



Steve McDaniel, Director

- + We opened the month with the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Brewer Park. This event showcased the year-long construction of the park with a new playground, splash pad, shelter, restrooms, basketball courts, open space turf areas, walking loop, gardens, and art sculpture. There are so many people to thank who were a part of this project: our Staff, the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Association, Bridge of Grace, and the generosity of Mark and Sarah Music.
- + Rob and I met with the Dekko Foundation to talk about several projects that are in the works. We also learned a little more about their foundation.
- + McMillen Park's Community Center was the location for this year's Blue-Ribbon Show, which was part of the School Children's Flower and Vegetable Association's annual event. As we look to the future, we are rebranding this group into Grow-It!
- + This month wrapped up the concerts at the Foellinger Theatre for the season. It included music by the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, as well as Journey and Queen, along with Warrant, Lita Ford, and Firehouse. The Theatre also held an event with the Mayor's Youth Engagement Council discussing youth violence.
- + Headwater's splash pad is currently still under construction and will likely not be activated this season. We hope that we will kick off next summer with the dedication of the splash pad as we start the season.
- + The team is still in design for Foster Park's new entrance. This design includes roadways, as well as the renovation of the park's garden area. A public meeting is scheduled for October 7th to share our designs to this point.
- + Chuck, Chad, and I attended Visit Fort Wayne's Accessibility Update Session as part of their master plan. This gave us an opportunity to hear where they are in their processes, as well as gather more information that will benefit Parks.
- + I have been working with our state organization on several items that will impact Fort Wayne Parks. The first is a Public Awareness Campaign that we are building a toolkit to help local agencies get marketing materials to help share the work parks and recreation does for a community. The second is helping to educate our state legislators. There is an interim Study Committee led by Senator Leising looking at the impacts parks and recreation have on Indiana.
- + Steve and I met with ARCH's Director, Michael Galbraith, to discuss the Heritage Trail Markers that are located in several parks. These are in need of renovations, so we are working on a plan to prioritize them, come up with cost estimates, and seek local grants to fund the renovations.
- + Rob, Rhonda, and I attended the quarterly meeting of the Park Foundation. This meeting built on their recent strategic planning session, where they are looking at their future and how the foundation will be able to be best suited.
- + Chuck, Jason, David, and I met with a tennis advisory group to discuss improvements to Swinney and Lions Parks courts. We have been meeting with this group annually for several years.
- + The "I am Allen" sculpture was dedicated in Reservoir Park. This was part of Allen County's 200 Bicentennial. The sculpture is named *Southeast Love* and was created by artist Bonnie Andrews.
- + As the month wraps up, our team held a World Rivers Day event in Promenade Park. The day was filled with conservation work, arts and crafts, music on the river, and ended the day with a floating screen showing the 50th anniversary of the movie "Jaws".

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

Community Center

- Eight of thirteen available rental dates were booked, with a utilization rate of 62 percent. Rentals served 417 people and generated \$2,400 in revenue.
- Programs drew steady participation, including 71 in Gymnastics and Dance, 50 in Line Dance, and 20 in Intro to Pickleball.
- The September luncheon drew 29 participants.
- Staff distributed over 200 *Fun Times* magazines and 150 calendars at the Senior Information Fair.
- The Sensory Clubhouse received 144 donated books, and a new partnership with Easter Seals began.

Weisser Park Youth Center

- The After-School Program enrolled 74 youth, with 63 attending during this period.
- New initiatives included a Gratitude Box and the Weisser Bucks merit program to promote positive behaviors.
- Youth engaged in activities such as hockey, disc golf, trivia competitions, and “Beat the Staff Friday.”
- Core programs featured arts and crafts, cheer, STEM experiments, history research, and mentorship through Youth Lives Matter.
- Outreach partnerships included Allen County Public Library Arts, Erin’s House, and Turner Chapel AME Ubuntu Learning Lab, which arranged a youth visit to The Dream Center.

McMillen Park Community Center

- The After-School Program served 743 youth in September with 30 new registrations. Programs included Pickleball Club, Esports, Brothers and Sisters Circles, Dance, Creative Arts, Trivia, Creative Bloom Power Moves, and Guitar Lessons.
- The Brothers and Sisters Circles mentorship initiative began, featuring guest speakers who shared career paths and personal experiences.
- Outreach visits were made to nine area schools to increase teen participation. Miami Middle School invited McMillen staff to begin a lunch program for older boys.
- Kids Café served 454 dinners, 352 snacks, and 94 breakfasts, continuing to provide a valuable resource for families.
- Essential Steps and Cardio Fit resumed after a three-week break.

Jennings Youth Center

- Forty-eight youth were registered with an average daily attendance of 21.
- Core programming emphasized homework help and family-centered literacy activities.
- Outreach partnerships included storytelling and painting with the Allen County Public Library, grief support sessions with Erin’s House, rhythm-based calming with Drum Fun, and practices with the Top Tier Dance Program.
- Supervisor Chanell Ridley completed two professional development webinars on reframing negative thoughts and fostering meaningful connections with youth.

Community Outreach

- On Thursday, September 18, the Supervisor of Community Outreach attended a tailgate at Portage Middle School where football and volleyball teams hosted other FWCS schools. Attendees played



games to win Parks-branded prizes, and *Fun Times* were distributed to parents. Approximately 60 individuals participated.

- On Thursday, September 25, the Supervisor of Community Outreach joined Jennings Recreation Center staff for Family and Friends Game Night. Participants solved a mystery with clues placed throughout the Center. Attendance was estimated at 35
- Winterval planning is underway. On January 24th, 2026, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation will host its 15th Annual Winterval throughout Downtown Fort Wayne.

Golf

- Chris Rudolph, Dave Weadock and Jason Smith met with representatives from City Utilities, Dunigan Construction and Harlow Enterprises to discuss the restoration process of Foster Park Golf Course after the “Big Dig”. Harlow will start hauling material in on Monday September 29, 2025 for the rebuild of Foster hole #7. Mark Slater will then start shaping and rebuilding the green. The same process will continue with the tee box on #6.
- Chris Rudolph reported that the grass seed that was planted throughout the fairways at Foster Golf Course has really started to come in to the point that they have already mowed some of it.
- Chris Rudolph was very appreciative of the grounds department for allowing him to borrow a piece of their equipment for aerification of the Foster Golf Course fairways. The golf course was in desperate need of this process. He also stated that the grounds department offered to let him use it again to do the same to McMillen and Shoaff Golf Courses.
- Gary Whitacre reported that Foster, McMillen and Shoaff Golf Courses are seeing a slight increase in play with the temperatures cooling down.

Salomon Farm Park

- The final farmers’ market of the season took place on Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at 4:00pm., it featured fresh produce, baked goods, honey and artisan items. Attendance was 4,017, which was a 13% decrease from 2024.
- On Friday, September 5, 2025, at 6:30 p.m., Salomon Farm Park hosted a new program: *Cider Tasting and Food Pairing*. In partnership with David Lugo, a certified Sommelier through the American Cider Association, this unique five-course experience featured curated ciders paired with small bites. The event drew 49 participants—just one short of a sellout—and generated \$2,450 in revenue.

