged to demonstrate their best sportsmanship in the hopes of being chosen for the Mental Attitude Award. This event was sponsored by the Downtown Optimists Club.
- The 2025 Park & Play Program will begin on June 6<sup>th</sup> and take place on weekdays, lasting through August 1<sup>st</sup>. Park and Play will take place at varying times in the following parks: Lakeside, Hanna Homestead, Packard, Waynedale, Psi Ote, Tillman, Lions, and Hamilton Parks. On Fridays, Park & Play will visit Library branches and other local organizations. The Park and Play staff will also activate Cooper Center at Reservoir Park Monday through Friday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM, with Fort Wayne Community Schools lunches being served out of this location.



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- Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation will host 4 events at McKinnie Commons in the summer of 2025. On Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup>, a summer kickoff celebration will take place from 5:00 – 8:00 pm. On Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup> and Friday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, free concerts will be held from 7:30 – 9:30 pm featuring Phase One Band and the G-Money Band. On Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, the Park and Play program will wrap up at McKinnie Commons with a Back-to-School Celebration.
- Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Staff attended the 2025 JA Ignite event on April 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. High school students from northeast Indiana attended to learn about job and career opportunities. An estimated 9000 children attended over the two days. Staff in attendance included representatives from the Community Center, Weisser Park Youth Center, Jennings Youth Center, McMillen Community Center, Golf Courses, and Marketing. Hundreds of fliers were handed out encouraging job-seekers to consider Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation for employment.
- On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the Supervisor of Community Outreach will present at a Fort Wayne Community Schools Title 1 District Family Advisory Meeting. The short presentation will cover summer programming opportunities offered by Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation.

#### Community Center

- We had a fire drill with all staff and participants who were present on Friday, March 28<sup>th</sup>.
- March 25 was Culture Night at Memorial Park Middle School. Neil Miller and Karen had an information table, gave out brochures, and answered lots of questions.
- March 27 Karen contacted Logan York, a member of the Miami Tribe, to get a First Nation speaker for PODS. Hopefully, we can set the dates for that next month. He will also be helping with resources and editing of a river program that Karen is developing.
- March 28 was the first-ever Bluey program as requested by parents. There were special Bluey crafts, games, dancing, and even Blue popcorn. Special guests were Chilli (Linda) and Bandit (Mary).
- Karen assisted with the last PODS interview, and all positions are now filled.
- Caleb, Linda, and Mary attended the JA Ignite job fair on 4/16 and 4/17.
- Caleb assisted with the basketball skills challenge held at McMillen earlier this month
- The parking lot got striped and holes were filled.
- The Children's Book Swap and Sale was held on April 1-3, and was one of our more successful book swap events. The weather for the week was great, which was a huge factor during spring break. Josh also did a Walk in the Park segment that ran during the week, which helped gain traction for the Book Swap.

#### McMillen Community Center

- The after-school program began in April with spring break programming. During the first week, the center operated from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for youth participants.
  - On **Monday**, 76 children signed in for the day's activities.
  - On **Tuesday**, the youth went on a field trip to the skating rink. Children enjoyed skating, showing off unique skills like one-legged skating and skating backwards.
  - On **Thursday**, participants visited Georgetown Bowling. Even the youngest children had fun using bumpers and smaller bowling balls.
  - On **Friday**, McMillen hosted a movie day using the Parks' new 22-foot projector screen. Youth from Weisser Park Youth Center were invited to join. Popcorn and water were provided during the screening.



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- On **Saturday**, McMillen co-hosted a basketball competition with the Optimist Club and the Boys and Girls Club. The one-day event gave youth ages 8–12 the opportunity to demonstrate their dribbling, passing, and shooting skills. McMillen youth Jaden Knox received the Sportsmanship Award.
- On April 18th (Good Friday), with schools closed, the center once again operated from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. At the end of the day, more than 240 candy-filled eggs were hidden outside the building for a festive egg hunt, which the children thoroughly enjoyed.

#### • Kids Café Service Totals:

- Snacks served: 392
- Breakfasts served: 80
- Total youth attendance: 704

#### 4 Weisser Park Youth Center

#### • Spring Break Staycation Activities:

- On **Monday, March 31**, youth competed in an obstacle course featuring crawling tubes, wall climbs, hurdles, and cone agility challenges. They also painted ceramic coasters.
- On **Tuesday, April 1**, a field day included games such as the bucket brigade, parachute games, potato sack races, tug-of-war, running challenges, scooter races, and ball toss.
- On Wednesday, April 2, 20 youth enjoyed bowling and pizza at MVP Lanes.
- On **Thursday, April 3**, 22 youth attended a skating outing at Bell's Skating Rink.
- On **Friday, April 4**, 17 youth went to McMillen to watch *Wonka* and enjoy popcorn. Later that day at Weisser, youth participated in a fun "cookie face challenge," where they had to move a cookie from their forehead to their mouth without using their hands.
- On **Saturday, April 5**, six youth participated in the Tri-Star Basketball Skills Competition at McMillen. Weisser had two winners in their respective age categories.

#### • <u>Recreation Room Reopening:</u>

- The recreation game room, closed since the COVID-19 pandemic, reopened on **Thursday, April 10**.
- Additions included a new skee-ball and foosball game, along with the return of air hockey, ping pong, basketball arcade, and pool tables.
- Youth are excited to learn and engage with these games. Staff plan to add a bumper pool table and a retro arcade game soon.

#### • Gardening Program:

- Youth helped clean and prep raised garden beds and grow pots by collecting leaves, sticks, and adding soil.
- Seeds planted indoors included: collard greens, kale, mustard greens, bok choy, cabbage, tomatoes, bell peppers, onions, marigolds, and herbs.
- On April 18, outdoor planting included: red potatoes, carrots, and additional leafy greens.

#### Outreach Programs:

- **Erin's House** held a pizza party on **April 17** to celebrate program completion. Staff also reviewed what the youth had learned during their sessions.
- Allen County Public Library visited on April 9 and hosted a Lego-building activity.



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• **Turner Chapel AME Ubuntu Learning Lab** conducted a financial literacy lesson on **April 10**, covering spending, saving, taxes, charitable giving, and investing. Youth tracked their spending until April 24 and brought back their savings banks to share their progress.

#### 4 Albert G. Jennings Youth Center

- Jennings averaged 25 youth per day throughout April and aims to maintain this through the school year.
- Youth visited Lindenwood Nature Preserve for a guided nature walk led by a Naturalist Specialist.
- Another outing took them to **Georgetown Bowling**, where first-time bowlers were taught how to bowl, and top performers received prizes from Supervisor Chanell Ridley.
  - Outreach Highlights:
    - Allen County Public Library *led a watercolor art activity*.
    - Erin's House continued its supportive programming with strong engagement from youth.
    - DrumFun resumed with Mr. Ketu, who focused this season on identity and Heritage. Mr. Ketu will be on tour for the next few weeks.
    - The Top Tier Dance Program is preparing dancers for an upcoming competition.

#### • Events and Special Projects:

- Jennings partnered with Indiana Tech Black Engineering students, the City of Fort Wayne, and the East Central Neighborhood Association to work on a youth-engaged EPA grant focused on addressing urban heat islands.
- Five Jennings youth participated in the Tri-State Basketball Skills Competition, proudly bringing home awards and cheering for their peers.

