

## Steve McDaniel, Director

- ✦ Our most current episode of the Parks Podcast has been recently released. This month, Gilbert Young and I taped this episode talking about the newly renovated Desert House at the Botanical Conservatory.
- ✦ The team and I met to discuss the opening of the new Football Club stadium across the street from Buckner Park. Our thoughts are that we might have some issues in Buckner on home match days. We will monitor as they open their home season and determine if action needs to be taken.
- ✦ A few of us attended Visit Fort Wayne's Accessibility Connect Session at the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Center. This was a panel discussion format that offered continuing learning on accessibility from four very different perspectives.
- ✦ The team and I also participated in Junior Achievement's Career Ignite event at the Coliseum. We had a booth where we were able to connect with over 8,500 local high schoolers, from jobs to teenage interests, to help us build programming and fill open positions.
- ✦ The Parks and Recreation team created a smaller working group to look at what we offer in our community, from park space to programming. This group is working on an overall model to help us identify those things we do that might be affected by impacts on our budget in the coming years.
- ✦ I have asked the design team to work through a couple of options for sidewalk/trail along Charlotte Ave, as well as pedestrian flow within Bob Arnold Northside Park. As these plans develop, we will bring them before the Board of Park Commissioners.
- ✦ On April 24<sup>th</sup>, we celebrated Arbor Day at Franklin School Park with the planting of trees, reading a proclamation from Mayor Tucker, and announcing we have been named Tree City USA for the 36<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, as well as winning the Growth Award for the 21<sup>st</sup> year. We also gave away White Pine or Chestnut Oak tree seedlings.
- ✦ We have several construction projects that are in the works. The team is working on replacing six playgrounds. We hope that those will be completed at the end of spring or early summer. Aquatic facility improvements, including a new pool liner at McMillen and sand filter replacement in Bob Arnold/Northside Park, are finishing up. On a side note, we will be filling both pools with water in early May to get ready for the summer season.
- ✦ We have a few press conferences planned in the coming weeks. One will be for the playground projects, one for the Headwater's Splash Pad, and another to kick off this year's Senior Games.
- ✦ Finally, we are still looking for summer staff members to fill some of our areas. If you are looking for a job this year, please fill out an application at [www.fortwayneparks.org](http://www.fortwayneparks.org).

## Chuck Reddinger – Deputy Director of Recreational Services

Salomon Farm Park, Neighborhood Outreach, Jennings Recreation Center, Weisser Park Youth Center, McMillen Park Community, Community Center (Downtown), Riverfront (Promenade Park), Athletic Fields and Courts, Aquatics (Northside Pools/McMillen Park Pools), Golf (Foster Park/McMillen Park/Shoaff Park), Outdoor Recreation, Special Events, Headwaters Park, & Travel Service

### ✦ General

- General Park Attendance: Starting in April, we have started to measure attendance in most of our parks using Placer AI. We are able to measure attendance at 80 of our parks. Unfortunately, we cannot measure all locations due to some restrictions from Placer AI.
  - These 80 parks had **542K** visits for April
  - The Top 3 Locations: Franke Park (96K visits), Foster Park (56K visits), Kreager Park (51K visits)

- All recreation areas have completed most of their seasonal hiring with only a few positions left to fill. The month of May will focus on seasonal training as most operations start in early June.

### **Weisser Park Youth Center**

- During the reporting period, six new youth registered for the after-school program. Average daily attendance was thirty-four, with forty or more youth attending on nine program days, indicating consistent participation.
- During the reporting period, youth participated in social and emotional learning activities, including a session focused on self-value and relationships. Additional activities included a Minute to Win It competition, a two-on-two basketball tournament, and a music-based painting activity that encouraged creative expression.
- During the reporting period, six outreach sessions were conducted. Martial arts instruction was provided on multiple dates by Goree Hung Ga Academy, focusing on strength and coordination. Additional sessions included cultural learning through Turner Chapel AME Ubuntu Learning Lab, a craft activity led by the Allen County Public Library, and a literacy-based session facilitated by Erin's House.
- From Monday, March 30, through Friday, April 3, 2026, Weisser Park Youth Center hosted its annual Spring Break Staycation. Youth participated in daily field experiences, including a park scavenger hunt, a visit to Salomon Farm, bowling, roller skating, and attendance at the Tri Star Basketball Skills Contest at McMillen Community Center. Participation ranged from fifteen to twenty-one youth per activity, and five youth placed in the top three of their competition categories, demonstrating strong engagement and achievement.

### **Community Center**

- During the reporting period, twelve rental dates were available, and eight were booked, resulting in a sixty-seven percent utilization rate. Two Saturday rentals were held with a combined attendance of two hundred thirty-seven participants, two Friday rentals included a setup and a Good Friday service, and four Sunday rentals for Calvary Christian Church totaled one hundred twenty-four attendees. Total monthly rental attendance was three hundred sixty-six, with revenue of two thousand four hundred sixty-five dollars. Forty-five rental inquiries were received during the reporting period, resulting in an eleven percent booking conversion rate.
- Program participation included ninety-two participants in Open Gym, with additional engagement in programs such as Sensory Clubhouse, Easter Extravaganza, and Under the Sea activities.
- Monday Luncheon was held with twenty-nine attendees.
- Sponsorship support was received from Park Place Senior Living and Aetna Medicare, contributing to senior programming and volunteer recognition efforts.
- Classes and enrichment programs continued with participation in offerings such as Sleep and Be Well, Siege of Kekionga, Arts United Tour, and Medicare education sessions. Several classes, including pottery, stained glass, and watercolor, reached full capacity, indicating strong program demand.

- Facility operations remained stable, with ongoing improvements to program materials and instructor agreements completed.

### **Community Outreach**

- On Wednesday, March 25, 2026, the Supervisor of Community Outreach attended the St. Joe Central Elementary School Wellness Event. Approximately twenty-five families interacted with the Parks and Recreation outreach table.
- On Friday, April 3, 2026, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Fort Wayne and the Optimist Club of Fort Wayne to host the Third Annual Tri Star Basketball Skills Contest. Seventy youths participated, with approximately one hundred total attendees, demonstrating strong community engagement.
- On Monday, April 6, 2026, Parks and Recreation staff attended the Fort Wayne Community Schools Transportation Job Fair at the Pearl Arts Center. Approximately fifty interactions were recorded with individuals seeking employment information.
- On Thursday, April 9, 2026, Parks and Recreation staff participated in the Fort Wayne Community Schools Spring Bling Event. Approximately twenty-five families engaged with the outreach table and received program information.
- On Wednesday, April 15, and Thursday, April 16, 2026, Parks and Recreation staff participated in the Junior Achievement JA Ignite Event at the Allen County War Memorial Coliseum. More than eight thousand students attended over two days, with fourteen staff members supporting outreach efforts. Approximately seven hundred student surveys were collected, providing valuable feedback for future programming.
- On Thursday, April 16, 2026, Parks and Recreation staff attended the Franke Park Elementary School Health and Wellness Event. Approximately twenty families interacted with the outreach table.
- Attended the JA Career Ignite on April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. This is an interactive in-person experience for high school junior and senior students to connect them to post-secondary opportunities: Employment, Enrollment, Enlistment, and Entrepreneurship. 8200 kids were registered from 35 schools. The majority of the Recreation Staff were represented, along with assistance from marketing, to cover four shifts with 4-5 staff per shift. It was great visibility for Parks, team building for the Staff as we are educating Students on who we are and what we do. Networking with the other organizations was also a benefit.
- Attended the FWCS transportation Job Fair at the Pearl Arts Center on Monday, April 6th

### **McMillen Park Community Center**

- During April 2026, the Lil Ballers Intro to Basketball program concluded after a six-week session for youth ages four through seven. Participants learned basic basketball skills, teamwork, and leadership, with each session averaging ten to twelve participants, and all youth receiving a certificate and medal upon completion.
- Youth attendance increased from two hundred forty-two in March to three hundred eighty-eight in April, reflecting strong growth in participation.

- Kids Café meals increased from two hundred eighty- five in March to three hundred fourteen in April, and snack distribution increased from two hundred twenty to three hundred thirteen, indicating higher daily engagement.
- Breakfast participation increased from sixteen in March to ninety in April, showing improved utilization of morning services.
- Kids Korner participation decreased from three hundred forty- four in March to one hundred eighty- eight in April, reflecting a shift in usage patterns.
- Pickleball participation decreased from three hundred seventy- five participants in March to two hundred ninety- five in April, indicating a seasonal adjustment of kids reducing pickleball activity levels.