Sweet Breeze

- Due to low river levels and a lack of rainfall, the Sweet Breeze canal boat operations temporarily shifted loading and unloading to the Headwaters West Dock on Monday, September 15, 2025. Regular operations resumed at the Promenade Park South Dock on Monday, September 22, 2025, following rainfall in the forecast and additional water released from the Leo-Cedarville area.
- Sweet Breeze Fest was held on Saturday, September 20, and Sunday, September 21, 2025, in partnership with Friends of the Rivers. The event featured two days of tours, with seven departures each day at a ticket price of \$5. Friends of the Rivers subsidized the tours, allowing us to offer them at a reduced rate and introduce new participants to the rivers. Each tour lasted 45 minutes, and every trip sold out except for one open spot on Saturday.
- In celebration of receiving an award for 25 years of outstanding operational excellence, public health protection, and a strong commitment to providing safe, high-quality drinking water to the residents of



Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne City Utilities scheduled 11 Sweet Breeze tours for their employees—most of which took place in September, with two additional tours in early October.

Riverfront

- September along the Riverfront was filled with engaging programs, a variety of rentals, and a community celebration that highlighted the importance of our rivers.
 - This month, Riverfront wrapped up the Color the Park series, which took place every Thursday evening from 5-7 p.m. and brought in a total of 102 attendees to enjoy creative, hands-on fun.
 - Fitness on the Riverfront maintained steady attendance with participation in Yoga on the Riverfront (in partnership with Discover Yoga), Zumba in the Park (in partnership with the Greater Fort Wayne YMCA), and Riverfront Social Runners offerings.
 - On September 13, Promenade Park hosted its first Esports Showdown with the help of Odyssey Esports. A total of 19 participants enjoyed double elimination style tournaments throughout the program.
 - The highlight event of the month was World Rivers Day on September 27, which drew more than 1,000 community members to the riverfront. Guests enjoyed educational opportunities from local conservation organizations, family-friendly activities, live music from Left Lane Cruiser, and capped the evening with an outdoor screening of JAWS on the river.
- On the rental front, September was also a steady month for rentals with a total of 5 gatherings bringing in over 450 people to Promenade Park. These included the Allen County Democratic Party's annual event, the Park Foundation's monthly meeting, a wedding ceremony on the bridge, Cuadra 260 Music Festival, and Bishop Dwenger High School's reunion. Looking ahead to October, Riverfront Fort Wayne is preparing for another month of engaging programs and an increase in rentals at the Park Foundation Pavilion. We look forward to building upon September's momentum and continuing to provide unique experiences for the community.
- Headwaters Park continued into September with the annual Labor Day Picnic event. This free event held on Labor Day, brings the UAW members, local elected officials, and community members to Headwaters Park for free hot dogs and beer all day long.
- The following weekend, on September 6th, was the Annual Brewed in the Fort with Mad Anthony's brewery and Fort Wayne Trails. The day was full of brewers from around the State of Indiana. This event continues to grow with ticket sales increasing along with the number of brewers participating.
- The final event of the year at Headwaters Park was held at the pavilion on September 27th with the Out of the Darkness Walk. The Out of the Darkness Walk is held every year at the Pavilion and continues to be a staple of the events at Headwaters Park, raising awareness of mental health in the Fort Wayne community.

Deputy Rhonda Berg - Director of Finance & Theatre, Budgets, Payroll, and Commercial Vouchers, Trust Fund Donations, Registrations, Rentals, Tickets, Customer Service, Accounts Payable, and Receivable.

Payroll and Accounts Payable

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 335 employees (144 full-time and 191 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending September 20th, and paid on September 26th, 2025



- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing or in the process of being hired, as of September 30th, 2025:
 - Assistant Golf Superintendent (Fund 121)
 - Manager – Neighborhood Programs (Fund 121)
 - Program Facility Coordinator – Jennings (Fund 121)
 - Forestry Grounds Person – Entry Level (Fund 121)
 - Fleet Mechanic – Golf (Fund 439)
- 48 total P-Card statements were processed for the month of September for charges made at the end of July to almost the end of August
- There was a total of 763 invoices processed during September from 9/1 to 9/30
- Separation of seasonal staff continues. Next seasonal employees to come off are for the Foellinger Theatre
- Seasonal Headwaters Ice Rink positions are now posted and available for applications



Customer Service and Finance

- Kim had her monthly RecTrac training meeting with 3 employees in attendance. She reviewed RecTrac for the new users
- Joyce is working with Camille, Eric, and Kathy to update the reservation of the Garden Plots. An additional meeting is scheduled to get everything finalized for 2026
- Maddie took over the campground reservations the week of the Johnny Appleseed Festival and will be taking on these responsibilities once the campground closes for the year
- Joyce has interviewed and hired Joana Garcia as the new Administrative Assistant III – Reservations. She will be starting on October 20th
- Joniece and Joyce have reconciled the Parks and Recreation bank statement for 2 months and are becoming comfortable with it
- Joyce completed her Lead Boldly Training
- Presented our final 2026 Budget to the Controller's office
- Attended several general Theatre meetings in September
- Attended the ribbon-cutting of Brewer Park
- Began attending weekly update meeting with our IT company, Resultant
- Attended quarterly Department Head Meeting with Mayor Tucker, where she discussed the future of our budgets with SB1 in play
- Attended the quarterly Park Foundation Meeting
- Updated Community Center Rental fees in RecTrac
- Began meeting with Ricoh to discuss the costs involved in replacing our marketing production copier
- Met with Karen Moses and Jarin Hart to work towards getting a co-pro Theatre contract put together
- Joniece and Rhonda attended a Lake City Bank Cyber Fraud Seminar



Foellinger Theatre Report

- In September, the Foellinger Theatre concluded its 2025 season with two ticketed rental performances presented in partnership with the Fort Wayne Philharmonic and the Honeywell Foundation. *We Will Rock You: The Music of Journey & Queen* with the Philharmonic drew 1,424 attendees (1,400 paid)—an increase of 573 over their May performance and Foellinger's season opener, *Dolly Parton's Threads: My Songs in Symphony* (851 attendees). The season closer, *Warrant: Let the Good Times Rock Tour* with Lita Ford and Firehouse, presented by the Honeywell Foundation, drew 1,487 attendees (1,560 paid).
- On September 27, the theatre was honored to host Mayor Tucker's **Youth Violence Prevention Forum**, organized

in collaboration with the Mayor's Youth Engagement Council. Composed of high school sophomores through seniors, the council led a meaningful discussion on youth violence for teens ages 14–18 and helped introduce the Youth Violence Prevention Program, a proactive initiative designed to address youth violence across Fort Wayne. This first-time event welcomed 172 attendees, including more than 20 Youth Engagement Council members.

- In addition to programming successes, professional development and industry engagement were priorities this month. I attended the **Etix Blast Conference** in Raleigh, North Carolina (September 3–6), an annual summit held in conjunction with the Hopscotch Festival that features peer-led sessions, panels, and networking opportunities focused on ticketing, marketing, and audience engagement. Later in the month, I represented the Foellinger Theatre at the **Midwest Arts Expo (MAX) Conference** in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (September 15–18). MAX offered valuable panels, workshops, and networking events centered on industry trends, programming, and collaboration with presenters and agents across the Midwest.
- Collectively, these activities reinforced the Foellinger Theatre's dual role as both a professional entertainment venue and a civic gathering space, while strengthening relationships and strategies essential to future success. Operational lessons learned from the high-volume Trace Adkins concert earlier in the season informed improvements to bar efficiency, staffing, and concessions readiness for the final performances. As a result, all remaining bar and concession inventory was sold out, leaving no alcohol to return at the end of the season.
- As we move into October, focus shifts to closing out the theatre for the year. The **house light replacement project** begins October 1, followed by the full theatre strip (removal of PA, stage lighting, drapes, etc.) on October 9. Throughout the month, staff will complete the final inventory, deep cleaning, and winterization while beginning preparations for a strong **2026 programming calendar**.
- This first summer as Theatre Manager has been both rewarding and instructive—marked by strong community partnerships, record attendance for several performances, and continued progress toward operational excellence. The enthusiasm from audiences, partners, and visiting artists sets an exciting tone for 2026, as we build on this season's momentum to deliver a year that is even more dynamic, efficient, and community-centered.