### **Deputy Director of Finance & Theatre** Budgets, Payroll and

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

# 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

#### **4** Payroll and Accounts Payable

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 285 employees (141 full-time and 144 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending April 19<sup>th</sup>, and paid on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025.
- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing or in the process of being hired, as of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025:
  - Heavy Equipment Operator (Fund 121)
  - Program Coordinator Neighborhood Programs McMillen (Fund 121)
  - Grounds Equipment Operator (Fund 121)
  - Park Person C Facilities (Fund 121)
  - Park Person C Botanical Conservatory (Fund 121)
  - Administrative Assistant Registration (Fund 121)
  - Project Management Technician (Fund 121)
  - Supervisor Salomon Farm (Fund 439)
  - Fleet Mechanic Golf (Fund 439)
  - Park Person C Riverfront (Fund 451)



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- Seasonal hiring is going well. We have done several hiring meetings: 4/16 for the Theatre staff, 4/29 for Aquatic staff, 4/30 for Aquatic/Sweet Breeze staff, and 5/5 for Franke/Salomon Farm day camp staff. There is another hiring meeting upcoming on 5/7 as well.
- We've gotten an additional two-time clocks and a couple more ordered as well for the Pools. They will be paired with a Verizon Jetpack for cellular connection, as we do not have either of the Pools wired for internet.
- Payroll on the new Attendance on Demand/Time Management System has been going smoothly.
- One position was changed from Manager Project Administration to Superintendent Project Administration. We also added Project Management Technician and removed the Manager VI Grounds position.
- In April, we processed 36 purchase requisitions, numerous change orders, 43 p-card statements, two payroll periods, and 596 invoices.

#### Customer Service

- Madeline Gore started in the Administrative Assistant Registration position. She is quickly learning her job responsibilities and will be the main point of contact for all customers visiting the Parks and Recreation Main Office
- The front office is once again fully staffed and working very well together
- Front office staff have been very busy with registrations for day camps at Franke Park, Salomon Farm, and the Conservatory
- Warm weather and spring are bringing along with them an uptick in purchases of Pooch passes, Golf Course memberships, and Foellinger Theatre tickets.
- Campground registrations have kept Front Office staff busy, but recently returned to the campground hosts this last week since the Campground opened on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Joyce and Maxine are working with the Marketing staff to hold an additional open house for McMillen Family Pavilion on Wednesday, May 28<sup>th,</sup> from 3:00 pm 6:00 pm
- May 7<sup>th</sup> is the start of Summer Fun Times registration. We are expecting a large number of calls/visits for swim lessons and junior golf tour registrations.
- 2025 Sweet Breeze Canal Boat cruises tickets went on sale at the beginning of May.
- Worked closely with Rick Kinney in April to learn as much as possible about the inner workings of Foellinger Theatre
- Interviewed and hired a new Foellinger Theatre Manager
- Participated in a Teams meeting with one of the promoters who rents Foellinger Theatre for concerts and came away with a better understanding of what a promoter is looking for when choosing where to place their concerts
- Participated in meetings with Ticketmaster to assist them with the installation of new credit card machines with chip readers. One machine is in the process of being tested, with four more to be installed after a positive result from the testing.

#### **Foellinger Theatre Report**

- Concerts Announced and On Sale:
  - FW Philharmonic Dolly Parton's Threads May 17, 2025
  - Justin Moore June 5, 2025
  - Tommy James and The Shondells June 28, 2025
  - 1964 The Tribute August 1, 2025
  - Trace Adkins August 22, 2025
  - Warrant, Lita Ford, and Firehouse September 26. 2025
- Community Free Events
  - Fort Wayne Area Community Band June 10, 2025
  - Fort Wayne Area Community Band July 8, 2025
  - New Millennium Jazz Orchestra July 9, 2025
  - Fort Wayne Children's Choir Choral Fest Concert July 25, 2025



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- Fort Wayne Area Community Band August 12, 2025

#### General Management

- Rick Kinney's last day was May 3<sup>rd</sup>
- We would like to welcome Jarin Hart to Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation as the new Foellinger Theatre Manager. Jarin comes to us with a lot of experience in venue management with previous positions with venues including the Embassy Theatre, Niswonger Performing Arts Center in Van Wert, Fort Wayne Dance Collective and also previously worked for a promoter so she knows both sides of the business 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. Jarin's first day is April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### Steve Schuhmacher – Deputy Director of Park Maintenance,

Facilities, Technicians, Grounds/Heavy Equipment, MainTrac, Projects, Storeroom, Administration, Safety Compliance

#### Facilities Supervisor: Greg Reith

- Pavilion rental totals for April were at 94.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Lawton Park skate park, Martin Luther King, Jr Bridge, Franke Park playground, Brackenridge Park basketball court, Klug Park playground, Psi-Ote Park shelter, Waynedale Park pavilion, and Shoaff Park restroom building.
- Pressure washed the following locations: Memorial Park splashpad, Waynedale Park splashpad, Buckner Park splashpad, Shoaff Park splashpad, McCormick Park splashpad, Kreager Park splashpad and shelters, Northside Park pool, McMillen Park pool, Freimann Square fountain, and Franke Park entrance signs.
- Working Leader and both reliefs assisted the maintenance techs with the setup of the Butterfly Exhibit lab at Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory.
- Assisted in cleaning the stage at the Foellinger Theater for the upcoming season.

#### Maintenance Technician Supervisor: Mike Cremeans

- Preparations for the 2025 season at Freimann Square were completed. This included removing the protective winter covers, repairing lights, and filling the pond.
- Hurshtown piers were installed the week of the 28th ahead of opening day on May 1st.
- The annual Color In Motion, Butterfly Exhibit at the Botanical Conservatory began on the 12th. Maintenance Techs were tasked with installing the education lab and access vestibules.
- Pre-season preparations were completed at both McMillen and Northside Park pools. The pools were filled on the 25th and are ready for Board of Health inspections before opening.
- Work continues to restore water services for the summer months. All rental pavilions and restrooms have been turned back on. Locations with irrigation and some drinking fountains remain to be turned back on.

#### Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment: Rob Schenkel

- Heavy Equipment and Grounds Relief crews removed and excavated the Franke Park playground to make way for the installation of the new playground.
- Stone was added and graded at Foellinger Theatre overflow lot, Shoaff Park boat house, and along the gravel roads at Franke Park.



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- Crews are maintaining parks on a 6–8-day rotation, including mowing grass, string trimming around trees and fence lines, and blowing off walkways.
- Crews run trash routes five days a week, ensuring all receptacles in the parks are emptied.

#### 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, and going back over inspections of the Parks, and doing new ones.
- Starting in 2025, playground inspections are still gearing up for the 2025 River Greenway inspections, and for 2025 monthly MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks.
- Writing and overseeing 2025 purchase orders, and working on interviews for open positions in Grounds and Facilities.

#### Operations / Fleet Maintenance / Storeroom: Travis Roth

#### Storeroom and Property:

- Storeroom staff transported Kenwood radios from the day camp, Salomon Farm, and McMillen Community Center to the radio shop to have them serviced for the season.
- The use of the box truck and new delivery van was coordinated to allow the theater to use one for moving materials and then landscape to utilize them for the school flower deliveries.
- $\circ$   $\;$  The storeroom forklift was loaned to the theater for the 2025 stage setup.

#### • Garage Operations Highlights:

- 196 work orders were scheduled this month, 40 of which were services.
- 3 Chevrolet Colorados were delivered and are in the process of getting numbers and decals. These will be put into service for night utility and the supervisor of repair and construction.
- A new Miller MIG welder was delivered for the garage. This portable unit will allow staff to make aluminum welding repairs at remote locations.
- The engine rebuild on chipper 322 was completed, and the unit runs nicely and was put back into service with the forestry division.
- Yearly bucket truck inspections began on April 24<sup>th,</sup> with 4 of the trucks being inspected and passing. The others will be done in the first week of May.
- The backup gasoline engine for the zoo skyride suffered a complete failure. Garage mechanics were able to source a used engine that wasn't being used in our system to replace the failed motor, so the ride could continue.
- Link Environmental out of Winamac, Indiana, sourced a 2015 Freightliner truck was a grapple boom for the department. Forestry has wanted to add this kind of truck to their operation. The used model saves the city \$182,000 over buying a new production model.
- Grounds pick-up truck 20 is in the process of getting the bed replaced. The original bed was rusted badly, and a rust-free bed was located in a salvage yard to replace it.
- A local lift repair company inspected the in-ground garage lifts and will make repairs to clear up some hydraulic leaks as soon as parts arrive.