### **Jennings Recreation Center**

- Jennings Recreation Center maintained consistent participation with an average of twenty-one registered youth attending daily. Attendance remained steady with a slight increase compared to the previous month.
- The Allen County Public Library facilitated a creative activity in which youth completed block puzzle coloring projects.
- Erin’s House conducted sessions using interactive games and word association activities to help youth better understand emotions and feelings.
- Drum Fun sessions continued with a focus on rhythm and self-expression through group drumming activities.
- Sankofa Sessions expanded with Elders actively engaging youth in academic enrichment activities, including cursive writing, reading comprehension, phonics, and cultural learning.

### **Riverfront**

- Headwaters Park rentals kicked off the 2026 season with the earliest event held at the park on April 11<sup>th</sup> with the MS Walk. The event kicked off in the morning with registration, along with coffee and snacks, which concluded with a run/walk in the East grassy area to raise money for the MS Foundation. The next event of April was the Michiana Wine Festival held on the last weekend of April and was held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2026. The Event sold more tickets than almost all of their previous years and had samplings of wine from local wineries, all from Indiana and Michigan.
- Riverfront continued to host several free fitness classes in partnership with the following organizations: YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne, Discover Yoga, and Pure Movement Studio. Classes included Barre, Yoga, Zumba, and Pilates, which brought in a combined 182 individuals getting active along the Riverfront and enjoying Promenade Park. In addition to these regularly scheduled fitness programs, our Riverfront Social Runners club continues to be a popular offering, with an average of 20 participants each week. Over 75 runners participated in April. Community engagement has grown online, with the Riverfront Strava Club now exceeding 275 members. We look forward to watching this group grow and continue to connect the community in an active way.
- This month, Riverfront also held the Spring Celebration on April 28. Throughout the program, 200 attendees enjoyed a wildlife presentation from Indiana Wild, visited with local organizations such as Allen

County Soil and Water Conservation and Plant Happiness, and participated in our Plant Walk. Riverfront had 45 plants donated to this year's program from the following: Fuller Plants, Riverview Native Nursery, Rose River Farms, Tres Beaux Gardens, Gold Gardening, Honey Plant, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Greenhouse, Young's Greenhouse, and International Florists.

- Riverfront rentals included Fort Wayne Trails, City of Fort Wayne Community Development, and The Leadership Experience, with 277 attendees overall. Looking ahead, reservations for this upcoming Summer and Fall continue to fill Promenade's calendar with limited weekend availability left and inquiries continuously coming in.

#### **Salomon Farm Park**


- Over the past several years, Salomon Farm Park has expanded camp group offerings, increasing overall capacity. With that expansion, some sessions have filled more slowly than in previous years. Due to available space in several age groups, the Staff plan to open an option for children to register for multiple weeks, where space allows, and will communicate this opportunity to currently registered families.
- Operations staff will also continue outreach and marketing efforts to support registration in sessions with remaining availability.
- A new program planned at Salomon Farm Park to celebrate Earth Day while also honoring our country's 250th anniversary was scheduled for Wednesday, April 22, 2026, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. The event was designed as a free community Earth Day cleanup followed by a social hour with a campfire and light refreshments. **Unfortunately, the program was canceled due to inclement weather.** Staff will evaluate whether a similar volunteer opportunity may be rescheduled for a later date.


#### **Sweet Breeze Canal Boat**

- The staffing plan for the Sweet Breeze 2026 season is nearly complete, with 10 returning staff members and 5 new staff members joining the team. For comparison, 14 staff were employed last season, and 15 staff are planned for this year, reflecting a modest increase in staffing to support operations for the upcoming season.
- The Sweet Breeze schedule for the first several months of the 2026 season will be released on Wednesday, May 6, 2026. The schedule will include both the public tours and a selection of specialty tours planned for the season. Tickets will be available for purchase online, in the Fort Wayne Parks office, or at the dockside if seats remain available.

#### **Johnny Appleseed Campground**

- Campground hosts returned to Johnny Appleseed Campground on Monday, April 20, 2026, to begin preparations for the season opening on Friday, May 1, 2026. This year, three campground hosts will be assisting with opening operations.

 **Hursttown Reservoir** - Staff have been through the hiring process and are actively preparing for the season opening on Friday, May 1, 2026. This year, four staff members are returning for the 2026 season.

 **Franke Park Day Camp** - Franke Park Day Camp registration is open, but space is extremely limited. This camp is designed for children ages 4–17 and offers hands-on learning in camping skills, nature exploration, crafts, games and more. This program has been a Fort Wayne tradition since 1946, providing unforgettable outdoor experiences for generations of campers.

#### **Golf**

- Gary Whitacre reported that most of the golf pro-shop Staff have been hired.
- Gary Whitacre stated that seventeen (17) new golf carts were delivered from Midwest Golf and Turf. The carts were distributed between Foster and McMillen Golf Courses.

- Jason Smith and Chris Rudolph reported that due to excessive rain and the level of the river, the Shoaff Golf Course driving range had standing water. Chris stated that they are working with City Water Maintenance to have the line jetted to clear any debris.
- ✚ **Pools** - Daryn Schwartz reported that Northside Pool had a new sand filter installed in the main swimming pool. Daryn stated that this new filter should help keep the pool cleaner and help with water chemistry.

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

### ✚ **Payroll and Accounts Payable**

- The 2026 Budget includes the following permanent, full-time positions:
  - 130 general fund positions
  - 13 non-reverting operating positions
  - 7 local income tax (LIT) positions
- 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>, 2026:
  - Manager – Neighborhood Programs (Fund 121)
  - Program Facility Coordinator – McMillen (2) (Fund 121)
  - Relief Person – Grounds (1) (Fund 121)
  - Grounds Equipment Operator – Grounds (1) (Fund 121)
  - Fleet Mechanic – Golf (Fund 439)
- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 284 employees (144 full-time and 140 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending April 18<sup>th</sup> and paid on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- 43 total P-Card statements were processed for April for charges made at the end of February to almost the end of March.
- There was a total of 697 invoices processed during April from 4/1 to 4/30.
- Seasonal hiring events are in full swing. We have had our hiring meetings for the following: Golf, Foellinger Theatre, Sweet Breeze, and Aquatics. There are additional hiring meetings scheduled for the day camps, aquatics, preschool/youth, Lifetime Sports Academy, and Park & Play staff. PDRs have already been submitted for many of these positions.

### ✚ **Customer Service and Finance**

- 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>.
- May 6<sup>th</sup> is the start of Summer Fun Times registration. We are expecting a large number of calls/visits for swim lessons, junior golf tour registrations, and all of the other fun summer activities.
- Entered 127 Sweet Breeze Canal Boat cruises into RecTrac. Tickets for these cruises go on sale May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Entered 440 program sessions into RecTrac for summer program registration beginning May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- Rhonda attended the Theatre pre-employment screening. It was great to see so many people back from our 2025 season!
- Rhonda attended the April Southeast Area Partnership meeting.

- Rhonda and Jarin met with the Projects department to discuss future updates to Foellinger Theatre and the funds needed to complete those.
- Rhonda began working on the employee section of the 2027 budget. We track each employee by name and job title, and those often change from the time the budget is submitted in July to the time the next year's budget is due.

#### ✦ **Foellinger Theatre Report - Overview**

April marked the transition from planning to execution for the 2026 season. Key milestones included public show announcements, continued ticketing builds, major restoration efforts, and finalization of core seasonal staffing—aligning all departments for full-scale summer readiness.

#### ✦ **Staffing / HR Development**

- Completed hiring for the majority of seasonal positions across production, front of house, and food & beverage teams.
- Remaining key leadership roles needing to be filled include:
  - Bars & Concessions Lead
  - Theatre Security Lead
  - Theatre Box Office Assistant Manager
  - Theatre Operations Assistant Manager
- Continued onboarding returning seasonal staff to ensure continuity and operational efficiency.
- Finalized staff training plan, including department-specific sessions and full team orientation.
- Established a clear departmental leadership structure to support day-of-show execution and accountability.
- Ongoing evaluation of staffing levels to ensure alignment with the finalized event calendar.