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 September were at 213
- Greg has completed the Lead Boldly training this month.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Lawton Park Skate Park, Martin Luther King, Jr Bridge, Shoaff Park, Packard Park, McCormick Park, Brewer Park, Miner Park, Hanna Homestead Park, and Swinney Park.
- Pressure washed the following locations: Lawton park skate park, Martin Luther King, Jr Bridge, Lions Park Shelter, Franke Park memorial bench and pad, Indian Sears Pavilion patio, Shoaff Park Riverlodge Pavilion, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Community Center, Foster Park pavilion 3, Memorial Park basketball court, McMillen Park Pavilion, Ivan Lebamoff Reservoir Park, McCormick Park splashpad, Swinney Park basketball court, and Brewer Park.
- Relief staff have been busy painting picnic tables as well as the Lawton Park restroom doors.
- The crew has also assisted with spin trimming and weed control at various pavilions.
- The staff is also busy replacing several toilet paper dispensers at Brewer Park, Packard Park, and Swinney Park as needed.



Maintenance Technician Supervisor: Mike Cremeans

- Mike has completed the Lead Boldly training this month.
- Work was completed for the 50th anniversary of the Johnny Appleseed Festival. The maintenance techs constructed festival stages and distributed tables, chairs, and straw bales the week before the festival. They deconstructed the stages the following Monday and stored them until next year's festival.
- New irrigation and plumbing lines were installed for the Lawton Park greenhouse propagation and growing benches.
- Stop signs were installed at the walk path near the entrance of Shoaff Park.
- Prep work was completed on the winter covers for the Freimann Square fountain covers.
- Construction of the tunnel for the upcoming railroad-themed holiday showcase at the Botanical Conservatory. This structure is made to look like a tunnel that railroads utilize and is big enough to allow visitors to walk through it.
- New picnic tables were installed at both Lakeside and McMillen Park playgrounds.
- Repairs on the holiday light displays for the downtown Community Center and youth centers were completed ahead of next month's installation at the various locations.
- The on-call staff received a total of **39** calls this month. **5** of which were lock issues, **8** were calls from dispatch regarding alarms, **5** were calls from the Franke Pond renter wanting to schedule time to pick up the door lock fob, and **21** were miscellaneous issues.
 - **Maintenance Technician completed the following tasks last month:**
8: Alarm Maintenance, **19:** Building Maintenance, **17:** Carpentry, **17:** Electrical Repair,
1: HVAC Maintenance, **6:** Key Core Maintenance, **22:** Light Maintenance,
13: Lock Maintenance, **10:** Paint, **10:** Playground Maintenance,
34: Plumbing Maintenance, **4:** Sign Maintenance, **15:** Vandalism



Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment Rob Schenkel

- Rob has completed the Lead Boldly training this month
- River greenway trails were serviced weekly to mow, remove sticks, debris, and flood damage.
- Botanical Conservatory and Lakeside Park compost bins were emptied several times this month.
- Crews are maintaining parks on a 6–8-day rotation, including mowing grass, string trimming around trees and fence lines, blowing off walkways, and spraying weeds.
- Parking blocks have been straightened and replaced as needed in various parks.
- Crews run trash routes seven days a week, ensuring all receptacles in the parks are emptied.
- The soccer fields at Foster West Park were aerated, top-dressed, and seeded to improve turf quality.
- Heavy Equipment crews removed the information kiosk from Lawton Park and stored it for future use.
- The soccer fields at Foster West Park were aerated, top-dressed, and seeded to improve turf quality.
- Safety mulch was added to the playgrounds at Kreager Park, Johnny Appleseed Park, Bowser Park, Memorial Park, Turpie Park, Miner Park, and Camp Allen Park.



Main Trac Coordinator: Nicole Roth

- Main Trac Entries: 9,339 for the month, and 73 calls this month from the 311 Call Center.
- 0 volunteer hours reported, entering time sheets, and contracted/sales invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Recreation Staff, and Nicole has completed the Lead Boldly training.



Superintendent: Mike Gore

- Approve and record invoices for various materials used and applied in grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Writing and overseeing 2025 purchase orders, along with a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance.
- Going back over inspections of the Parks and doing new ones.
- Continuing the 2025 River Greenway inspections, working on 2025 monthly MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks.

Johnny Appleseed Festival setup

The team wrapped up the Johnny Appleseed setup with the annual unloading of the straw. The maintenance technicians, grounds crew, and the cleaning crew all joined together to get the bales unloaded and placed in the areas that needed them. Once completed, they all sat down for a much-needed break and some lunch. Great job, team!





Operations and Support: Travis Roth (Storeroom & Property)

- Storeroom staff supplied materials for crews setting up for the Johnny Appleseed Festival.
- 2 new Kenwood radios were purchased for Salomon Farm Park, and Foellinger Outdoor Theatre is putting together a list of radio needs for the 2026 season. The City's radio shop assists with the programming of these radios.
- Passenger vans were provided to City Utilities, Parks and Recreation, and Parks Administration for several trips and events.

Property Transactions:

25 Stihl Kombi Motor	Added Into Inventory	P230
25 Stihl Brush-cutter Head	Added Into Inventory	P230
25 Stihl Reciprocator Head	Added Into Inventory	P230
25 Stihl String Trimmer	Added Into Inventory	P240
25 Stihl Backpack Blower	Added Into Inventory	P240
25 Ventrac Aera-Vator	Added Into Inventory	P240
25 Milwaukee M18 Jump Box	Added Into Inventory	P252
25 Stihl MS500 Chainsaw	Added Into Inventory	P260
25 Stihl MS661 Chainsaw	Added Into Inventory	P260
25 Kenwood NX-1200 Radios (2)	Added Into Inventory	R530
25 Tommy Gate Lift Gate	Added Into Inventory	R710

2025 Vehicle Lease Purchase Update:

Ford Transit Cargo Van	Delivered
Ford Transit Cargo Van	Delivered
Shelving for Cargo Van	Delivered
Chevy Colorados (3)	Delivered
Bobcat T770	Delivered
Club Car 550 Carts	Delivered
Ford F350 Chassis	Delivered
Dump Bed	Delivered
Portable Welder	Delivered
Forestry Bobcat Attachment	Delivered
Mulch Mate trailer	Delivered
John Deere Gator	Delivered
Steel Green Sprayer	Delivered
Ford F250s (2)	Delivered

Garage Operations Highlights:

- 194 work orders were scheduled this month, 34 of which were services.
- A new John Deere golf course mower ordered last year arrived and has been put into service on the courses.
- One of the forestry cranes suffered damage to the lift cable and will require a new cable to be installed. The work will be performed by RPM Machinery, which is an authorized service center for our cranes. The Forestry



Superintendent met with the garage working leader to discuss future bucket truck repairs if new equipment cannot be purchased as replacements.