#### Project Administration: Dave Weadock

- Brewer Park Construction Pavilion structure and roofing installed. Most sidewalks have been installed. Trail base
  material is installed throughout the park. Interior restroom building work and playground installation is in
  progress. Turf playground material is scheduled for late April. Spray-ground piping is installed.
- Community Center Shuffleboard Courts Shade Structures Product ordered by Parks with planned delivery late April.
- Franke Park Playground Equipment Installation is in progress with completion planned by mid-May.
- Hanna Homestead Lighting Installation Installation of electrical components in progress.
- Hanna Homestead Lighting Product Purchase All products have been received.
- Headwaters Park Fountain Construction in progress.



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- Jehl Park Playground Equipment Project completed.
- Kreager Park Soccer Fields Irrigation Project completed.
- Kreager Park Tennis Courts Net posts reconstruction completed on four courts. Remaining courts shall be addressed in June, after-school tennis season
- Lakeside Park Playground Equipment Play equipment has been installed, and mulch surfacing installation is in progress.
- Lakeside Park Dome Arbor Renovation Construction is in progress, planned completion in early May.
- Lawton Park Trestle Bridge Construction in progress.
- Mechanic St. Bridge Construction Bridge rehabilitation in progress.
- Packard Park Redevelopment Construction in progress.

#### Safety: Tony DeVido

- The Parks & Rec. The Safety Committee met on April 29. 4 employees were present.
- 2 2-vehicle crash was reported for this time period.
- 3 employee injuries were reported during this time.
- 1 CPR/FA classes were held. 8 employees were certified
- $\bullet$  The OSHA 10-hour class was rescheduled to May 14th and 15th.
- Worker Protection Standard classes have begun.
- Seasonal employee training has begun.
- An additional forklift training session was held for Foellinger seasonal employees.
- Safety Fair planning is underway.

The S.A.F.E. program suggestion boxes were installed at the Lawton Storeroom – 1900 North Clinton Street, and in the Administrative Building – 705 E State Blvd.

# Chad Shaw, Deputy Director of the BOTANICAL

#### Development, Forestry, Greenhouse, Landscape & Horticulture, and Riparian

On April 15, the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual 'Color in Motion: Live Butterfly Exhibit' welcomed its first visitors. This nine-week exhibit will last until June 22, with a target attendance of 40,000 visitors.

- The Botanical Conservatory hosted several well-received events in April 2025, including Bunny Tales in the Garden (April 18 & 19), Color in Motion: Spring Artisan Market (April 27). Staff are gearing up for Mother's Day Plant Sale (May 8 11), Mother's Day in the Garden (May 10 & 11), National Public Gardens Week (May 9 16), Spring Bonsai Show (May 17), Iris Flower Show (May 25), and several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month.
- Current vacancies include one Seasonal Maintenance and two Camp ACTIVenture Counselors (candidates have been selected and are awaiting clearance by Human Resources). The full-time Park Person C position was filled internally with the promotion of Bethany Patty, who had been serving in a Seasonal Maintenance position; Bethany brings a great deal of enthusiasm and tested experience to the position.

#### Botanical Conservatory KPIs

April 2025 marked a significant month of growth and momentum for the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory. With 14,638 visitors, attendance rose by an impressive 34.79% over April 2024, pushing our year-



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to-date total to 43,539 visitors—a 24.73% increase compared to this time last year. This growth reflects sustained public enthusiasm for the Botanical Conservatory's immersive exhibits, spring programming, and vibrant garden displays.

Admissions revenue followed suit, rising 22.07% for the month and 15.19% year-to-date, while membership revenue climbed by 38.12% in April, a strong indicator of long-term community investment. This increase brought the year-to-date membership total to \$45,774, exceeding 2024 by 5.38%.

While Conservatory Shop revenue remained stable for the month (+0.20%), year-to-date sales continue to outpace 2024 by 9.28%, driven by consistent merchandising and customer service. Rental and catering revenue also posted strong gains, up 42.43% for April and 18.52% year-to-date, reflecting growing interest in the Botanical Conservatory as a venue for private events.

Most notably, Other Revenue experienced a dramatic increase on the month of \$219,546.98 due to the annual disbursement of the Fort Wayne Park Foundation endowment. This contribution, alongside increases across nearly all categories, resulted in an overall 246.85% increase in total revenue for April, and a year-to-date total of \$625,648.96, up 15.27% compared to 2024.

In sum, April was a month of outstanding growth in both attendance and financial performance, setting a strong foundation for the upcoming peak season. With Color in Motion launching and preparations underway for the Mother's Day Plant Sale, the Botanical Conservatory is well-positioned to continue this upward trajectory.

#### Attendance

April 2024:	10,860 visitors
April 2025:	14,638 visitors
An increase of +3,778 or +34.79%	to 2024

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2024 Attendance:	34,906 visitors
2025 Attendance:	43,539 visitors
An increase of +8,63	33 or +24.73% to 2024

#### **Admissions Revenue**

April 2024:	\$44,596.00
April 2025:	\$54,438.00
An increase of \$9,842.00 or +22.07	% to 2024

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2024 Admissions Revenue:	\$141,102.00
2025 Admissions Revenue:	\$162,538.00
An increase of \$21,436 or +15.19%	to 2024

#### **Membership Revenue**

April 2024:	\$10,999.00
April 2025:	\$15,192.00
An increase of \$4,193.00 or	r +38.12% to 2024



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#### **YTD Comparisons**

2024 Membership Revenue:	\$43,437.00
2025 Membership Revenue:	\$45,774.00
An increase of \$2,337.00 or +5.38%	to 2024

#### **Conservatory Shop Revenue**

April 2024:	\$33,341.37
April 2025:	\$33,407.69
An increase of \$66.32 or +0.20%	to 2024

#### **YTD** Comparisons

2024 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$104,530.82
2025 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$114,232.34
An increase of \$9,701.54 or +9	0.28% to 2024

#### **Rental & Catering Fee Revenue**

April 2024:	\$4,342.50
April 2025:	\$6,185.00
An increase of \$1,842.50 c	or +42.43% to 2024

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2024 Rental Revenue:	\$29,295.00
2025 Rental Revenue:	\$34,720.00
An increase of \$5,425.00 or +1	8.52% to 2024

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

April 2024:	\$1,508.73
April 2025:	\$219,546.98

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2024 Other Revenue:	\$224,411.72
2025 Other Revenue:	\$268,384.62

#### **Conservatory Total Revenue**

April 2024:	\$94,787.60
April 2025:	\$328,769.67
An increase of \$233,982.07	or +246.85% to 2024

YTD Comparisons			
2024 Total Revenue:	\$542,776.54		
2025 Total Revenue:	\$625,648.96		
An increase of \$82,872.42 or +15.27% to 2024			

#### **4** Botanical Conservatory Business Development

Staff submitted a grant to the Duke Energy Foundation for support of the Desert House Improvements Project.



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Staff is continuing to research possible capital plan funders from foundations and corporations.

Staff provided promotional tickets and information to Majic 95.1 and FOX55 and corporate sponsor Aunt Millie's for the promotional spots for 2025 Mother's Day in the Garden.