#### ✦ **2026 Season Planning & Show Development**

- Advanced multiple shows from confirmed to announced status, moving the season into active sales mode.
- Returned fully executed contracts to promoters and community partners.
- Continued coordination with promoters on remaining holds, routing logistics, and final contract execution.
- Refined season pacing and spacing to optimize attendance, staffing capacity, and overall revenue performance.
- Identified opportunities to supplement the lineup with tribute and low-cost programming to maximize calendar utilization.
- Aligned internal teams on announcement timelines, marketing rollouts, and on-sale strategies.

#### ✦ **Facility Improvements / Capital & Maintenance**

- Completed the house lighting upgrades and back parking lot installation!
- Initiated a comprehensive facility restoration and cleanup effort, removing accumulated clutter, obsolete materials, and non-functional equipment to improve safety, organization, and usable space.
- Began upgrades to internal communication systems, including modernization of the venue phone system to improve reliability and staff coordination.
- Identified and initiated repairs on key infrastructure issues to ensure full operational readiness ahead of the season.
- Aisleways and stair paths within the seating bowl will be enhanced with glow-in-the-dark striping to enhance patron safety and nighttime visibility.
- Advanced improvements to the lawn experience, including the addition of a dedicated bar and concessions trailer to increase service capacity and revenue opportunities.

#### ✦ **Ticketing / Box Office / Ticketmaster**

- Continued building and auditing events in Ticketmaster, including pricing models, scaling, and hold configurations.
- Supported launch of initial on-sale campaigns tied to newly announced shows.
- Coordinated across box office, marketing, and promoters to ensure alignment on on-sale execution.
- Continued refining ticketing strategy to balance revenue optimization with accessibility and overall patron experience.

#### **✚ Operations & Event Management Systems**

- Developed and implemented core workflow structures for:
  - Event advancement and timelines
  - Staffing assignments
  - Production and technical needs
  - Vendor coordination
- Strengthened cross-department communication and operational alignment in preparation for high-volume event activity.

#### **✚ Production & Vendor Coordination**

- Continued coordination with Force Tech (production), CSC (security), Alliance (security), Open Gate (weapons detectors), and additional vendors supporting the 2026 season.
- Developed preliminary production schedules aligned with the active event calendar.
- Coordinated with in-house production staff and vendors on venue readiness, stage setup, cleaning, and season preparation.
- Continued assessing technical readiness to support a diverse range of performances.

#### **✚ Additional Work / Ongoing Items**

- Continued coordination with maintenance and project management staff on venue readiness and capital improvements, including:
  - Followspot booth demolition
  - Cleaning and repainting of concessions areas
  - Painting of the box office and front-of-house booths
  - Infrastructure repairs and FOH lighting booth window replacement
- Advanced planning and vendor coordination for additional facility and infrastructure improvements ahead of the 2026 season.
- Continued refining internal processes to improve efficiency, communication, and execution during peak operations.

#### **✚ Next Steps / May Priorities**

- Continue rolling out show announcements and executing additional on-sale campaigns.
- Complete final seasonal staff onboarding and conduct full staff training sessions.
- Finalize all production schedules, labor calls, and vendor agreements.
- Fully operationalize Monday.com workflows across all departments.
- Conduct full venue readiness review across facilities, staffing, and systems.
- Transition into active event execution as the 2026 season begins

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

#### **✚ Facilities Supervisor: Greg Reith**

- Pavilion rentals totaled 106 for this month.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Brewer Park, Freimann Square, Indian Village Park, Foster Park Pavilion 3, Martin Luther King, Jr. Bridge, Lawton Park Skatepark, Brewer Park, Moody Park shelter, and Packard Park shelter.
- The facilities team has spent much of the month pressure washing the following locations: Franklin School Park, Lakeside Park, Foster Park, Moody Park, McCormick Park, Franke Park, Packard Park, Brewer Park, and Northside Park Swimming Pool decks and pools.

- The facilities team has spent this month getting the open-air pavilions and restrooms cleaned for the summer season. The open-air rentals started on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- We also spent a little time assisting with some cleanup at the Foellinger Theatre.

#### **Maintenance Technician Supervisor: Mike Cremeans**

- Both pools at Northside and McMillen Parks have been cleaned and filled in preparation of the upcoming season. Fresh paint and concrete maintenance on the deck surfaces will be completed ahead of the Board of Health inspection in mid-May.
- Freimann Square was reopened for the 2026 season. New lights were installed on each of the four fountains.
- Hurshtown reservoir season preparation was completed. This included opening the attendant shack, turning on electricity, and operating (opening) the pump's well. Rentable aluminum boats and a staff boat were delivered, and two wooden piers were also installed.
- The butterfly showcase installation at the Botanical Conservatory was completed.
- The process of restoring water service to summer facilities remains ongoing and is more than halfway complete.
- Playground inspections and repairs continued.
- The shade structures at Kreager, McKinney, and Franklin Parks, as well as the downtown Community Center, have all been installed.
- The windscreens for the Swinney Park tennis center have also been installed.
- There was a total of **13** calls to the on-call person this month. **3** of which were lock issues, **4** were calls from dispatch regarding alarms, and **6** were miscellaneous issues.

#### **Maintenance Technician completed the following:**

**5:** Alarm Maintenance, **37:** Building Maintenance, **4:** Carpentry, **19:** Electrical Repair, **3:** HVAC Maintenance, **5:** Key Core Maintenance, **34:** Light Maintenance, **12:** Lock Maintenance, **3:** Paint, **22:** Playground Maintenance, **32:** Plumbing Maintenance, **18:** Sign Maintenance, **7:** Vandalism

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

- Tree limb and debris cleanup continues as needed at various park locations.
- River greenway Trail continues to be serviced weekly for mowing, removal of sticks and debris, and addressing flood damage.
- Botanical Conservatory, Foster Park, and Lakeside Park compost bins continue to be emptied as needed.
- Our Grounds crews are running the trash routes three days a week, ensuring all receptacles in the parks are emptied.
- We are continuing to straighten parking blocks.
- Heavy Equipment crews added and graded stones on roads and paths at Johnny Appleseed Park and Buckner Park to improve quality and enhance their overall appearance.
- Crews are maintaining parks on a 7–10-day rotation, including mowing grass, string trimming around trees and fence lines, blowing off walkways, and spraying weeds.
- Crews aerified and seeded McMillen Park rugby fields.
- Heavy Equipment crews removed old park benches and picnic tables at Hamilton Park, Memorial Park, and Kettler Park to prepare for the installation of new ones.
- Crews assisted the Fort Wayne Zoo with transporting and installing the new train and train cars.
- Heavy Equipment crews excavated a leaking water line at Salomon Park for the Maintenance Technicians to repair.

- Sports fields at Kreager Park, Tillman Park, Foster West Park, McMillen Park, Memorial Park, and Shoaff Park were fertilized with approximately 4000 pounds of fertilizer to improve turf quality and playability.

**Main Trac Coordinator: Nicole Roth**

- Main Trac Entries: 8,207 for the month.
- We have had 69, 311 calls this month.
- We had 30 hours of volunteer work at Northside Park.
- Busy entering time sheets and contracted/sales invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Recreation Staff.
- Continued to help the Forestry Department with their Citizen Match Tree Program.

**Superintendent: Mike Gore**

- Approve and record invoices for various materials that are being used in our grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Managing a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance, continuing 2026 River Greenway inspections
- Working with contractors to ensure 2026 purchase orders are completed.
- Starting the MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks for the 2026 season.

**Time to get the pools cleaned:**



**Operations and Support: Travis Roth - Storeroom and Property:**

- The Kenwood radios for the theater were transported to the radio shop to be checked over, allowing staff to determine if any new radios need to be purchased.
- Signs were made for Brewer Park for a new adopt-a-playground group that has decided to adopt this playground.