- IDEM (Indiana Department of Environmental Management) inspected several locations at the Lawton Maintenance complex for stormwater drain compliance. The state selects one city location every year for inspection. No major issues were discovered.
- A golf course John Deere Gator had head gasket issues that required the cylinder head to be removed and sent to a machine shop for repair.
- Two Ford Transit 350 cargo vans had shelving and storage compartments installed by W.A. Jones and those vehicles were put into service with the Headwaters maintenance staff.
- A lift gate was purchased for installation on one of the Headwaters utility trucks to allow both of their trucks to be equipped with lift gates.
- All 2025 equipment lease invoices have been processed now that all vehicles and equipment have been delivered.
- 3 Ford trucks had recalls related to their backup cameras. Ford's mobile service tech was able to repair all 3 of these trucks onsite at Lawton Park.
- Extra backup cameras were installed on a landscape dump truck to allow it to safely transport the new Mulch Mate trailer purchased this year. The trailer and truck both have cameras to ensure safe backing procedures.
- Van 44 (2011 Freightliner Sprinter) was decommissioned and prepared for the city auction in October. This vehicle, along with 2 Ford F250s and a Ford Escape, will be auctioned and the money used to purchase new equipment.
- Parts have been delivered for the Zamboni to prepare it for the winter ice skating season. The chiller trailer and ice rink storage trailers have also been inspected to prepare for them to be moved to Headwaters Park.
- Stormwater prevention upgrades were performed at the Rea building to make sure that the location passes the yearly stormwater inspections performed by City Utilities.
- A grounds maintenance John Deere Gator had 2 new steering racks installed. Both units failed within minutes of installation. The Gator was transported to Truland Equipment so they could verify that the replacement parts were faulty and thus replace them under the factory warranty.



Project Administration: Dave Weadock

- Bloomingdale Park Playground Equipment – Approvals in progress.
- Botanical Conservatory Roof Glass Replacement – Project completed.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Roof Design – Project completed.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Roof Replacement – Project completed.
- Brewer Park Construction – Final punch list items in progress.
- Community Center Berry St. Façade Building Signage – Project completed.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Components Package – Project completed.
- Foellinger Theatre House Lighting Products – All products have been received. Installation is planned in October.
- Foellinger Theatre House Lighting Installation – Installation to begin in October.
- Foster Park Golf Course Restoration Plan – Restoration is in progress.
- Franke Park Pond Pavilion Interior Renovation – Bidding is complete and PO issued. Construction planned for October.
- Hanna Homestead Park Playground Equipment – Design kickoff meeting planned for early October.
- Headwaters Park Fountain – Construction in progress.
- Headwaters Park Service Buildings Roofing – Construction to begin in early October.
- Kreager Park Playground Equipment – Approvals in progress.
- Lafayette Park Playground Equipment – Design option in progress.
- Lakeside Park Pavilion #1 Roof – Project completed.

- Lakeside Park Pavilion #1 Exterior Improvements – Construction is in progress.
- Lawton Park Maintenance Building Roof Design – Planning documents sent to PAS for review.
- Lawton Park Skate Park Fence Walls – Bidding in progress.
- McMillen Park Pool Liners Replacement – Approvals in progress.
- McMillen Park Pool Drains Improvements – Bidding in progress.
- Mechanic St. Bridge Construction – Final closeout procedures in progress.
- Northside Park Psi-Ote Pavilion Lower Updates – Bidding complete. Construction in early 2026.
- Northside Park Administration 1st Floor HVAC Replacement – Bidding is in progress.
- Northside Park Administration Fire Alarm Panel – Project completed.
- Northside Park Administration Front Entrance Improvement – Project completed.
- Packard Park Pavilion Roof Replacement – Project completed.
- Parks 2025 Pavement Renovations Project – Project completed.
- Promenade Park Safety Surfacing Replacement – Approvals in progress.
- Repka Park Playground Equipment – Design options are in progress.
- Salomon Farm Animal Barn – Planning in progress.
- Salomon Farm Pasture Barn Utilities – Construction to begin in early October.
- Salomon Farm Pasture Barn – Project completed.
- Shoaff Park Riverlodge Roof Replacement – Construction in progress.
- Shoaff Park Playground Equipment – Design options in progress.
- Swinney Park Rear Entrance Arbor Replacement – Project completed.
- Various Parks Signage Improvements – Projects ongoing.
- Wells St. Bridge Partial Deck Replacement – Construction planned for early October.

Other work:

- Various Parks: reviewed potential and necessary future projects
- Various Parks: planning projects for 2025 budget
- Various Parks: updating park site plan bases and building plans.
- Various Parks: underground utility locates were scheduled and performed.
- Various Parks: assisting marketing department by preparing requested project information.
- Various Parks: cost estimates for various projects are being prepared upon request.
- Various Parks: park assessments being completed.
- Content preparation for Engage Fort Wayne
- PAS Division GIS training sessions in progress with staff
- Preparing GIS content for Parks mobile application

 Safety: Tony DeVido

- The Parks & Rec. The Safety Committee held a meeting on September 30, 2025. 3 Parks employees attended
- 0 vehicle crash was reported for this time period.
- 4 employee injuries were reported during this time period.
- 1 CPR/FA classes were held. 3 employees were certified
- 2 CDL holders successfully renewed their licenses.
- 31 Worksite inspections were done.
- 1 ergonomics assessment was completed.
- 1 patron injury investigation was completed.
- Safety Review Council meeting was held. 2 Parks employees were present. Further investigation ref Amanda Black's injury was requested.
- De-Escalation training update was completed. Classes are being scheduled for October.

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

Botanical Conservatory Report – September 2025

- “...*Something Blue*” Showcase Exhibit warmly welcomed visitors, inviting guests to experience the romance and charm of a classic tradition reimagined in botanical form. With formal landscape design, a grand central fountain, and striking blue-themed plantings, the exhibit offered a dreamy setting for newlyweds and garden lovers alike. From heartfelt photo ops to leisurely strolls through enchanting scenes, the exhibit captures the essence of summer elegance. Generously sponsored by the Fort Wayne Park Foundation, English Bonter Mitchell Foundation, and Majic 95.1, “...*Something Blue*” sets the stage for a memorable season at the Botanical Conservatory.
- The Botanical Conservatory hosted several well-received events in September 2025 including Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown (September 7), Fall Bonsai Show (September 20), Pumpkin Path Display Installation (September 29), Botanical Brew (October 3). Staff are gearing up for Pumpkin Path Display (open through October 26), Botanical Brew (October 3), Rocky Horror Picture Show (October 18), Garden Trick-or-Treat (October 25), and several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month.
- Three Conservatory Food Service Assistants (Alison Cole, Rachel Cole, and Justina Odedina) began working in September as Café Flora prepares to open. Rental Coordinator, Norah Bray, submitted her resignation to be effective November 21, 2025 – her ample notice allows time for candidate recruitment and on-boarding to allow for continuity in the role; the position is in the process of being posted.

Botanical Conservatory KPIs

- In September 2025, the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory welcomed 7,499 visitors, representing a 13.65% decrease compared to 8,684 visitors in September 2024. Despite this monthly drop, the Conservatory remains ahead year-to-date, with 92,824 total visitors in 2025, an 11.68% increase over 83,116 visitors in the same period in 2024.
- Admissions revenue for September 2025 totaled \$13,014.00, down \$2,013.00 or 13.39% from the previous year. However, year-to-date admissions revenue remains strong at \$323,292.63, marking a 3.65% increase over 2024.
- Membership revenue saw a monthly gain, increasing from \$2,745.00 in 2024 to \$3,245.00 in 2025, up \$500.00 or 18.21%. Year-to-date membership revenue is also up 5.10%, with \$73,993.00 collected through September.
- Conservatory Shop revenue grew modestly in September, up \$594.15 or 3.64%, totaling \$16,921.41. However, year-to-date shop revenue is slightly down by \$7,872.65 or 3.28% compared to 2024.
- Rental and catering revenue dropped significantly in September 2025, down \$4,787.50 or 41.01% compared to 2024. Nonetheless, on a year-to-date basis, this category is still up 7.20%, with \$71,787.50 earned in 2025 compared to \$66,965.00 in 2024.
- A standout category this month was Other Revenue, which includes donations, enrollments, and plant sale earnings. September 2025 brought in \$10,674.58, a substantial increase over \$1,144.26 the year prior. Year-to-



date, this category has generated \$424,261.16, up from \$367,737.33 in 2024.