Staff submitted final media reports to US 93.3 for 2025 Great Train Connection and to 103.9 Wayne FM Fort Wayne for the 2025 The Floor is Lava! Exhibit. These reports will enable us to approach these media for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.

Staff submitted final sponsorship reports to Magee-O'Connor Foundation for the 2025 The Floor is Lava! Exhibit and to PNC Charitable Trusts for the 2024 Gnome for the Holidays and the 2025 The Floor is Lava! Exhibit. These reports will enable us to approach these agencies for continuing support of upcoming exhibits.

Staff completed the 2025 Spring Annual Appeal to our members – it will be sent May  $2^{nd}$ . A follow-up email appeal will be sent May  $15^{th}$ .

#### **4** <u>Botanical Conservatory Public Programs - Events</u>

Bunny Tales in the Garden (April 18 & 19)

Attendance Day 1: 1,676 total visitors; 1,538 in 2024 Attendance Day 2: 1,727 total visitors; 1,714 in 2024

With a total attendance of 3,403 visitors, this favorite public event returned on the Friday and Saturday before Easter Sunday. Event attendance continues to climb from 3,246 total visitors in 2024; 2,713 visitors in 2023; 1,821 visitors in 2022; and 1,398 visitors in 2021. Families visited all three indoor gardens and both outdoor gardens in addition to a craft station, live animals from Indiana WILD, a bunte eier display, goody bag station, and finally, a visit with the Easter Bunny! In addition, this year's event happened to coincide with the Color in Motion butterfly exhibit, which was a timed experience that accommodated 2,035 visitors during the 2-day event.

#### Education

Pysanky Eggs (April 3)

In this popular workshop taught by mother/daughter duo Carol Ann and Karen, 24 participants learned Ukrainian methods of decorating eggs with wax and dye. It reached capacity and earned high reviews from guests who especially enjoyed the opportunity for egg decorating before Easter. A second workshops is even being requested!

#### SCFVA, School Children's Flower & Vegetable Association

Landscape and Horticulture Staff completed a week-long delivery of plants and bags to approximately 50 different schools and 17,000 children grades K-3<sup>rd</sup>. Each School Principle also received their own plant to participate alongside students. Throughout the month of April, all other ordered items such as ribbons, seed packets, pencils, and t-shirts were ready for pickup at the Botanical Conservatory. The next big thing is to coordinate dates and times for each individual school show in addition to training and scheduling volunteer judges.

#### **4** Youth Field Trips

The Botanical Conservatory hosted 23 groups bringing 503 students in the month of April. In 2024, 26 groups bought 929 students; 14 groups brought 281 students in 2023; 4 groups brought 99 students in 2022; 2 groups brought 26 students in 2021; zero groups visited in 2020; 12 groups brought 326 students in 2019; and 22 groups brought 749 students in 2018.



#### **4** <u>Exhibits & Displays</u>

#### Color in Motion (April 15-June 22)

The current showcase exhibit is among the most popular and is much anticipated by guests at the return of spring. With the live butterfly exhibit in its  $22^{nd}$  year, high attendance numbers are anticipated along with increased field trips. Some new butterfly species were also introduced this year along with a handful of new Butterfly Attendant volunteers who help staff the exhibit on a daily basis.

#### Gentle Turning by Grace Yencer (April 15-June 22)

Local artist Grace Yencer brings *Color in Motion* to the Gallery Hall with her 37 unique mixed media pieces titled *Gentle Turning*. Motifs of rolling hills, butterflies, short quotes, florals, and homes are familiar and whimsical. Within the first two weeks, five pieces already sold! Her artwork can be purchased online at <a href="https://www.short.com">shop.botanicalconservatory.org</a>.

#### Soaring into Spring (April 15-June 22)

In partnership with the (FWCS) Anthis Career Academy, the Botanical Conservatory is participating in the 2025 Fort Wayne in Bloom Window Decorating Contest put on by Downtown Fort Wayne. Student, Molly Rider, is the original Artist, while students, Virginia Keefe, Felix Duarte, and Kris Houghton-Thompson are the designers who worked together to reimagine, enlarge, print, and install the final artwork. Such talent! Learn more about these graphic design students when visiting in person, and vote for your favorite window design by visiting <u>downtownfortwayne.com/bloom-25/</u>.

#### Volunteers/Staff

At the Front Desk, 8 volunteers staffed 38 shifts while 11 volunteers supported 30 shifts in the Gift Shop. Another weekly volunteer maintained their commitment to grooming the Atrium and Tropical Gardens. In the butterfly tent, 75 shifts were fulfilled by 35 volunteers, including 6 new volunteers trained to be Butterfly Attendants. Also supporting the exhibit are 3 dedicated volunteers who pin chrysalids for emergence as well as prepare Painted Lady Butterfly Kits for the Gift Shop. During Bunny Tales in the Garden, 12 volunteers completed 1,400 goody bags while 13 volunteers supported the two-day event. A handful of volunteers also decorated eggs for display.

As for SCFVA, 5 different volunteers were dedicated to stamping and labeling bags, which were also prepared by Front Desk and Gift Shop volunteers during regular shifts. Plus, many different greenhouse volunteers contributed toward preparing plants! CAS students and their facilitators jointly served 43 volunteer hours when contributing toward SCFVA, Bunny Tales in the Garden, and grounds maintenance. Their volunteer service was definitely impactful! Easterseals also continued regular volunteer service, which was beneficial especially when it came to sweeping the paths and clearing fallen sticks.

#### 4 Upcoming

April 11-June 22: Painted Lady Butterfly Kits for sale in Gift Shop, while supplies last

April 15-June 22: Color in Motion, live butterfly exhibit

April 15-June 22: Gentle Turning, art display by Grace Yencer

April 15-June 22: Soaring into Spring, window decorating contest

May 5-8: Setup & Load-in Plant Sale, 9 am-4 pm



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- May 8: Day 1- Mother's Day Plant Sale, Member's Preview 4-7 pm
- May 9: Day 2- Mother's Day Plant Sale, 1-7 pm
- May 9-16: National Public Gardens Week, public hours
- May 10 & 11: Mother's Day in the Garden, public hours
- May 10: Day 3- Mother's Day Plant Sale, 10 am-4 pm
- May 11: Day 4- Mother's Day Plant Sale, 11 am-2 pm
- May 17: Spring Bonsai Show, public hours
- May 22: 4H Club Meeting, internal
- May 23: Outdoor Sales Garden Opens, public hours
- May 25: Iris Flower Show, 12-3 pm
- May 29: String Jams Spring Jam, 6:30-7:30 pm

June 1: Breakfast with Butterflies, pre-registered program
June 3-July 8: T'ai Chi for Relaxation, pre-registered program
June 7: Spring Plant Swap, pre-registered program
June 8: Breakfast with Butterflies, pre-registered program
June 9-27: Camp ACTIVenture, pre-registered program
June 14 & 15: Father's Day in the Garden
June 17-23: National Pollinator Week
June 22-27: Showchange Week!
June 23: Opening of Summer/Fall Exhibit ...Something Blue
June 29: Summer Artisan Village

#### **4** <u>Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture</u>

April marked a major transition for the Botanical Conservatory's horticulture and landscape operations, as the team completed the seasonal showchange from The Floor is Lava to Color in Motion. This complex transformation required the coordinated efforts of the Botanical Conservatory horticulture staff, Maintenance Technicians, Grounds Crew, and the Lawton Park Landscape team. Their collaboration ensured the successful removal of the previous showcase and installation of the butterfly exhibit, including detailed floral displays and structural features.