**Property Transactions:**

09 RedMax Spin Trimmer	Scrapped	P210
15 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P210
26 FuelLock Computer	Added Into Inventory	P210
22 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P210
19 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P210
17 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P230
13 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P230
16 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P230
26 TurfTeq Bed Shaper	Added Into Inventory	P230
26 MB Snow Plow Blade	Added Into Inventory	P240
26 Club Car 550 golf cart	Added Into Inventory	P250
26 Makita 18V Jigsaw	Added Into Inventory	R710
26 Makita 18V Sander	Added Into Inventory	R710
26 Milwaukee Inflator	Added Into Inventory	R213

**2026 Vehicle and Equipment Purchase Update:**

- Forestry Bucket Truck and Toro 5910 Mower P.O. Complete
- Ford F250 Pickup P.O. Submitted

**Garage Operations Highlights:**

- 224 work orders were scheduled this month, 45 of which were services.
- Mechanics tested the new engine on Park's pontoon boat, and the engine was swapped onto the small work boat. Both performed as expected and are ready for summer use.
- Allied Mechanical is replacing both large furnaces in the garage. An inspection earlier this year revealed that the heat exchangers were bad on both units, requiring replacement.
- A new Club Car 550 gas utility cart was delivered for the Maintenance Technicians. This will allow them to haul tools and materials to locations on the river greenway that cannot be reached with a truck.
- The chassis for the new forestry bucket truck is currently being built by International. Once this is complete, it will be delivered to UTE to have the bucket and body installed. The purchase order for this equipment build is complete, and the truck should be finished for delivery in the fall.
- The purchase order for a new Toro 5910 wide-area mower is complete, and the unit is on order. Delivery is expected in May.
- Garage mechanics were able to successfully fit the newer step van into the garage door at the Botanical Conservatory. This is a requirement for cold-weather plant deliveries and will allow the old 1982 step van to be removed from inventory.
- A list of vehicles and equipment to send to the next spring auction is being put together to present to the Board of Park Commissioners in May. This auction will include 4 outdated trucks, surplus golf mowers, and some other surplus items that can be sold.
- All of the items from the April online equipment auction have been sold, creating a revenue stream of nearly \$20,000 for the department. These funds will be used to purchase other pieces of equipment as needed.
- A dozen Ford trucks had a recall related to the programming for the towing computer. The Bob Thomas mobile technician was able to update the programming on all of the affected vehicles in one day without staff needing to move trucks to the dealership.
- A used replacement bed crane was sourced from a surplus fleet truck to replace the crane on truck 198. The existing crane had an obsolete part that was defective and could not be sourced. The replacement is larger and can lift more weight than the previous model.

- The roof of a cab on a Toro 5910 was completely replaced with a new part directly from Toro. The roof had damage from striking a large tree limb and required replacement. This process included removing all of the air conditioning components and reinstalling them after the roof was replaced.
- The truck and sewer pump for the Johnny Appleseed Campground were both serviced to prepare for the opening of the campground. The mower was checked over by our Grounds Crew during the winter and delivered for use.
- Two older TyCrop top dressers at the golf courses were taken out of retirement and refurbished so they can be put back into service for turf maintenance on the courses.
- Box trucks and step vans were serviced to prepare for the annual school plant deliveries to be made by the landscape division.

### **Project Administration: Dave Weadock**

#### **Project Administration:**

- Bloomingdale Park Playground Equipment – Installation of playground equipment and safety surfacing is completed. Site restoration is in progress.
- Boone Street Park Fence Replacement – Bidding is completed. Project planned to begin in May.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Design – Planning is in progress. Construction planned for after Labor Day, 2026.
- Botanical Conservatory Gallery Corridor Design – Planning to begin in late June.
- Botanical Conservatory Roof Glass Replacement – Planning is in progress. Installation planned for September/October 2026.
- Buckner Park Stream Crossing – Planning ongoing through the Landscape Division.
- Foellinger Theatre House Lighting Installation – Project completed.
- Foellinger Theatre Rear Parking Lot Lighting – Installation of light poles and fixtures planned for late April, early May.
- Foellinger Theatre Step Lighting – Lighting is completed. Step tread treatment planning is in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Ticket Office Windows Replacement – Replacement glass windows in progress. All other work is completed.
- Foster Park Golf Course Practice Facility – Contracts in progress for architectural services, permitting, engineering, and topographic survey.
- Foster Park Pavement Striping – Project completed.
- Franke Park Longhouse Lighting – Project completed.
- Gren Park Picnic Shelter – Shelter has been ordered. Bidding for installation planned for June/July.
- Hamilton Park Picnic Tables and Benches – Installation planned by Parks staff in May.
- Hamilton Park Playground Border Replacement – Construction planned for May.
- Hanna Homestead Park Playground Equipment – Installation planned for mid to late April through the end of May, and the RFP for design firms is out for bid.
- Hanna Homestead Playground Border – Construction to begin late April and completed by May 4<sup>th</sup>, and the playground removal project is completed.
- Headwaters Park Bridge Railing Renovation – Renovation work set to begin June 1.
- Headwaters Park Fountain – Project completed.
- Headwaters Park West Sidewalk Leveling – Work is in progress.
- Headwaters Park West Sidewalk Stairs and Pavers Renovation – Work is in progress.
- Johnny Appleseed Campground Paving Projects – Installation of new paving and renovations to existing paving planned for May/June.
- Kreager Park Playground Equipment – Installation of equipment is completed. Playground border and safety surfacing planned for early May.

- Kreager Park Tennis Courts Recoating – Project planned to begin after the Spring High School season. Completion by the end of June.
- Lafayette Park New Sidewalks – Installation to follow playground removal and shall begin approximately the first week of May.
- Lafayette Park Playground Equipment – Installation planned to begin the first week of June, and the playground equipment removal is planned for mid-April in conjunction with the installation of new playground equipment.
- Lakeside Park Pond Fountain – Project completed.
- Lawton Park Maintenance Building Roof Design – Work is planned to begin in May, with 3-4 weeks to complete.
- Lindenwood Nature Preserve Wood Railing Replacement – Work is planned for late Spring.
- Lions Park Pickleball Court Paving Repair – Work is in progress, and completion is planned for late April.
- Lions Park Tennis/Pickleball Courts Recoating – Work is planned for late June through early August.
- McMillen Park Basketball Goals Pads Replacement – Installation is in progress.
- McMillen Park Pavilion Roof Replacement – Project completed.
- McMillen Park Pool Deck Engineering Design – Design is in progress. Bidding is planned for May, and construction is to begin in mid-August.
- McMillen Park Pool Drains Improvements – Project completed.
- McMillen Park Pool Liners Replacement – Project completed.
- Memorial Park Picnic Table Concrete Pads – Project completed.
- Memorial Park Picnic Tables – Installation by Parks staff in May.
- Memorial Park Monument Sign Repairs – Work planned for early May.
- Multiple Park Locations Playground Communication Panels – Project approval process is ongoing.
- Northside Park Pool Sand Filters Replacement – Project completed.
- Northside Park Pool Fence Replacement – Work planned to begin May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Northside Park Psi-Ote Upper Pavilion Awning Replacement – Order has been placed and new awning to be installed in May/June.
- Promenade Park Safety Surfacing Replacement – Project completed.
- Repka Park Playground Equipment – Project completed.
- Salomon Farm Animal Barn Renovation – Bidding is in progress.
- Salomon Farm Old Barn Flooring – Application to improve flooring planned for May.
- Salomon Farm Old Barn Gutters Replacement – Planning is in progress.
- Salomon Farm Rear Parking Lot Lighting – Planning is in progress.
- Shoaff Park Playground Equipment – Work is in progress with completion planned for late May.
- Shoaff Park Boat Parking Area – Work planned for mid-May.
- Swinney Park East Trail Relocation – Planning for trail maintenance is in progress.
- Various Parks Playgrounds Dry Wells Installation – Planning is in progress for Lafayette, Hanna Homestead and Bloomingdale Parks.
- Various Park Pavilions Exterior Painting – Project planned for Spring/Summer of 2026.
- Various Parks Paving Projects 2026 - Project planned to begin in May with work to proceed through late Spring and early Summer.
- Various Parks Sidewalks Replacement – Bidding planned for early May.
- Various Parks Concrete Pads for Site Furniture – Project completed.
- Various Parks Park Identification Signage Additions – New signs to be installed at McKinnie Commons, Hursttown Reservoir, and Hanna Homestead Park.
- Weisser Park Tennis Courts Fencing Replacement – Project planned for late Spring or early Summer 2026.

**Other work:**

- PAS Division GIS training sessions in progress with staff
- Preparing GIS content for the Parks mobile application
- Content preparation for Engage Fort Wayne

- Various Parks: cost estimates for various projects are being prepared upon request.
- Various Parks: park assessments are being completed.
- Various Parks: planning projects for the 2027 budget
- Various Parks: underground utility locates were scheduled and performed.
- Various Parks: assisting the marketing department by preparing requested project information.
- Various Parks: reviewed potential and necessary future projects
- Various Parks: updating park site plan bases and building plans.