- Total revenue for September 2025 reached \$50,742.49, an 8.15% increase over September 2024. Cumulatively, the Conservatory has generated \$1,125,287.74 in 2025, a 6.48% increase compared to \$1,056,836.11 in the first nine months of 2024.

Attendance

September 2024:	8,684 visitors
September 2025:	7,499 visitors
A decrease of 1,185 visitors or -13.65% to 2024	

YTD Comparisons

2024 Attendance:	83,116 visitors
2025 Attendance:	92,824 visitors
An increase of 9,708 visitors or +11.68% to 2024	

Admissions Revenue

September 2024:	\$15,027.00
September 2025:	\$13,014.00
A decrease of \$2,013.00 or -13.39% to 2024	

YTD Comparisons

2024 Admissions Revenue:	\$311,907.68
2025 Admissions Revenue:	\$323,292.63
An increase of \$11,384.95 or +3.65% to 2024	

Membership Revenue

September 2024:	\$2,745.00
September 2025:	\$3,245.00
An increase of \$500.00 or +18.21% to 2024	

YTD Comparisons

2024 Membership Revenue:	\$70,400.00
2025 Membership Revenue:	\$73,993.00
An increase of \$3,593.00 or +5.10% to 2024	

Conservatory Shop Revenue

September 2024:	\$16,327.26
September 2025:	\$16,921.41
An increase of \$594.15 or +3.64% to 2024	

YTD Comparisons

2024 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$239,826.10
2025 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$231,953.45
A decrease of \$7,872.65 or -3.28% to 2024	

Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

September 2024: \$11,675.00

September 2025: \$6,887.50

A decrease of \$4,787.50 or -41.01% to 2024

YTD Comparisons

2024 Rental Revenue: \$66,965.00

2025 Rental Revenue: \$71,787.50

An increase of \$4,822.50 or +7.20% to 2024

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

September 2024: \$1,144.26

September 2025: \$10,674.58

YTD Comparisons

2024 Other Revenue: \$367,737.33

2025 Other Revenue: \$424,261.16

Conservatory Total Revenue

September 2024: \$46,918.52

September 2025: \$50,742.49

An increase of \$3,823.97 or +8.15% to 2024

YTD Comparisons

2024 Total Revenue: \$1,056,836.11

2025 Total Revenue: \$1,125,287.74

An increase of \$68,451.63 or +6.48% to 2024

 Botanical Conservatory Business Development

- Staff submitted a grant proposal to the English Bonter Mitchell Foundation for support of the 2026 Showcase Garden exhibits.
- Staff submitted a grant proposal to the Spencer Foundation for support of the 2026 Showcase Garden Exhibits.
- Staff submitted a grant proposal to the McComb Family Foundation for support of the 2025-2026 Fern's Fairylight Express Exhibit.
- Staff submitted information about Fern's Fairylight Express to Cheryl Chalfant, director of the Mary Cross Tippman Foundation; Stacy recently received an email from Cheryl about ideas for combining gardens and books in an exhibit. We provided Cheryl with more details on FFE and while Cheryl is a great fan of the gardens and literature, the exhibit does not match the mission of the foundation.
- The Conservatory was awarded support of \$4,500 from the Wilson Foundation for the 2025-2026 Fern's Fairylight Express Exhibit.



- The Conservatory was awarded support of \$5,000 from the Barbara Bradley Baekgaard Family Foundation for the 2025-2026 Fern's Fairylight Express Exhibit.
- Staff submitted an intent to apply request to the Arts Midwest grant program for support of the 2026 Fern's Fairylight Express Exhibit. We have been notified that we do not qualify as the overall expense budget is more than allowed by the guidelines.
- Staff submitted the final promotional report to 96.3 XKE for the 2025 Botanical ROOTS Music Fest.
- This report will enable us to approach the media for continuing support of the 2026 Botanical ROOTS.
- Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to Majic 95.1 for the 2025 Pumpkin Path special event. Provided information for the station's promotional spots.
- Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to 99.5/ALT 102.3 for the 2025 Rocky Horror Picture Show special event. Provided information for the station's promotional spots.
- Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to Fort Wayne Metals, Majic 95.1, and FOX55 for the 2025 Garden-Trick-or-Treat special event. Provided information for the station's promotional spots.

Botanical Conservatory Public Programs - (Events and Education)

- **Be A Tourist at the Botanical Conservatory (September 7)**
As part of this favored downtown event hosted by Fort Wayne's Visitor Center, the Botanical Conservatory offers free admission during its Sunday business hours of 12:00-4:00 pm. This year's event had 2,526 tourists in attendance who were able to take advantage of and enjoy a garden visit. Attendance went up from 2,361 tourists in 2024.
- **Fall Bonsai Show (September 20)**
Presented by the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club, this year's fall show had 540 people attend. Attendance increased 62% over 2024 despite the Johnny Appleseed Festival happening at the same time. While member attendance was 24% last year, the percentage of members dropped to 16% suggesting a surge in interest from the general public. The show also drew a broader audience, with 18% being youth. This repeat show will continue in both the spring and fall of 2026.
- **Education**

Fall Plant Swap (September 6)

This semiannual free program had 25 participants in the fall, many arriving early in eager anticipation! It began with an abundance of plants thanks to contributions from Lawton Park Greenhouse and donations from volunteers and participants. Volunteer Denise Lock kicked things off with fun nature trivia and wrapped up the program with a plant giveaway. Feedback from the survey and participant conversations was overwhelmingly positive.

GROW IT! School Plant Program

A total of 51 schools hosted their own plant show with approximately 135 judging slots coordinated and filled by Conservatory Volunteers. At the City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show on September 13th, Fort Wayne's School Plant Program concluded its 99th year when an announcement was made that the program name has formally transitioned to GROW IT! and is no longer referred to as the SCFVA, School Children's Flower & Vegetable Association. There were 870 people in attendance where the show was held at the McMillen Community

Center. An increase from 291 entries in the previous year, there were 310 student entries in 2025. Come 2026, the program is approaching its 100th anniversary! Also, looking at next year, staff have already sent out School Plant Order Forms, now due by the end of October.

- **Youth Field Trips**

This September, one school brought 43 visitors to the Botanical Conservatory. This lucky group was able to try out the newly redesigned Plant Puzzlers activity, which received very positive feedback from the educators on content, organization, and aesthetics. In September of 2024, five groups brought 388 students to the Botanical Conservatory.

- **Exhibits & Displays**

...*Something Blue* (June 28-November 16)

The newest showcase exhibit is inspired by the symbolic wedding rhyme, “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue!” Where enchanted scenery complements a formal landscape of blue hues, visitors are immersed in a fairytale of blue beauty in bloom. The exhibit also features a grand fountain in addition to a variety of photo ops with complimentary pieces, bringing together a lovely backdrop for heartfelt memories this summer/fall.

Joni Walker: Nature Walk (June 28-November 16)

This talented, local artist is now showcasing a collection of her watercolor paintings in the Gallery Hall at the Botanical Conservatory. Her artwork, featuring the beauty and wonders of nature, is available for purchase at shop.botanicalconservatory.org. A public artist reception was held on August 15th from 1-3 pm.

Pumpkin Path Display (September 30-October 26)

This seasonal display keeps getting better and better, as staff and volunteers come together, making it something for everyone to enjoy. Throughout its duration, guests are able to help themselves to a Seek and Find Activity while also taking advantage of numerous photo ops amidst beautiful fall scenery. Conservatory attendance is expected to pick up during this beloved outdoor display!