A significant effort was also made in the Tropical House, where staff completed a deep clean of the pond and waterfall features over the course of four full days. This included the removal of debris, a thorough tightening and pruning of surrounding plant material, and restoration of water clarity to maintain a healthy aquatic environment for both plants and wildlife.

Pride Landcare supported seasonal outdoor preparations by edging and mulching all outdoor beds and beginning the 2025 mowing season across the Botanical Conservatory's exterior spaces. With their assistance, the gardens were refreshed and revitalized in time for spring visitation.

The team also completed extensive outdoor plantings, including new additions to the Terrace Garden pots and Salon Plaza raised beds. Flowering perennials such as camellias, rhododendrons, columbine, lenten rose, and ground cherry were introduced alongside bright annuals on the Terrace, while Salon Plaza was refreshed with colorful pansies and snapdragons to welcome guests to the Atrium.



In preparation for the busy growing season, staff also conducted a thorough cleanout of horticulture storage areas with the help of volunteers from CAS. This effort included the installation of new hanging racks in the Exploration Barn and a full inventory of horticulture tools, ensuring that equipment is organized and accessible for the months ahead.

#### Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

In April, American Elevator completed the installation of the new elevator and returned to install the protective wall curtains, marking the final steps of the project.

Conservatory staff worked collaboratively to deinstall The Floor is Lava showcase and install the 2025 Color in Motion butterfly exhibit, transitioning the Showcase Garden into its spring presentation.

The Botanical Conservatory team also successfully coordinated the setup and breakdown of the two-day Bunny Tales event, which was well-received by guests and noted as a particularly engaging, family-friendly experience.

In preparation for the outdoor season, Mutton Rental was on-site to remove the sidewalls of the tent on the upper terrace while staff refreshed outdoor areas and made them ready for spring visitors.

Central Indiana Hardware repaired two malfunctioning doors in the Tropical House, restoring proper function to door closures and improving safety and accessibility.

Renovations to the Café and Gift Shop also continued to advance throughout the month. Flow Tech installed sinks and completed plumbing in the new café prep area, removed debris from the floor drain installation, and fitted a new mop sink in the remodeled janitorial closet. LA Electric and Lan Con Electric progressed with electrical installations in both areas. Ruiz Painting returned to complete additional drywall repairs and painted cabinetry as needed. O'Neil's Glass installed a new glass panel in the office window, and Simplx Security reinstalled smoke heads, a fire pull station, and security components previously removed during demolition. Kaleidoscope Floors completed the removal of tile and carpeting, skim-coated, and laid new 30-mil commercial-quality vinyl plank. These combined efforts reflect steady momentum as the project nears completion.

#### **4** <u>Planning Report – April 2025</u>

Construction of the Franke Park Renaissance, Phase I project is nearly complete. Exterior wall capstones are being fabricated for installation at the pavilion.

Concrete installation continues at Packard Park and Brewer Park. The splashpad and playground equipment are underway at Brewer Park. Project completion for each is anticipated for early-mid June.

The Lawton Park/Fourth Street Pedestrian Bridge installation is complete. Punchlist items are underway.

Riverfront Phase II B construction is well underway. The subgrade is in place for the discovery ascent and concrete curbs around the bioswale are underway. Staff continue to coordinate with AEP for relocation of distribution and transmission lines through the project area.

Design work continues on the Foster Park Entrance project. The design team is well into design development and has met with staff to review potential new restroom building locations and entrance drive layout. Staff is also coordinating with City Utilities on the restoration of their utility construction project throughout Foster Park.



The Treeline District design team has finalized design development documents for the proposed park. Parks staff is working with Redevelopment staff and the design team to ensure the project aligns with the department's goals and that it is integrated with the adjacent Riverfront designs.

Staff received the final design of interpretive signage at Wells Street Park and Wells Street Bridge for review. The Bloomingdale Neighborhood Association is using neighborhood grant funds to purchase the signs and is working with Parks staff to determine locations for installation.

Staff finished the design of a planting plan for the Salomon Farm Park north/dining garden and is developing an implementation plan.

Staff attended several sessions of the Mayor's Lead Boldly training.

Staff reviewed the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Botanical Conservatory Exploration Garden and Terrace Garden design with the Botanical Conservatory's supervisory team. Conversations continue regarding the scope of the RFP.

Staff continue 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.

#### **4** <u>Horticulture and Landscape Report- April 2025</u>

There were 4,625 seeds sown for the Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale and the Conservatory Showcase.

A total of 560 cuttings were taken for Parks, Plant Sale, and Showcase.

Approximately 30,000 plants were transplanted for various Parks, and the Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale.

600 Spring Bulbs for Bunny Tales and 150 were sold at the Conservatory's Gift Shop, and 73 Spring bulbs were provided for the Parks.

15,000 plants were for the SCFVA program to 51 schools that participated.

69 Greenhouse volunteers worked approximately 650 hours in the greenhouse helping to transplant, clean plants, price, and label.

With the assistance of landscape staff, the show change at the Botanical Conservatory was completed the week of the 7<sup>th</sup>; the "Floor is Lava" exhibit was removed, and the "Color In Motion" live butterfly exhibit was installed.

All landscape staff helped out in the greenhouse and delivered plants for the SCFVA the week of April 21st. In 6 days, staff delivered approximately 15,000 plants and over 2,000 trees to 51 schools.

Lakeside staff finished leaf cleanup, continued with daily litter removal, and began weekly mowing and spin trimming. They worked on bed and sidewalk edging, weeded and applied pre-emergent to beds, fertilized shrubs and perennials, and planted pansies in the urns. They also assisted in helping the greenhouse, and continued to



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prune and un-hill roses, as well as apply pesticides to them to prevent rose midge, black spot, powdery mildew, and root rot.

Foster staff finished leaf cleanup, continued with daily litter removal, began mowing the bridal glen weekly, removed early-season tulips, tilled beds as they prepare for annual flowers, edged beds, mulched perennial and tree beds, pruned shrubs, and applied pre- and post-emergent herbicides for weed control. The team also removed tree stumps and began maintaining the bridal glen fountain.

The Downtown Team continued with daily litter removal and power-washed and assisted in the filling of the Freimann Square fountain. All fountain nozzles were removed and cleaned this year to improve fountain performance. They did shrub pruning and bed cleanups at Little Turtle, selective pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicide applications at Freimann, Promenade, and Headwaters, planted the Downtown Community Center pots, fertilized shrubs at Promenade, as well as, the Liriope beds at Freimann, and worked on spring turf repairs around the pavilions at Headwaters. Strong winds kept the staff busy picking up sticks and limbs in all the downtown parks. Staff also helped in the greenhouse and assembled 10 new carts that will assist with the transport of plants for the Mother's Day Plant Sale. The team continued to work on pruning back the Euonymus beds at Headwaters East and planted 250 additional Liriope at Freimann to supplement existing beds.

The City Team began weekly mowing and trimming at Lawton and Northside Office, applied selective preemergent herbicide applications, cleaned up the rain garden at Reservoir Park, mulched the Northside Office, did turf repair in the Indian Village/Bluffton Rd. area, and assisted the greenhouse as needed. The team also delivered soil to the Weisser Center to assist with the planting of their garden beds. They renovated the Franklin Park sign, planting a mixture of over 270 perennials. They also added over 20 additional perennials to areas around Taylor's Dream Playground that had died off over the years. Minor renovations were made to the service memorial at Memorial Park, with the addition of some ornamental grasses and transplanting.

Approximately 6 volunteers from Suburban Propane assisted in trash pickup at the Community Gardens. Landscape staff hauled all garbage to the landfill.

Triscape, Inc finished mulching Promenade, Headwaters, and Riverfront IIA as per contract.

Pride Landcare, Mow Baby Mow, and MJK Total Lawn Care began mowing all contracted maintenance areas.