#### **Safety: Tony DeVido**

- Parks & Rec. The Safety Committee meeting was held on 4/28.
- 1 vehicle crash was reported for this time.
- 2 employee injuries were reported during this period.
- 3 CPR/FA classes were held. 14 employees were certified.
- I participated in the city-wide Safety Review Council meeting.
- 2 employees received SOAR/CPR training.
- The biennial AED inspections continue.
- SDS book collection and digitization continue.
- Bobcat (skid steer) training was held at Salomon Farm.
- Worker Protection Standard training has begun.
- Chainsaw/Chipper Safety training is planned for early May.
- Training for Seasonal employees has begun.

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

### **Planning Report – April 2026**

Riverfront Phase IIB construction continues. The pavers have been installed throughout the esplanade, and excavation has begun in the north lawn area for the amphitheater. AEP has installed the foundations for its new transmission poles within the riverfront site. The contractors delivered updated costs and schedules due to recent scope of work changes. Staff continues to coordinate construction activities with adjacent developments at the old Schaab Metals building, More Brewing, relocated Depot, and Eddy.

The design team is working towards finalizing plans for the Foster Park Entrance design. Work may commence once the recently submitted contract changes are agreed upon.

Staff and members of Wildwood Park Community Association reviewed a preliminary draft of the Wildwood Park and Rockhill Park Historic Landscape Study and Guidelines and provided comments to Heritage Landscapes.

Staff issued an RFP for the design of Hanna Homestead Park masterplan and held a project briefing meeting for interested design teams.

Staff is drafting schematic design plans for Wells Street Park, and coordinating with City Utilities Engineers regarding the proposed storm sewer alignment in Swinney Park along W. Jefferson Blvd.

Merritt Chase presented three conceptual building layouts for the Conservatory's Exploration and Terrace Garden Design project for staff review.

Staff led tours of Promenade Park and Riverfront with student groups from Oak Farm Montessori, highlighting sustainable practices throughout the sites.

Staff attended Visit FW's 'Accessibility Connect Session'. The event welcomed several people within the local accessibility community, highlighting ways in which organizations and venues can better serve the public.

Coordination continues with Sasha Primo, the artist selected to install public art in the Harvester Neighborhood. Installation is scheduled for early June at Rea Park.

### **Horticulture and Landscape Report- April 2026**

57 Greenhouse volunteers worked 457 hours in the greenhouse helping to transplant, clean plants, price, and label.

There were 5,498 seeds sown for the Parks Department, the Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale, and the Botanical Conservatory Showcase.

A total of 500 cuttings were taken for propagation for Parks, Annual Mother's Day Plant Sale, and Showcase.

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

A total of 3,175 bulbs were grown for the following:

- 450 Spring Bulbs for Bunny Tales
- 1,900 for Showcase
- 395 were sold at the Conservatory's Gift Shop
- 95 Spring bulbs were provided for the Parks Community Center Pots.

17,262 plants were provided for Grow it! School Children's Program, formally known as School Children's Fruit and Vegetable Association (SCFVA), for 72 schools that participated.

With the assistance of all landscape staff, the show change at the Botanical Conservatory was completed the week of the 13th; the "Ferns Fairylight Express" exhibit was removed, and the "Color in Motion" live butterfly exhibit was installed.

All landscape staff helped in the greenhouse and delivered plants for the "Grow It!" program the week of April 27th. In 4 days, staff delivered over 17,000 plants and over 2,600 trees to 61 schools in the area.

Lakeside staff continued with daily litter removal and began weekly mowing and spin trimming. The fountain ponds were filled, and so daily maintenance began on them as well. Staff also worked on bed and sidewalk edging, pre-emergent applications, fertilization of shrubs and perennials, and mulching. Bulbs that had bloomed were pulled this month. Some poor weather allowed them to assist in the greenhouse. Staff continued to prune roses and weed rose beds. As the weather warmed, they began un-hilling the roses, as well as applying pesticides to them to prevent rose midge and root rot. Lakeside staff also removed all the declining climbing roses and prepped the area for replacements in May.

Foster Staff completed leaf cleanup and continued daily litter removal. Weekly mowing and string trimming began in the Bridal Glen, along with edging of beds and sidewalks. Crews removed early-season tulips and began clearing out beds that had finished blooming, while continuing care of remaining tulip beds through mulching, weeding, and cleanup. Mulching of perennial and tree beds was initiated, along with applications of pre- and post-emergent herbicides for weed control. The Bridal Glen was also cleaned up and mulched.

Additional work included rose maintenance, cleanup of the Broadway lilac beds, daylily garden cleanup, and general shrub pruning and bed maintenance.

The Downtown Team continued daily litter removal at Freimann Square. Staff power-washed and assisted with filling the Freimann Square fountain. Selective pre-emergent herbicide applications were completed at Headwaters Park. High winds required additional cleanup, with staff removing sticks and limbs throughout all downtown parks. Crews also weeded tulip beds and removed spent tulips at Freimann Square and the Community Center.

The City Team began weekly mowing and trimming at Lawton Park and the Administrative Office in Bob Northside Park. Selective pre-emergent herbicide applications were completed, and turf areas at Lawton Park and the Northside Office were fertilized. Landscape bed cleanups were completed at Lawton, Northside, Powell, Jennings Center, McMillen, Reservoir, and Shoaff Parks. Additional cleanup was performed at Franklin Park in preparation for the Arbor Day celebration. Mulching was completed around the golf courses at Shoaff and McMillen Parks. The team also redesigned and renovated the landscape bed at the McMillen Park sign, as well as the permanent planters at Buckner Park, incorporating a variety of perennials and grasses. Additional work included cleanup at Moody Park and delivery of 22 yards of mulch to support a volunteer event, where it was installed.

First Presbyterian Church spread 22 yards of mulch at Moody Park.

Triscape, Inc., mulched the south side of Promenade and the east side of Headwaters, as per contract.

Clounie Landscaping mulched Riverfront IIA as per contract.

Pride Landcare 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 and the Boxwood Letters at the Swinney Letterbed for insects, fungi, and improved health.

Two seasonal employees began work in April.

Pride Landcare completed contracted spring landscape maintenance that included bed edging, mulching, and pre-emergent applications at McMillen Community Center, Weisser Center, and McKinnie Commons.

Pride Landcare planted 43 trees at Rockhill Park to replace the declining Crabapple trees that were recently removed.

Triscape planted 48 trees at Memorial Park to replace the declining Crabapple trees that were recently removed.

### **Riparian Management Report- April 2026**

Successfully installed the Guldin dock for the recreational season.

Repaired the crack in the Promenade dock and successfully installed for the recreational season.

Kept Promenade South and North dock clean from silt after flood events.

Removed 63 bags of litter and a bike (approximately 2570 lbs.) from the riverbanks.

Added 6 geese nests with a total of 27 eggs.

Began plans for erosion control for the Shoaff dock riverbank.

Improved Shoaff gangway landing.

Seasonal Staff hired for the year and completed recertification of CPR.

Scheduled and coordinated several upcoming volunteer events.

Assisted with the updating of safety protocols for working around the rivers.

### **Forestry Report- April 2026**

The 2025/2026 Contracted Street Tree Removal Project is complete. In-house crews will continue working on the 133 remaining high-priority tree removals over the next few months. Of the 133 remaining trees slated for removal, 53 are located within our parks.

Currently, 507 street tree stumps are under contract for removal. We anticipate all of these stump removals being completed by June 1<sup>st</sup>. Currently, there are 175 outstanding (uncontracted) street tree stumps that will be managed as the budget allows.

The 2026 Emerald Ash Borer treatment is under contract. Davey Resource Group will be treating 383 ash trees in June.

Arbor Day was celebrated on April 24<sup>th</sup> at Franklin School Park. The event included ceremonial tree planting as well as a seedling tree giveaway in partnership with Trees Indiana.

Fort Wayne Parks partnered with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, the School Children Flower and Vegetable Association, and the Homestead High School Environmental Science Club to package and distribute nearly 2,700 seedling white pine trees to area third graders.

Staff began this year's annual windshield inspection. This inspection intends to identify trees that have declined to the extent that warrants removal. Most of the compromised trees identified through this inspection are expected to be scheduled for removal during the winter months of 2027.