- **Volunteers/Staff**

September was a busy month of fall preparation and cleanup that drew several different volunteer groups! Concordia High School presented 15 students and 2 staff to weed the berms along Calhoun Street; they collectively contributed 60 hours. Four separate groups joined Conservatory Volunteers to install the Pumpkin Path Display, totaling 57 volunteers assisting staff; CAS, FWCS/Anthis Career Center, and Target all offered teams of volunteers. In addition to their assistance with the Pumpkin Path before, during, and after official installation, CAS students began their semester of service in September by also pulling ivy from the Showcase Garden; they collectively contributed 51.5 hours this month.

Volunteers with Easter Seals Arc finished sorting labels for the 2026 Mother’s Day Plant Sale and also enhanced Terrace aesthetics by sweeping and weeding the pavers. A total of 33 Conservatory Volunteers judged plants for the GROW IT! School Plant Program, while filling approximately 135 judging slots at 51 participating schools, in addition to others joining them, many of these same volunteers also assisted with the City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show. Two dedicated volunteers continued to weed, deadhead, and clean debris from the interior gardens while a third tended to retail plants for the Gift Shop. At the Front Desk, 8 volunteers filled 34 shifts while 9 volunteers covered 31 shifts in the Gift Shop.



Upcoming

June 28- November 16: ...*Something Blue* showcase exhibit

June 28- November 16: Nature Walk, art display by Joni Walker

September 30-October 26: Pumpkin Path Display

October 3: Botanical Brew

October 7-November 4: Continuing T'ai Chi, pre-registered series

October 16: Succulent Pumpkins, pre-registered

October 18: Rocky Horror Picture Show & Fright Night Market

October 25: Garden Trick-or-Treat

October 27: Teardown of Pumpkin Path Display

November 16-21: Showchange Week

November 22-April 12: Fern's Fairylight Express Showcase Exhibit

November 26: \$1-Night of Lights at the Conservatory

November 27: CLOSED Thanksgiving Day

November 28-December 19: \$1-Night Light Display

November 28: Holiday Performance by Those 2 Guys in Suits & Ties

November 29: Holly Shopping

Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

A significant soil replacement project was completed in the Desert House to support the long-term health of the Botanical Conservatory's arid plant collection. A total of 64 cubic yards of custom arid soil—sourced from Midwest Trading, a specialty soil vendor—was delivered and installed by the team at Mulchworx. The new mix aligns with horticultural standards for arid environments and provides greatly improved drainage, aeration, and structure.

Following the Horticulture Supervisor's procurement trip to the western United States, new Mediterranean climate plants were introduced to several key Botanical Conservatory spaces. The Mediterranean Beds in the Showcase House were expanded with select species collected during the trip, including plants from Santa Barbara, San Diego, and southern Nevada. Northland Express coordinated the delivery of these specimens, ensuring their timely and safe arrival.

A new Mediterranean climate-themed planting was completed on the east side of the Showcase House, featuring plants originating from New Zealand and Australia. This project revitalizes a previously underutilized area and marks an intentional expansion of the Botanical Conservatory's permanent plant collection. The new installation adds both botanical diversity and educational value to the public display.

To usher in the autumn season, mums were planted throughout the Terrace Garden to replace select annuals. These fall favorites offer seasonal color and maintain high visual appeal during the September–November period.

Additional plant material obtained during the western procurement trip was installed in the Tropical House, contributing to the continual evolution and richness of the collection. These additions enhance the layered vertical aesthetic and ensure diversity in form, foliage, and habitat representation.



In anticipation of an upcoming interior improvement project, Sycamore Tree Care removed the existing ivy from the eastern Showcase House wall. This clears the way for planned painting and cosmetic upgrades, which will refresh the space and better support interpretive exhibit elements in the future.

Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

Preparations are underway for the holiday showcase, Fern's Fairy Light Express. Staff are actively fabricating large-scale three-dimensional renderings of the exhibit's featured characters. Additional elements currently in production include a crawl-through tunnel and an interactive fairy wand.

The Building Supervisor's office underwent a full demolition and reconstruction process to modernize the workspace. The updated office will improve functionality and aesthetic consistency with adjacent operational areas.

Final preparations for the opening of Café Flora continued throughout the month. Staff contributed to cleaning, staging refrigeration units, assembling final retail and service displays, and completing minor touch-ups. Coordination with vendors, contractors, and health inspectors was carried out to meet all regulatory requirements and launch benchmarks.

Maintenance teams from Lawton Park assisted with the installation of new baby changing stations and a door closer, improving guest amenities and ADA compliance.

Newly hired employees received orientation covering building operations and general safety procedures as part of their onboarding process.

Progress continues in reorganizing and upgrading the Botanical Conservatory's basement storage area. Staff cleaned and installed new shelving to better utilize the space and improve accessibility to materials.

The indoor bee hive exhibit was deinstalled for the season. Representatives from Southwest Honey collected the live hive to overwinter off-site. All related display materials were cleaned and securely stored for future use.

Lawton Park maintenance teams completed electrical repairs to outdoor outlets and GFI units in both the Terrace Garden and Exploration Garden. These updates ensure the spaces are fully functional for upcoming public events.



Be A Tourist Passports to be stamped at the Botanical Conservatory



*A snapshot of beauty as part of
the ...Something Blue Showcase
Exhibit*



*A couple walking through &
enjoying the outdoor Pumpkin Path
Display*



*Volunteers judging student
entries as part of the School Plant
Program*



*Participants & Volunteers at
registration for the City-Wide Blue-
Ribbon Show*



Volunteers judging plants at the Blue-Ribbon Show as part of the GROW IT! School Plant Program



Merit Winners at the 2025 City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show with their winning plant entries



Conservatory Program Staff with Lynda Heavrin, former Manager of the School Plant Program



*Concordia Students weeding the
berms during a morning of volunteer
service*



*Anthis Students unloading
pumpkins for the Pumpkin Path
Display*



*CAS Students & Staff the day
of Pumpkin Path installation*



Planning Report – September 2025

- Construction of the Franke Park Renaissance, Phase I project is nearly complete. Exterior wall capstones are being caulked.
- Riverfront Phase II B construction continues. The boulder mound walk has been poured and hammock supports are installed. Staff continue to meet with AEP for coordination of this project with their transmission line rebuild.
- Design work continues on the Foster Park Entrance project. Staff are working with the design team to prepare for the public presentation of the design development drawings. Staff continue to coordinate with City Utilities on the restoration of their utility construction project throughout Foster Park.
- Staff are working with members of Wildwood Park Community Association and Heritage Landscapes to find historical photos of the park for the Wildwood Park and Rockhill Park Historic Landscape Study and Guideline project.



- Staff are coordinating with members of the Maplewood Community who want to install a native pollinator garden in Sheldon Drive Park as part of their Neighborhood Improvement Grant.
- Staff are coordinating with members of the Bloomingdale Neighborhood to install two interpretive signs; one at Wells Street Park and the other at Wells Street Bridge as part of their Neighborhood Improvement Grant.
- Staff are preparing a Request for Quotes for the design of improvements at the Wells Street Park.
- Staff are preparing a Request for Quotes for Mitigation Monitoring services for mitigation plantings required by Construction in a Floodway permits for the Franke Park Renaissance and Lawton Park Trestle Bridge projects.
- Staff received 15 proposals submitted for the Rebid of the Conservatory's Exploration and Terrace Garden Design. Staff are reviewing the proposals and plan to select a consultant team by the end of October.