Lawnganics continued turf fertilization and weed control on all park locations under contract.

Myers Plant Health Care treated several select trees at Promenade Park and Freimann Square for insects, fungi, and improved tree health.

MJK Total Lawn Care was awarded a stump removal and turf renovation project at the front of Kreager Park.

MJK Total Lawn Care was awarded mulching contracts at REA Park and Swinney Park.

Pride Landcare was awarded a mulching contract for Tillman Park.

Two seasonal employees began work in April.

#### **4** <u>Riparian Management Report- April 2025</u>



Cleared the Van Buren bridge of woody debris. Began clearing large log jam on Ewing with the running total of 23.7 tons of debris removed so far.

Successfully installed Shoaff dock system and improved the gangway system.

Successfully installed the Guldlin dock system.

Successfully installed Promenade dock system.

Scouted and located 7 goose nests throughout the parks. Addled (a method used for the control of Geese) 23 eggs in four nests. Monitoring will continue.

Cleared Guldlin, Promenade Park- North Dock, and Promenade Park- South Dock from silt after severe flooding.

Continued clearing honeysuckle at Shoaff, totaling about 1140 pounds (.57 tons).

Replaced old throw lines on the safety rings at Promenade.

The supervisor attended the River Management Society's 2025 River Symposium in Oregon with over 230 people in attendance. A presentation and poster showcasing the Riparian Division were presented.

#### Forestry Report- April 2025

Contract crews continue the removal of street trees throughout Fort Wayne. The removal of street trees is part of a comprehensive urban forestry management plan, addressing factors such as tree health and safety concerns.

Mr. Issac Lyons achieved his Arborist certification and is now a Certified Arborist. We also celebrated Arbor Day on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Crews bagged and handed out well over a hundred trees to the public.

During April, forestry crews completed 70 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to accommodate the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.

34 high-priority trees were removed by in-house crews this month. 7 of these were located within our parks. 1 was a result of vehicle damage.

This month, crews responded to 32 storm-related fallen/hanging limbs. Eight of these were from privately owned locations that had fallen in the right-of-way.

Completed 6 inspections/appraisals of trees that had been damaged by vehicles (One by vandalism). In total, these incidents resulted in \$7,040.00 of damage in April.

Forestry staff responded to and resolved 78, 311 Call Center requests for service this month.





Event attendees taking advantage of a photo op in the Tropical House during Bunny Tales in the Garden

Conservatory Staff smiling and giving the thumbs up with the Easter Bunny himself

Plants, bags & info distributed as part of the SCFVA, School Children's Flower & Vegetable Association





A Conservatory guest interacting with live butterflies as part of Color in Motion

Tulips brightening up the Botanical Conservatory's main entrance off Calhoun and Jefferson

Anthis Career Academy Students posing with their collaborative design for a local contest

A Volunteer Butterfly Attendant tending to the entrance vestibule in the Butterfly Tent

A dedicated volunteer adding labels to plants at the Lawton Park Greenhouse





Greenhouse volunteers tidying plants for the upcoming Mother's Day Plant Sale

CAS Students taking a break from volunteering to enjoy the butterfly tent

### Kathryn Pargmann – Manager, Lead of Marketing

- www.RiverfrontFW.org had 4,949 hits to the site this month, and the Promenade Park link had 4,255 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 2,620 hits in April.
- The Marketing Team attended a variety of spring Wellness Fairs, school events, and more to promote our spring/summer offerings. These events will continue into May.
- The Marketing Team continues to push out job messaging and attend Job Fairs and related events. Over 6,300 hits to the Parks Job link in April!
- **Web Statistics:** Users: **50,619** Hits: **161,456**
- Numerous Design projects completed, including LSA, Learn to Swim, Senior Games brochures, Botanical Conservatory Appeal letter, & Electronic Riverfront promos and more.
- 4 A major focus was the design and production of the Summer Fun Times.
- Finalized project fundraising information booklet for Moody Park. Will use this template going forward for creating other booklets.
- Connected program teams with sponsorship leads (Community Center, Riverfront, Conservatory, Youth Centers, Salomon, and others).
- Interviewed on <u>"Walk in the Park"</u> about Youth Scholarships. Our goal is to improve visibility and access to youth scholarship funds
- Held a very successful Arbor Day Press Conference and Seedling giveaway.



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- Social media promotions for: Farmin' Fun Camp, Day Travel, Work IN Parks, Golf, Arbor Day/seedlings, among others.
- Arranged for 18 media interviews with select staff promoting spring events.
- April Media Mentions: 65. Social Media Totals for <u>April</u>:

FB Followers	101,248
FB Reach	447,091
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,949
Instagram Followers	28,264

### Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations

- A "typical" Indiana April occurred this year, which is to say there was some excellent spring weather mixed with some leftover late winter weather. After opening the courses in late March, we were finally able to allow carts and range use by early April. Despite a slow start, by the end of April, two courses have exceeded their year-to-date revenues by the end of the month, and the third will catch up and pass last year's totals by the end of May. Remember, we are comparing totals to an exceptional year last year (our fourth straight year of growth) with an "average" weather year that has nearly two fewer weeks in March because of this year's late opening.
- Here are the monthly and year-over-year numbers so far this year:

<u>APRIL</u>	FOSTER	MCMILLEN	<u>SHOAFF</u>	
2024 REVENUE	\$22,976	\$21,851.75	\$50,646.75	
<b>2025 REVENUE</b>	<b>\$37,223.50</b>	<b>\$31,367.75</b>	<b>\$58,344.25</b>	
YTD 2024	\$36,142	\$34,303.75	\$76,345.25	\$146,791
<b>YTD 2025</b>	<b>\$41,059.25</b>	<b>\$36,189.25</b>	<b>\$66,723.50</b>	<b>\$143,972</b>

- Chris Rudolph is now on board as Golf Course Superintendent, replacing Bryan Keister, who retired after 30 years of service to the courses (thank you for your service, Bryan!). Chris brings a wealth of experience from over 30 years of experience at local private and public golf courses. Paired with Travis Whitman, who has over 15 years of experience with the Parks courses, we have an excellent grounds staff to continue making the playing experience better for our patrons.
- A quote has been acquired for golf carts. The quote is to both continue expanding the fleet up to the optimal number of 110 total carts and to begin replacing the 2015 era carts as they begin to age out. The goal is not to get caught in a similar situation as we were three or four years ago, where 20-year-old carts were constantly failing and costing us potential revenue as well as the cost of repairing a diminished asset. With this purchase, we will be trading in 8 remaining 2007-era carts and a yet-to-be-determined number of the 40 2015-era carts currently in service.
- High School and Middle School golf seasons are in full swing, utilizing all three courses. Changes made to the middle school scheduling at Shoaff Park have eliminated congestion and complaints from patrons. The Park's courses are at capacity for several schools that we will take, and we have seemingly found a decent balance between hosting schools and being available for the high demand of open play.
- 4 Mark Beneke has again contracted to give lessons through the Parks Department. Mark is the men's and ladies



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golf coach at Indiana Tech and a PGA associate, and has been contract teaching with us for 3 years now. The opportunity for golf instruction through the Parks Department is very good.

### Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



- **u** The Hanna Street Trail from Wallace to Berry will be bid in May.
- Fort Wayne Trails, Inc., the City's non-profit partner, provided \$157,000 in donor funds to the Mayor for the Hanna Street Trail project.
- **When the South Anthony Trail from Pontiac to Creighton construction will start in early May.**
- The Wheelock Road Trail from Jefferson Middle School to Stellhorn Road construction will begin in early May. The pedestrian bridge has already been delivered and is being stored at the intersection of Wheelock and Stellhorn.
- The Rivergreenway will close under Parnell Ave in early May as the bridge project gets underway. We'll have a detour utilizing Parnell and Spy Run Avenue Extended.
- The new pedestrian bridge in Lawton Park for the Rivergreenway crossing of the Spy Run Creek recently opened up for use. It looks fabulous!
- Trek the Trails and Tread the Trails kicked off on April 29<sup>th</sup> at Promenade Park. We had 77 walkers/runners and 49 bicyclists. The bike rides and runs/walks will take place every other week until the end of September.
- Bike to School Day is May 7<sup>th</sup>. I'll be joining teachers and students at St. Joe Central Elementary School.
- **4** Bike to Work Day gathering is May  $16^{th}$  at The Porch on Calhoun.
- The Greenways Foundation of Indiana just had its annual *Celebrate Trails* luncheon. The Allen County Equestrian Course received the Outstanding Trail project award for the entire state. Commissioner Richard Beck received the Outstanding Public Official award for his work on the horse trails.
- The Great American Cleanup will be held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Thousands of volunteers will be cleaning up sites around the city, including many of our parks and trails.
- **4** National Trails Day is June  $7^{\text{th}}$ . We are working on an idea for an event.
- The Mayor recognized John Gardner as the 2024 Trails Volunteer of the Year. John is one of our 108 Greenway Rangers. He communicates to us weekly to let us know about the condition of his trail (the Pufferbelly Trail from State to Lawton Park). He collects garbage along his section, as well. To recognize John, we planted a tree of his choice along the trail of his choice: a Bur Oak along the Pufferbelly Trail just south of State Boulevard.
- We are in the process of bidding out crack sealing for trail projects. Our concrete contractor is taking care of ADA ramp issues, trip hazards, and fixing faulty concrete slabs along our trail system.



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- We will be getting bids soon to repair asphalt issues on 4 or 5 trails primarily issues with tree roots damaging asphalt.
- Staff has recently been blowing off trails from winter debris and storm debris. We'll be spraying herbicide in the joints along the concrete trails soon to keep vegetation from growing on our trails.
- We have started ramping up the planning of our Renaissance Car Show and Open Streets events, including securing sponsors.
- Uur seasonal maintenance worker, Brad Baumgartner, started in late April.
- Our intern, Cora Hall, will be joining us again this summer on May 14<sup>th</sup>. Cora will help primarily with event planning.

## **Division News and Media Coverage:**





WFFT, One year of DORA

https://www.wfft.com/video/one-year-of-dora/video\_ce7b6c3b-c986-54b7-ac9e-fb5c0a9481ee.html

WANE, City Council recap – FWPD Traffic Unit presentation

https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-police-provide-update-on-traffic-unit-at-city-council/

Input FW, Feature on local food entrepreneur Johnny Perez https://www.inputfortwayne.com/features/how-fort-wayne-food-entrepreneur-johnny-perez-built-and-scaled-a-

#### <u>restaurant-empire.aspx</u>

- 4 April 2025 Parks & Recreation [42 43]
- Please click on the link below, pages 11, 24, 25, and 29 are special <u>https://online.fliphtml5.com/krtil/ipps/#p=1</u>
- IPRA Profile Spring 2025 FINAL
- Home | National Recreation and Park Association May 2025 - Parks & Recreation [Intro - Cover1]

PBS, Northeast Indiana legislators recap the 2025 session

https://www.pbs.org/video/northeast-indiana-lawmaker-panel-re6zma/

#### PBS, Indiana Week in Review

https://www.wfyi.org/programs/indiana-week-in-review/television/governor-braun-reflects-on-the-2025-session--may-2-2025

FW Bus Weekly, Sen. Liz Brown files disciplinary action against AG Rokita

https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article\_f84f8592-17ea-402b-acf1-f349f9d91881.html

FW Bus Weekly, Mike Hicks column – Two key economic lessons in one bill

https://www.fwbusiness.com/opinion/article\_20699c01-0dce-46c5-bab0-

7f6b26d9ffd3.html?utm\_source=fwbusiness.com&utm\_campaign=%2Fnewsletters%2Fheadlines%2F%3F-

dc%3D1746525612&utm\_medium=email&utm\_content=headline



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Adams Radio Group, Trail Volunteer of the Year named https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/05/03/87763/

Adams Radio Group, Historic Preservation Month – Fort Wayne celebrates 60 years of commitment to historic preservation

https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/05/02/fort-wayne-celebrates-60-years-of-commitment-to-historic-preservation/

WANE, Vote for your favorite logo to represent historic FW areas <u>https://www.wane.com/top-stories/vote-for-your-favorite-logo-to-represent-historic-fort-wayne-areas/</u>

WANE, Feature on a volunteer at the Conservatory https://www.wane.com/news/positively-fort-wayne/botanical-conservatorys-herb-lady-is-positively-fort-wayne/

WANE, Fort Wayne native teaches in sister city Takaoka <u>https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-native-teaches-in-sister-city-takaoka/</u>

WANE, FWACC programs aim to avoid shelter overcrowding

https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fort-wayne-animal-care-and-control-programs-aim-to-avoid-shelterovercrowding/

WANE, City/Doden/Surack on North River https://www.wane.com/top-stories/slap-in-the-face-doden-and-surack-at-odds-with-mayor-over-north-river-future/

WPTA, Great American Cleanup

https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/05/03/fort-wayne-participates-great-american-cleanup-saturday/

WFFT, Bike safety with the FWPD

https://www.wfft.com/video/fort-wayne-bike-patrol-teaches-fwcs-students-bike-safety/video\_92ef7ebc-c8f9-5894-b06a-4354967d80cd.html

WOWO, Commission Turpin on North River https://wowo.com/commissioners-corner-north-river-front-development-project/

WPTA, Mayor Tucker talks highlights of first year in office <u>https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/04/23/fort-wayne-mayor-sharon-tucker-talks-highlights-first-year-office/</u>

Adams Radio Group, Fort Wayne Trails makes contribution to Hanna Street Trail project https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/04/24/87481/

Adams Radio Group, Mayor recognizes Bishop Dwenger's state championship gymnastics team <a href="https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/04/23/mayor-proclaims-april-22-bishop-dwenger-girls-gymnastics-team-day/">https://www.1039waynefm.com/2025/04/23/mayor-proclaims-april-22-bishop-dwenger-girls-gymnastics-team-day/</a>

WANE, Mayor Tucker recognizes accomplishments of state champion girls gymnastics team at Dwenger <a href="https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/mayor-declares-april-22-a-day-to-honor-bishop-dwenger-gymnastics-following-state-title-win/">https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/mayor-declares-april-22-a-day-to-honor-bishop-dwenger-gymnastics-following-state-title-win/</a>

WANE, Landfill growing so high it could block radio waves as city and county ok a fix <a href="https://www.wane.com/top-stories/landfill-growing-so-high-it-could-block-radio-waves-city-county-ok-fix/">https://www.wane.com/top-stories/landfill-growing-so-high-it-could-block-radio-waves-city-county-ok-fix/</a>



WBCL, Lifetime Sports Academy returns for 27<sup>th</sup> season through FW Parks and Recreation <u>https://www.wbcl.org/news/lifetime-sports-academy-27th-season</u>

WFFT, City's bike rack program aiming to make navigating the city easier

https://www.wfft.com/video/fort-wayne-bike-rack-program-aiming-to-make-navigating-the-city-easier/video\_dffe5dec-4383-559b-a7c7-78df0ade5551.html

# City TV, 'Public Works in your Neighborhood' program with Shan G. and Patrick Z. as guests discussing the 2025 construction season

https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=JvG3Qu5M8zmbBz2E#

WOWO, New FWFD District Chief of EMS sworn in https://wowo.com/fort-wayne-has-a-new-chief-of-emergency-medical-services/