In April, Forestry crews completed 5 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 68 trees in April. 20 of these were storm related.

Crews responded to and cleared 56 storm-related broken/fallen/hanging limbs. 9 of these were private trees that had fallen into the roadway.

Completed 4 tree damage appraisals for trees that had been struck by vehicles. These appraisals resulted in \$6,300.00 in damages to City-owned trees.

Responded to and closed (97) 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

### **Botanical Conservatory Report – April 2026**

April marked a significant seasonal transition for the Botanical Conservatory as Fern's Fairylight Express concluded its memorable run and the team completed the swift transformation of the Showcase House for the return of Color in Motion: Live Butterfly Exhibit, which opened on April 21. The month also brought strong spring visitation, record-breaking attendance for Bunny Tales in the Garden, and a major milestone for the Grow it! School Plant Program, as plants and materials were delivered to more than 60 schools serving approximately 17,000 children across Fort Wayne.

The Botanical Conservatory hosted a full slate of April programs and community collaborations, including bonsai education opportunities, the continuation of popular T'ai Chi offerings, field trip growth tied to the butterfly exhibit, and ongoing participation in Downtown Fort Wayne's Garden Party Window Decorating Contest with Anthis Career Academy. Staff are now preparing for one of the busiest periods of the year, including the Mother's Day Plant Sale, Mother's Day in the Garden, National Public Garden Week, and the continued peak season for Color in Motion and spring field trips.

Karmen Fletcher has begun working as a Seasonal Gardener. Current vacancies include Seasonal Maintenance (reviewing applications), Seasonal Gardener (a candidate has been selected and submitted for clearance by Human Resources), and Clerical II – Retail Assistant (a candidate has been selected and submitted for clearance by Human Resources).

### **Botanical Conservatory KPIs**

April 2026 reflected a meaningful improvement in visitation as the Botanical Conservatory moved into a stronger spring operating period. Monthly attendance reached 15,360 visitors, an increase of 722 guests or 4.93% over April 2025. While year-to-date attendance remains below the prior year due to the softer winter period, April's positive attendance trend suggests renewed momentum as the Botanical Conservatory entered its peak spring season. Admissions revenue, however, finished at \$49,167, down 9.68% from April 2025, with year-to-date admissions revenue remaining 16.85% behind last year.

Several earned revenue areas performed well during the month. Conservatory Shop revenue increased 11.20% in April to \$37,148.46, bringing year-to-date shop sales slightly ahead of 2025 by 1.27%. Café Flora contributed an additional \$13,622.25 for the month and has generated \$42,792.15 year-to-date, continuing to strengthen the Botanical Conservatory's overall retail and hospitality operation. Rental and catering revenue also improved for the month, increasing 10.47% over April 2025, though year-to-date rental revenue remains below last year. Membership revenue was softer in April, declining 43.06% for the month and 14.06% year-to-date.

The most significant year-over-year variance appears in Other Revenue and Total Revenue, but this is largely a matter of payment timing rather than a direct operating decline. In 2025, MAP membership quarterly distribution payments and Fort Wayne Park Foundation endowment payments were reflected in April; in 2026, those revenues are expected to be reflected in May. This timing shift accounts for a substantial portion of the apparent decrease in April membership revenue, other revenue and overall revenue. As reported, April total revenue was \$124,940.94, down 62.00% from April 2025, and year-to-date total revenue stands at \$443,085.53, down 29.18%. These comparisons should be read with the recognition that a meaningful portion of the variance is expected to normalize once those deferred distributions are captured in the May report.

#### **Attendance**

April 2025: 14,638 visitors

April 2026: 15,360 visitors

An increase of +722 or +4.93% to 2025

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2025 Attendance: 43,539 visitors

2026 Attendance: 37,560 visitors

A decrease of -5,979 or -13.73% to 2025

#### **Admissions Revenue**

April 2025: \$54,438.00

April 2026: \$49,167.00

A decrease of \$5,271.00 or -9.68% to 2025

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2025 Admissions Revenue: \$162,538.00

2026 Admissions Revenue: \$135,143.00

A decrease of \$27,395.00 or -16.85% to 2025

### Membership Revenue

April 2025: \$15,192.00

April 2026: \$8,650.00

A decrease of \$6,542.00 or -43.06% to 2025

### YTD Comparisons

2025 Membership Revenue: \$45,774.00

2026 Membership Revenue: \$39,336.00

A decrease of \$6,438.00 or -14.06% to 2025

### Conservatory Shop Revenue

April 2025: \$33,407.69

April 2026: \$37,148.46

An increase of \$3,740.77 or +11.20% to 2025

### YTD Comparisons

2025 Gift Shop Revenue: \$114,232.34

2026 Gift Shop Revenue: \$115,688.61

An increase of \$1,456.27 or +1.27% to 2025

### Café Flora Revenue

April 2026: \$13,622.25

YTD 2026: \$42,792.15

### Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

April 2025: \$6,185.00

April 2026: \$6,832.50

An increase of \$647.50 or +10.47% to 2025

### YTD Comparisons

2025 Rental Revenue: \$34,720.00

2026 Rental Revenue: \$20,250.00

A decrease of \$14,470.00 or -41.68% to 2025

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

April 2025: \$219,546.98

April 2026: \$9,520.73

### YTD Comparisons

2025 Other Revenue: \$268,384.62

2026 Other Revenue: \$89,875.77

### Conservatory Total Revenue

April 2025: \$328,769.67

April 2026: \$124,940.94

A decrease of \$203,828.73 or -62.00% to 2025

### YTD Comparisons

2025 Total Revenue: \$625,648.96  
2026 Total Revenue: \$443,085.53  
A decrease of \$182,563.46 or -29.18% to 2025

### **Botanical Conservatory Business Development**

The Botanical Conservatory and Lawton Park Greenhouse received a total of \$39,625 (\$19,812.50 each) from volunteer Judi Cox as a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) donation. A thank you letter has been sent from the Botanical Conservatory and the Greenhouse for her gift. (Judi has previously given a QCD in 2021 with a gift of \$50,000 total (\$25,000 each) for the Botanical Conservatory and the Greenhouse.)

The Botanical Conservatory secured a \$2,000 sponsorship of the 2026 Jazzworks! and 2026 Garden Trick-or-Treat from Fort Wayne Metals.

Staff sent a follow-up report with details about the Desert House Improvements project opening and press conference to all the foundation sponsors. Final grant reports will be sent as required by each foundation. We will also track attendance, metrics, and visitor comments over the next year to report to each foundation.

Staff is continuing to work on a new comprehensive fundraising plan for the Botanical Conservatory that covers all earned and contributed revenue streams, consulting with pertinent Botanical Conservatory staff for their input and review. The fundraising plan will also incorporate key factors of the Botanical Conservatory's strategic plan (currently in process). The fundraising plan will serve as the master playbook for revenue growth. Expected review, completion and approval by end of Q2 2026 (draft in early May), with the plan in use by Q3 2026 and beyond.

Staff met with Matt Kurten and Brian Green from ST Radio to confirm the 2026 promotional media trades with Majic 95.1 and ALT 99.5 & 102.3. They confirmed support for the 2026 Bunny Tales in the Garden, Mother's Day Plant Sale, Mother's Day in the Garden, Rocky Horror Picture Show, Garden Trick-or-Treat, Pumpkin Path, and the Silver Bells holiday exhibit.

(This meeting followed ST Radio staff reorganization and hiring of Brian as the regional sales manager based out of Indianapolis. He wanted to be sure that they honored previously secured agreements for trade media partnerships.) ST Radio is also considering a promotional partnership for the 2026 Pueblo Garden: Styles of the Southwest exhibit and the 2026 Back to Our Roots.

Staff provided promotional tickets and information to 21Alive and Majic 95.1 for the promotional spots for the 2026 Mother's Day in the Garden.

Staff pitched sponsorship of the 2026 Pueblo Garden: Styles of the Southwest exhibit to WANE 15. They cannot serve as the official media sponsor but will give us any extra open spots on their newscasts and community lifestyle shows.

Staff submitted final media reports to US 93.3 for the 2026 Great Train Connection and to the Barbara Bradley Baekgaard Family Foundation, Magee-O'Connor Foundation, O'Rourke-Schof Family Foundation, PBS Fort Wayne, and Majic 95.1 for the 2025-2026 Fern's Fairylight Express Exhibit. These reports will enable us to approach these funders and media for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.