Horticulture and Landscape Report- September 2025

- The School Children's Flower and Vegetable Association had it's City-Wide Blue Ribbon Show on Saturday, September 13. The Blue Ribbon Show was a culmination of all the school shows held in August and September.
- There were 48 plants sent to the Botanical Conservatory for the Fall Plant Swap and 61 plants sent to the gift shop.
- 33 volunteers worked 342.6 hours in the greenhouse.
- The Lakeside Park team focused on daily litter pickup; watering and weeding of all annual beds; weekly mowing and spin trimming; sidewalk edging; fountain maintenance including vacuuming; landscape bed weeding; rose bed maintenance that included pesticide treatments, specifically for Powdery Mildew and Black Spot this month. Staff also spent time pruning the Yews, pruning trees, edging and mulching landscape beds and edging the curbs along Lake Avenue. The annual flowers in the urns were removed and replaced with Mums this month and the Gardeners completed their 2026 annual flower plans.
- The Foster Park team focused on daily litter pickup; weekly mowing of the bridal glen, regularly removing tree debris from the tennis courts; began park leaf removal; watering/weeding/deadheading of all annual beds; fountain maintenance and cleaning; landscape bed weeding and herbicide treatments; perennial bed cleanup; stump removal, and turf repair. Staff also spent time doing some selective edging and mulching of landscape beds. Some annual beds that were done blooming for the season were removed. The annual flowers around the Clubhouse were removed and replaced with Mums, Kale, Cabbage, and other fall décor. Gardeners completed their 2026 annual flower plans.
- The Downtown Team focused on daily litter and trash removal in downtown parks; daily fountain maintenance in Freimann Square; post emergent herbicide treatments at Headwaters, and Promenade; and annual/perennial/shrub bed weeding at Freimann, Courthouse Green, and the Community Center. Staff also completed the bed cleanup and mulching at Zeiss Park and they made seasonal adjustments to all irrigation systems. Approximately 250 Liriope were planted at Freimann in areas that had lost plants over the years. Perennials were also replaced at Promenade as needed. Some sod was laid at the Courthouse Green on annual bed edges to improve aesthetics and reduce planting bed space slightly. Due to extreme dry weather, staff watered any new trees and landscapes that were planted in 2025, as well as any recently planted turf grass. Cleanup began at the Arts United Japanese Garden before the grand opening of the building renovation. Staff spent most of the month on stump grinding, turf repairs, and landscape bed reductions in Headwaters Park. Gardeners completed their 2026 annual flower plans for Freimann, the Downtown Community Center, and the Courthouse Green.
- The City Team continued to mow Northside and Lawton office weekly. Post emergent herbicide applications and general weeding/bed cleanups were made in Foster Golf pathway, Franke, Jennings Center, McMillen, and Reservoir Parks. Swinney Letterbed was weeded, fertilized, and watered regularly. Staff visited



Foellinger Theatre for landscape cleanups before shows. They also cleaned up at Johnny Appleseed Park before the festival. Mulching was completed along the Foster Golf pathway before the Fort for Fitness event and bed cleanups were done at the McMillen Community Center before the SCFVA show. The City Team also replaced several perennials at the Franke entry sign. Due to extreme dry weather, staff watered any new trees and landscapes that were planted in 2025, as well as any recently planted turf grass. They also made seasonal adjustments on all irrigation systems. Staff spent most of the month on stump grinding, turf repairs, and landscape bed reductions at the entry of the Foellinger Theatre, Reservoir, Swinney, and the Franke Day Camp area. Many diseased and dying Crabapple and Hawthorne trees were removed around the day camp. These trees will be strategically replaced this fall. Gardeners completed their 2026 annual flower plans for the Swinney Letterbed.

- Landscape staff picked up pumpkins at Kurtz Farms and delivered them to the Botanical Conservatory prior to their Pumpkin Path setup.
- Landscape staff also assisted the Botanical Conservatory by unloading plants that were shipped in for the Desert House display.
- All trees planted that were part of the 2024 Park Tree contract were checked for health. Dead ones were noted and turned in to last year's contractor, Shade Trees Unlimited, who will be replacing them this fall as part of the warranty.
- Sarah Colter, Lakeside Gardener, gave a rose garden tour for board members of the Richmond Rose Garden located in Richmond, Indiana. Sarah talked with them about the different varieties Lakeside displays, as well as care/maintenance throughout the season.
- Pride Landcare, Mow Baby Mow, and MJK Total Lawn Care continued mowing all contracted maintenance areas.
- Lawnganics continued turf fertilization and weed control on all park locations under contract.
- Olympia Pools continued sweeping the Freimann Square fountain every other week per contract.
- Aquatic Management continued to maintain the Thomas Property pond, spraying for algae and submerged weeds as per contract.

Riparian Management Report- September 2025

- Maintained Guldin boat ramp and all dock systems, which include cleaning and removing debris on or around the docks.
- Finished repairs from minor damage to the Shoaff Park dock and Promenade Park kayak launch.
- Treated Japanese knotweed in Kreager Park with herbicide.
- Scouted all three rivers during the record-low river levels. Was able to identify and remove many hazards that would normally be hidden under the normal summer river levels, including woody debris and man-made debris.
- Removed approximately 600 lbs. of litter and man-made debris from all three rivers.
- Assisted Sweet Breeze operations during low river conditions by extending the existing dock at Headwaters West.
- Assisted Riverfront staff in installing a giant river movie screen for World Rivers Day.
- Attended supplemental chainsaw training with the Forestry Division that included maintenance and operation.

Forestry Report- September 2025

- This year's fall tree planting project has been approved. Shade Trees Unlimited is expected to begin work on this project by early November. We anticipate all trees being planted by January 1st.
- The forestry team accepted applications for their recently vacated position. Interviews have been scheduled for early October. We hope to have this position filled quickly.



- This year's winter tree removal project went out for bid and has been advertised. Bids are due October 21st.
- Forestry continues the process of inspecting trees within our park system. We expect to continue these inspections through October.
- The unusually dry conditions allowed access for crews to remove 18 compromised trees from within the BMX Race Park.
- In September, Forestry crews completed 71 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 33 trees in September. 7 of these were the result of damage caused by storms. 21 were located within the parks, and 1 was the result of vehicle damage.
- Completed 8 inspections/appraisals of trees that had been damaged by vehicles. In total, these incidents resulted in \$5,6250.00 in damages.
- Crews responded to and cleared 38 storm-related broken/fallen/hanging limbs.
- Responded to and closed 84 requests for service this month, from the 311 Call Center.

Kathryn Pargmann – Manager, Lead of Marketing

+ www.RiverfrontFW.org had 7,314 hits to the site this month, and the Promenade Park link had 435 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 69 hits in September.

+ Dedicated the "Reimagined Brewer Park" as well as one of the "I am Allen" sculptures on September 3rd.

+ **Web Statistics:** Active Users: 19,717 Event Counts:148,427

+ 41 Graphic Design projects completed.

+ Department Facility Rental brochure near completion.

+ Community Center Sponsorship brochure completed.

+ We received \$200,000 from the Community Foundation for the Hanna Homestead park project, which will go toward the initial construction design.

+ Submitted grant application for Buckner Park trail work.

+ Reached out to area businesses about winter program sponsorship opportunities.

+ Social media promotions for: Brewer Park Reopening, Great Tree Canopy Comeback, Sweet Breeze, Extended Travel trips, and Foster Park Entrance Presentation.

+ Arranged for 11 media interviews with select staff promoting September events.



✚ September Media Mentions: 62.