WOWO, Commissioner Turpin discusses future of the Coliseum https://wowo.com/commissioners-corner-renovate-or-rebuild-the-coliseum/

WPTA, New FWFD District Chief of EMS sworn in https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/04/21/new-fwfd-district-chief-ems-sworn-monday/

WPTA, Fix needed for emergency signals

https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/04/18/multi-million-dollar-fix-needed-prevent-emergency-signals-being-blockedallen-county-officials-say/

WANE, Braun's crackdown on nuisance bars adds to current Fort Wayne efforts <a href="https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/braun-crackdown-on-nuisance-bars-adds-to-current-fort-wayne-efforts/">https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/braun-crackdown-on-nuisance-bars-adds-to-current-fort-wayne-efforts/</a>

WANE, Honoring 911 dispatchers

https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/honoring-911-dispatchers-through-national-public-safety-telecommunicatorsweek/

WPTA, Councilman Jehl on SB 1 https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/04/17/fort-wayne-city-councilman-reacts-indianas-new-property-tax-plan/

WANE, Commissioner Brown on the future of the Coliseum

https://www.wane.com/top-stories/county-commissioners-allen-county-war-memorial-coliseum-in-solid-shape-recentstudy-affirms/

WANE, FWFD and West Central Fire District talk procedures after rescuing man from a pit <u>https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fwfd-and-west-central-fire-district-talk-procedures-after-rescuing-man-from-pit/</u>

WFFT, How FWFD and West Central Fire District rescued a worker at a construction site <u>https://www.wfft.com/news/firefighters-and-ems-reflect-on-team-effort-to-save-man-from-being-crushed/article\_301d7fbb-6d3f-46ff-802b-81c4029869d7.html</u>

WOWO, Understanding SB 1

https://wowo.com/inside-the-governors-office-understanding-sb1/



<sup>ON</sup> Staff Reports Submitted May 8, 2025

#### Mother's Day Plant Sale

Friday, May 9, 1:00 – 7:00 p.m. Saturday, May 10, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Sunday, May 11, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Just in time for spring planting, the Botanical Conservatory offers over 700 varieties of plants at the annual Mother's Day Plant Sale. Shop masses of locally grown herbs, vegetable starts, flowering perennials and native plants joining a host of annuals, mixed containers, hanging baskets, bonsai and houseplants. Essentials like potting soil and compost worms are also available. A team of knowledgeable plant advisors are even ready to answer questions and offer suggestions! This annual fundraiser supports Fort Wayne's very own Botanical Conservatory. Sponsored by: Majic 95.1 WAJI, Fox55 and Koester's Body & Frame Shop.

#### Mother's Day in the Garden Saturday & Sunday, May 10 & 11, public hours

Plan a special outing to the Botanical Conservatory where Moms get in free during Mother's Day weekend. Together, browse the Conservatory Shop, visit live butterflies and admire lovely garden displays. Mothers receive a free plant while supplies last! Sponsored by: Aunt Millie's, Majic 95.1 WAJI and 21Alive.

#### **Kickboxing with 9Round**

Sunday, May 11, 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. *Park Foundation Pavilion* Kick and punch your way through a great workout at this free monthly exercise class. Instructors will lead participants in a calorie burning journey like no other.

#### Yoga on the Riverfront

Sunday, May 11, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. *Park Foundation Pavilion* This free, relaxing one-hour flow yoga class is designed for all skill levels and led by owner of Discover Yoga, Chelsea Vona. Bring your own yoga mat to Promenade Park or borrow one for the class.

#### Wild Walkers

#### Friday, May 9, 8:45 – 10:30 a.m. Spurgeon Woodland Reserve, 9478 N. 600 W., Ligonier, IN

This adult hiking group meets the second and fourth Fridays of each month for a walk on the wild side. Each hike features a different natural area in the region (parks, wetlands, nature preserve, etc.) and carpooling is available when necessary. Find the full 2025 schedule at this link

https://www.fortwayneparks.org/images/PDF/Salomon/2025\_Wild\_Walkers\_Schedule.pdf

#### **Registration continues for Summer Day Camp & PODS**

Choose your adventure at the hands-on *Farmin' Fun Day Camp* at Salomon Farm. *PODS*, or Positive Days of Summer offer half-day options for kids ages 5-13 at the Community Center and feature numerous themes. Download the <u>brochure</u> for more details. Registration may be made online at <u>FortWayneParks.org</u>, in-person, by mail or drop box at 705 East State Blvd., Fort Wayne, IN 46805. Sessions for Franke Park Day Camp are filled.

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department will offer program scholarships for qualified children as funds are available. Scholarship policy details are listed <u>here</u>.



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#### Grace Yencer: Gentle Turning

#### Until June 22

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

Grace Yencer has been creating art for as long as she can remember, inspired by a childhood dream of becoming an artist or art teacher. Yencer's love for snail mail sparked an early career in greeting cards, but she soon shifted focus to art as self-expression. With roots in the Midwest, her style reflects both a sense of nostalgia and a playful exploration of the world around her, making her pieces as heartfelt as they are visually engaging. Her work invites you to pause, look closer and maybe catch a hint of sorrow in the details. "To create one's world takes courage," Georgia O'Keeffe.

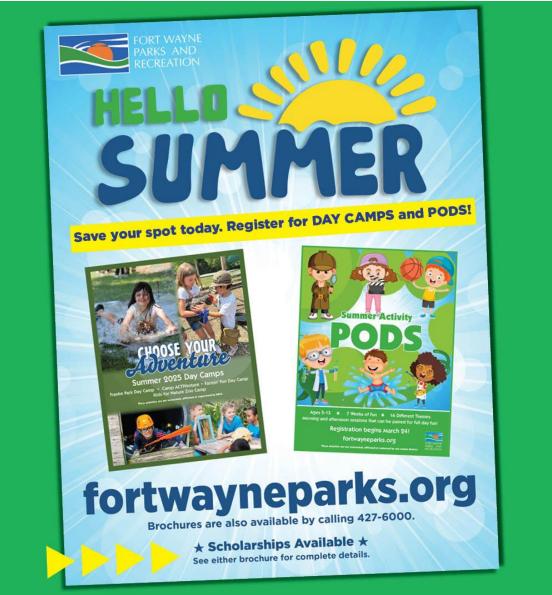


### 22nd Annual **Live Butterfly Exhibit** April 15 – June 22

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

<u>click for Day Camp</u> <u>brochure</u>





click for PODS brochure









<b>PLAY</b> the	PARKS Follow	Opening mid-March w us on social media or call the golf course.
Foster Park Golf Course	Shoaff Park Golf Course & Driving Range	McMillen Park Golf Complex
Historic 18-Hole Championship Course New Golf Carts New Golf Paths	Challenging 18-Hole Course, All Par 3 City's Premier Driving Range Great for beginners, families and skilled golfers who want to play a quick round!	18-Hole Executive Course • Mad Anthonys Short Course Driving Range • Jerry Fox Learning Center Putting Green • Short Game Practice Area • Foot Golf Lifetime Sports Academy MORE COUP for UESS GREEN Play 9 Holes on weekdays for Just \$7!
Rudisill Blvd. & Old Mill Rd.   (260) 427-6735	6401 St. Joe Rd.   (260) 427-6745	Oxford at Hessen Cassel   (260) 427-6710
FORT WAYNE PARKS AND RECREATION F & @ @FortWayneParks Golf		Senior Men's Golf League Organizational Meeting April 16, 9 am, Franke Park Pavilion #1 or call Jim at 260-479-7770.