Staff completed the 2026 Spring Annual Appeal to our members and volunteers – it will be mailed out by April 30th. A follow-up email appeal will be sent on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

## **Botanical Conservatory Public Programs - Events**

### Bunny Tales in the Garden (April 3 & 4)

With a total attendance of 3,475 visitors, this beloved event drew record-breaking crowds on Friday (1,762) and Saturday (1,713) before Easter. Despite some rainy weather, attendance remained steady, with Friday marking the highest-attended day, breaking last year's record of 1,727 visitors. A new Bunny Tales story booklet was well received and added an engaging, interactive element to the experience. Families explored the gardens, enjoying craft stations, live animals from Indiana WILD, a *bunte eier* display, and additional giveaways before seeing the Easter Bunny for a festive photo op.

## **Education**

### T'ai Chi for Relaxation (March 3-April 7)

This program was filled with 20 pre-registered participants while holding a waitlist of 5. It concluded with high marks, as those who attended the last session rated the experience as mostly 10 out of 10! Overall, students enjoy the opportunity to practice in the gardens when they are closed to the public.

### Fort Wayne Bonsai Club: Private Workshop (April 18)

Approximately 30 members met to receive education, assessment, and constructive critique to grow pines and evergreens as bonsai. Guest lecturer, Mark Fields, presented in the morning and offered a critique session in the afternoon. This is the first time such an opportunity has been offered regionally! The Club President, Steve Moore, noted that this type of workshop has been offered in Europe, but to his knowledge, not in the States.

### Bonsai for Beginners (April 25)


Volunteers from the Fort Wayne Bonsai Club led this return program, offering hands-on guidance to 20 pre-registered participants. Students left with a solid understanding of bonsai basics, their very own bonsai tree, and the confidence to continue practicing.

### Continuing T'ai Chi (April 28-May 26)

Sandy Gebhard began another nearly filled session of Continuing T'ai Chi. Nineteen students enrolled with a limit of twenty. Many of them are returning students who happily come to the Botanical Conservatory for their morning practice.

### Grow it! School Plant Program

Landscape and Horticulture Staff completed a week-long delivery of Grow it! plants and bags to over 60 schools and 17,000 children throughout Fort Wayne. Other items ordered for the program, including seed packets, t-shirts, and pencils, have been processed and picked up at the Botanical Conservatory. Phase I of the program is reaching its conclusion, as students will care for their plants throughout the spring and summer, then bring them back for their school's Plant Shows come fall. Consider volunteering to judge plants for schools and for September's Annual Blue-Ribbon Show, marking the program's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary!

-  **Youth Field Trips** - Field trips are in full swing with the ever-popular live butterfly exhibit. The Botanical Conservatory hosted 29 groups bringing over 900 students, with many of them visiting in the last two weeks of April at the start of Color in Motion. In 2025, 23 groups brought 503 students.

## **Exhibits & Displays**

### Color in Motion (April 21-June 21)

This annual showcase exhibit is among the most popular and is much anticipated by guests at the return of spring. New educational signage has been introduced, complementing a weekly rotation of unique and exotic

butterfly species. With the live butterfly exhibit in its 23<sup>rd</sup> year, high attendance numbers are anticipated along with increased field trips.

**Julie Wall: Grounded in Light (April 12-June 21)**

Julie Wall is a multidisciplinary artist who has been making prints for nearly 20 years. Her work in this exhibit reflects a sense of interconnectedness with the universe, incorporating images of both earth and sky. Wall's pieces are available for purchase at [shop.botanicalconservatory.org](http://shop.botanicalconservatory.org). A public artist's reception will be held on June 14<sup>th</sup>, from 1-3 pm.

**Garden Party Window Decorating Contest (Thru May 10)**

The Botanical Conservatory partnered again with the Anthis Career Academy on a design for Downtown Fort Wayne's window decorating contest. Spring of 2026 is the 3<sup>rd</sup> design collaboration, with winter 2025 being the 2<sup>nd</sup> and spring 2025 the 1<sup>st</sup>. Last spring, the students even won People's Choice for best use of theme. What's cool is that these neighboring graphic design students find it to be a worthwhile collaboration, offering them real-world experience in their junior and senior years. It's also a great way to participate in community happenings via the Connector hallway. Visit [downtownfortwayne.com](http://downtownfortwayne.com) to vote for your favorite 2026 "Garden Party" window display. Thanks for considering!

#### **Volunteers/Staff**

In April, the Botanical Conservatory and Lawton Park Greenhouse welcomed 2 new volunteers and oriented 2 additional volunteers. 2 groups offered volunteer service; the 4-H Clover Rovers packaged 300 seed packets for National Public Garden Week, while 5 Amazon employees removed wintercreeper in the Exploration Garden. Easterseals maintained their bi-monthly schedule of sweeping the garden paths. Kicking off butterfly season, 4 people trained as Butterfly Attendants, with 3 of them being new volunteers as of January.

A total of 6 volunteers filled 28 shifts at the Front Desk, while 9 volunteers filled 37 shifts in the Gift Shop. Ongoing, 2 different volunteers continued weekly garden grooming, and 2 train volunteers helped with the maintenance of Ferns Fairylight Express. 14 volunteers filled significant roles during our largest event of the year, Bunny Tales in the Garden. Five of the 14 volunteered during both days of the 2-day event. Color in Motion is in full swing with a commitment from 48 Butterfly Attendants; 12 of them are new this year, and 36 are returning. While the exhibit wouldn't be possible without them, these 48 volunteers have filled 98% of the 9-week schedule.

#### **Upcoming**

Thru June 21: Grounded in Light, art display by Julie Wall

Thru June 21: Color in Motion live butterfly exhibit

May 4-7: Setup of Mother's Day Plant Sale, McMillen Community Center

May 7-10: Mother's Day Plant Sale, McMillen Community Center

May 8-17: National Public Garden Week

May 9 & 10: Mother's Day in the Garden

May 16: Spring Bonsai Show

May 24: Iris Flower Show

May 28: String Jammers Spring Jam

June 3: Desert Sound Relaxation, pre-registered program

June 4-25: Back to Our Roots, \$1 Night Thursdays

June 6: Spring Plant Swap, pre-registered program

June 7 & 14: Breakfast with Butterflies, pre-registered program

June 8-26: Camp ACTIVenture, pre-registered program  
June 20 & 21: Father's Day in the Garden  
June 22-26: Showchange Week  
June 23-28: National Pollinator Week  
June 27-November 15: Pueblo Garden: Style of the Southwest showcase exhibit  
June 27-November 15: Touching Grass, art display by Jeremy Stroup  
June 28: Summer Artisan Market  
June 30-July 28: T'ai Chi for Relaxation, pre-registered program

#### Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

Pride Landcare completed all the mulching and spring cleanup earlier in the month, just in time for Bunny Tales.

Sycamore Tree Care pruned additional trees in Tropical House and installed hardware at the waterfall overlook and on the southwest corner of the House to allow Horticulture staff to hang additional permanent orchids and other showy epiphytic plants.

The Botanical Conservatory acquired additional Vandaceous orchids to add to the permanent collection from a renowned orchid grower in South Florida. This purchase included intergeneric hybrids the Conservatory hasn't previously had in the collection. These intergeneric hybrids will be in nearly constant bloom from early spring to late fall once they become established. These orchids, which at regular price would have cost over \$1,500, the Botanical Conservatory was able to purchase for a bit over \$400.

Amazon volunteers, Botanical Conservatory staff, and Botanical Conservatory volunteers have made more progress in eradicating winter creeper throughout the gardens. Approximately 2,000 square feet of winter creeper was removed throughout the month of April.

Botanical Conservatory volunteers eradicated the remaining invasive Japanese barberry planted on the property. The shrubs will be replaced with dwarf ninebark.

Botanical Conservatory staff installed the final two shifts of forced bulbs in Fern's Fairylight Express to add a touch of spring to the Showcase House.

Botanical Conservatory staff, Lawton gardeners, and MTs installed the Color in Motion: Live Butterfly Display earlier this month.

#### Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

O'Neil's Glass removed the heavy glass entry doors to the Showcase House after fractures were identified in one of the door panels. A proposal has been received for replacement doors with an updated style and construction. The new doors are anticipated to be installed in the coming months once fabrication is complete.