✚ Social Media Totals for September:

FB Followers	106,177
FB Reach	591,029
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,942
Instagram Followers	30,211

Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations

✚ The golf season is winding down, as it does annually at this time of year. Good weather helps keep people coming out, but the seasonal slowdown is in effect. Here are the numbers through the end of September:

<u>SEPTEMBER</u>	<u>FOSTER</u>	<u>MCMILLEN</u>	<u>SHOAF</u>
2024 REVENUE	59,938	44,429.25	81,712.50
2025 REVENUE	44,140	50,036.75	80,603.00
YTD 2024	399,458.75	307,698.50	604,155.05
YTD 2025	363,460.50	312,722.75	571,296.75

✚ Golf revenue will be down this year for a multitude of reasons that will be discussed after the season ends. This slight downturn follows four years of tremendous growth and is not thought to be indicative of a downward trend.

✚ All of the courses (and Foster in particular) suffered from substandard conditions this year. This was mainly due to ongoing irrigation problems compounded by abnormally dry conditions following a very wet spring. The irrigation problems are systematically being fixed properly, and we will end the year far ahead of where we began

✚ Reconstruction of areas affected by the (now completed) Deep Rock Tunnel project at Foster has begun. Irrigation has been restored, and initial dirt work is complete. Reconstruction of #7 green should be completed this month. It will not be entirely completed in time to take full advantage of the fall growing season, but it will hopefully be ready for play by the end of the 2026 season.

✚ Upon golf courses closing after Veterans Day, greens at all of the courses will be aerified, and we will be getting on a regular aerification/top dressing schedule to greatly improve turf health. All of the maintenance issues that led to poor conditions this year will be significantly better heading into next season.

✚ The golf cart situation has been relatively ok this season. We are in possession of a quote for additional new carts to expand and modernize the fleet, should the budget be available. A lot of the problems



that were encountered in the past couple of years existed because the cart fleet had aged out, and we do not want to get in that situation again.

Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



✚ Dawn Ritchie spent most of September working on a grant application for the Indiana Trails Program with the DNR. The grant is \$400,000 for the construction of the Carroll Road Trail on the north side of Carroll between the Fairgrounds and Lima Road in 2027. The grant was submitted on 10/1.

✚ We opened three bids for the Illinois Road Trail and Road Improvement project from Rockhill Park to Getz Road on 9/18. Bunn Excavating was the lowest bidder at \$9,097,944, of which the trail portion is \$4,141,497. Construction will occur from November 2025 to October 2027. The trail project also includes roadway and intersection improvements. TIF funds, a \$1,000,000 Next Level Trails grant from the State and \$9,000 in donor funds from Fort Wayne Trails, Inc. will fund the trail construction.

✚ I'm involved with planning a Legislative Round Table that will be held on 10/28 at 8 a.m. to promote the 82-mile Poka-Bache Connector to our state and federal delegations in hopes that they will help us secure funding for the remaining 30 miles. We are in the process of putting together an Impact Report to share with elected officials on what the Poka-Bache Coalition & Task Force and the 11 communities involved have accomplished since we began meeting in April of 2021. Since the spring of 2021, we've raised/invested \$4.8 m in federal funds; \$10 m in state funds; \$13 m in local funds; and \$11 m in donated funds for the 82-mile-long Poka-Bache Connector!

✚ We've been spending time each week blowing leaves off trails.

✚ Crack sealing continues on the trails.

✚ Another successful season of Tread the Trails ended on 9/19, and Trek the Trails ended on 9/30 with a nighttime ride.



Division News and Media Coverage:

[October 2025 – Parks & Recreation](#)

[Fort Wayne Monthly - October 2025](#)

[Fort Wayne Monthly - September 2025](#)



WBOI, Fort Wayne puts out call for homeless shelter proposals

<https://www.wboi.org/government/2025-10-06/fort-wayne-puts-out-call-for-homeless-shelter-proposals>

City TV, Public Works in your Neighborhood program with guests Phil LaBrash and James Reitz discussing the Traffic Engineering Dept.

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=AYUaBCY60A6boUQh>

WANE, FWACC addresses petition calling for change in their protocol

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-animal-care-control-addresses-petition-calling-for-change-in-their-protocol/>

WANE, City and county promote storing and disposing lithium batteries properly

<https://www.wane.com/news/charge-into-fire-safety-fw-city-county-agencies-promote-storing-disposing-lithium-batteries-properly/>

WPTA, Russ Jehl on 2026 budget

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/10/06/ugly-fort-wayne-city-council-president-reacts-state-laws-impact-2026-budget-proposal/>

WOWO, Ron Turpin on Fort Wayne's Morning News providing an update on Restore Allen

<https://wowo.com/commissioners-corner-update-on-restore-allen-initiative/>

FW Bus Weekly, Mike Hicks on data centers

https://www.fwbusiness.com/churubusconews/article_c0a7fe39-a371-4c36-ac47-cf08c3632393.html

WFFT, Fort Wayne plans new homeless center, seeks nonprofit partner

https://www.wfft.com/news/fort-wayne-plans-new-homeless-center-seeks-nonprofit-partner/article_c3729de8-06e0-4c0f-8942-9ef47e040791.html

WPTA, Packard Park event

<https://www.21alivenews.com/video/2025/10/05/city-fort-wayne-packard-area-planning-alliance-celebrate-progress-packard-2030-neighborhood-plan/>

WOWO, Joel Benz provides update on future of EMS services

<https://wowo.com/traa-executive-director-joel-benz-provides-update-on-future-of-emd-services/>

WOWO, City plans 24/7 homeless shelter, looks for operator

<https://wowo.com/city-plans-24-7-homeless-shelter-looks-for-operator/>

WPTA, Fire Prevention Week

https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/10/01/fire-prevention-week-county-city-officials-encourage-residents-learn-risks-lithium-ion-batteries/?utm_source=taboola&utm_medium=organicclicks&tbref=hp

WPTA, Fort Wayne homeless shelter plans to expand options for families in need

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/10/02/fort-wayne-homeless-shelter-plans-expand-options-families-need/>



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<https://www.21alivenews.com/2025/09/25/local-fop-president-addresses-violence-against-law-enforcement/>

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AVAILABLE NOW!

Here are some exciting upcoming events and programs that your organization can sponsor this year!

SANTA'S WORKSHOP

Wednesday **NOV 26** | 4:30 until 7:30

Community Center, 233 W. Main St.

Make-n-Take Crafts Refreshments "Buddy" the Elf
Christmas Shopping Lighting at 6:10 p.m.

Donate a new or gently used bear for a chance to win a giant elf bear.

A cartoon illustration of an elf character with a red hat, green tunic, and red pants, peeking out from behind a large red curtain. The elf is holding a small red bag.



The Headwaters Park Ice Rink is accepting dasher board sponsors for the 2025-26 season. You can see your business featured on the boards surrounding the rink all season long!



Contact us at 260-427-6000 to learn more about joining the wintry fun!





Christmas on the Farm



SAT DEC 6 1-5 PM
Salomon Farm Park, 817 W. Dupont Rd.

- Santa Claus
- Farm Animals
- Kids Crafts
- Holiday Music
- Christmas Shopping
- Horse-Drawn Wagon Rides



Questions?

We'd love to talk with you about your organization's needs and discuss how a Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation sponsorship can help you reach your desired audience.



Contact Rob Hines at rob.hines@cityoffortwayne.org to start the conversation today!



FIND YOUR AUDIENCE WITH FORT WAYNE PARKS AND RECREATION!

Our team offers safe and fun recreation programs through the support of donors, charitable organizations, and sponsors like you!

With Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation, you can find sponsorship opportunities that allow you to support your community while reaching the people you're seeking.