Gabet Cleaning completed a full carpet cleaning throughout the facility, helping refresh the building's overall appearance ahead of peak spring visitation.

Mutton Rental installed the large 30' x 45' seasonal tent for the year, and the exterior restrooms were reopened for the season. Lawton Park Maintenance Technicians also activated the outdoor water systems in preparation for warmer-weather operations and events.

The Fort Wayne Fire Department completed both the seasonal tent inspection and the annual facility fire inspection. Both inspections were passed without issue.

Staff prepared truckloads of materials and supplies for transport to the McMillen Park Community Center in support of the annual Mother's Day Plant Sale. The team also began supporting the start of wedding season and increasing event setup needs while preparing for higher visitor volume associated with the butterfly exhibit.



*A Father captures the moment during Bunny Tales in the Garden*



*Participants potting during Bonsai for Beginners*



*Native to the Philippines, Golden Birdwing butterfly on display*



*The Showchange Crew pausing after a hard week's work*



*Greenhouse Volunteers &  
Staff embracing the  
camera*



*Judy tidying up as part of  
the HORT Support Team*



*Amazon Employees proud  
of their invasive species  
removal*

## [Kathryn Pargmann – Manager, Lead of Marketing](#)

- ✚ [www.RiverfrontFW.org](http://www.RiverfrontFW.org) had 6,033 hits this month. We continue to use RiverfrontFW.org to promote upcoming events and share current Riverfront news.
- ✚ **Web Statistics:** Active Users: 18,502      Event Counts:135,699
- ✚ Marketing team assisted with the Arbor Day Press Conference and Seedling giveaway.
- ✚ Welcomed two Marketing Interns to our team: Pierre Loya (social media) and Micah Carlson (marketing).
- ✚ The Summer Fun Times was produced and released on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

- ✚ Created Botanical Conservatory Spring Fundraiser e-newsletter and numerous flyers, passes, signs, posts, and more.
- ✚ Completed LSA Brochure, Pee Wee & Jr. Golf Brochures.
- ✚ Submitted letter of intent for grant for LSA; waiting for invite to apply.
- ✚ Met with a potential radio station about sponsoring Ghostbusters at Foellinger Theatre.
- ✚ Wrote a blog about youth scholarships.
- ✚ Social media promotions for: Arbor Day Tree Giveaway, Podcast Promo, Fundraising with the Tin Caps, Day Camp spots, Park Maintenance, and Bluffton Bridge Trail Detour.
- ✚ Arranged for 16 media interviews with selected staff promoting April events.
- ✚ April Media Mentions: 70.

Social Media Totals for April:

FB Followers	113,314
FB Viewers	216,469
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,893
Instagram Followers	32,240

## Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations – Foster/McMillen/Shoaff

- ✚ Springtime in Indiana is always the same, but in different ways. We always expect wet weather and large temperature variations, but they occur in different ways.
- ✚ This year has been unusually wet, but the moisture has come in different ways. It has been nearly constant, rather than a heavy dump here and there. In April, there were never more than two consecutive days in a row without measurable rainfall. This greatly affected the rounds played and revenue generated from carts.
- ✚ The large dumps of rain early in the month (over 5" in 72 hours) at Shoaff Park in particular put more than 1/3 of the driving range under water. It was following this that we discovered a serious issue with the drainage system for the range. At this point, the range at Shoaff has been closed for over 30 consecutive days, causing a significant impact on revenue. As this report is being written, standing water is finally off of the range, and as soon as the ground firms up, we will have the drains cleared and hopefully the range up and running.
- ✚ Christina Tichac has replaced the retiring long-time Parks employee, Linda Lipp, as the golf administrative assistant. Linda always provided the revenue data that appeared in this report. Chris is revamping that data report, and it will appear with year-over-year data starting next month.

- ✦ Even with poor (even by Indiana standards) weather throughout the month of April, play has been steady. As the weather dries up and the courses firm up, we can expect course usage to remain high. Kim Moore and Mark Beneke are both back as contracted instructors, and the programs and learning opportunities are abundant.
- ✦ Also, as the courses dry and firm up and the temperature increases, maintenance programs to continue to repair course damage from last year will increase. The (former) 7<sup>th</sup> hole at Foster Park, which has been closed for two years, is about to receive final grading on the green and seeding. There is a good possibility that this hole could be ready to open later this year.
- ✦ Also, regarding Foster Park, meetings with the golf course architecture firm of Hills, Forrest, and Smith have been ongoing and have now reached the point where there is a workable design to add a driving range/practice facility. This will require building two new holes and some re-routing, but it is very “doable”. A practice facility at Foster would completely change the golf course for the better, and would greatly increase not only its revenue capacity, but also restore its status as a destination course in the Fort Wayne area.
- ✦ There is every reason to be confident that the golf program for the Parks Department is heading in the right direction and is on solid footing with a good plan.

## Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



- ✦ *Trek the Trails* and *Tread the Trails* began on April 28<sup>th</sup>. With colder temps and the threat of rain, we had a lower turnout than normal with 18 runners, 27 walkers, and about 50 bicyclists. The programs run biweekly through the end of September.
- ✦ The Rivergreenway - Maumee Pathway east of Anthony to New Haven remains closed as we continue to clean up after the flooding events.
- ✦ The Bluffton Road Bridge is now open to vehicular traffic, but the Rivergreenway below the bridge remains closed until June. There is a detour in place utilizing sidewalks.
- ✦ The Rivergreenway is still closed downtown between Clinton and Harrison for the construction of Riverfront Phase 2B. We have a detour utilizing sidewalks.
- ✦ Mayor Sharon Tucker has a ribbon cutting for the completion of the 4.5-mile-long Hanna Street Trailhead at 612 E Pettit on 5/28 at 1:30 p.m.
- ✦ We will have two sessions of Bike Safety Training this summer: June 24<sup>th</sup> at Shoaff Park at 6 p.m. and July 16<sup>th</sup> at Weisser Park at 3 p.m.
- ✦ We have started the appraisal for the NE Trail, Phase 1. We’ll be starting to appraise and acquire two other trails soon: Stellhorn Road Trail and Lake Avenue Trail.
- ✦ We hope to bid for the Vann Family Crossing (pedestrian bridge for the Pufferbelly Trail) over Coliseum in June or July, with construction beginning in September.
- ✦ Friday, May 15<sup>th</sup> is the National Bike to Work Day. Bike to School Day was held on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ✦ We are replacing faded signage on the Rivergreenway and Towpath Trail. These signs are nearly 15-20 years old.

## National / State / Division News and Media Coverage:



NATIONAL RECREATION  
AND PARK ASSOCIATION



[Parks Recreation Magazine • May 2026](#)

[Parks Recreation Magazine • April 2026](#)

<http://thedesignhornet.com/books/Fort-Wayne-Monthly-May-2026/> [Fort Wayne magazine May 2026](#) [FortWayne.com](#)

### **Moving with the Mayor**

Last year, our inaugural “Moving with the Mayor” days were fun and productive, so let’s do it again this year! I hope you’ll join me for one of three opportunities to learn a new activity coordinated by our outstanding Parks & Recreation and Greenways departments. Each activity will last approximately one hour. If you’d like to join in, we ask that you register on the Sign-Up Genius links provided below. 4:00 p.m., Thursday, May 21: Trail of Reflection hike in Lindenwood Nature Preserve, 600 Lindenwood Avenue. [Trail of Reflection Hike with Mayor Tucker](#). If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Eggeman: [natalie.eggeman@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:natalie.eggeman@cityoffortwayne.org) or x1167. Let’s go have some fun!

Mayor Sharon Tucker

FW Bus Weekly, Businesses invited to meeting on northwest Fort Wayne revitalization

[May 18: Businesses invited to meeting on northwest Fort Wayne revitalization | News | fwbusiness.com](#)

WANE, Councilman Paddock publishes book on trailblazing women in Indiana politics

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fort-wayne-councilman-publishes-book-on-trailblazing-women-in-indiana-politics/>

WPTA, Organizations, businesses share support for new homeless center

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/05/14/organizations-businesses-share-support-new-homeless-shelter-after-downtown-fort-wayne-shares-concerns/>

WPTA, Construction paused on Portland Loo public restroom downtown

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/05/14/construction-paused-portland-loo-public-restroom-downtown-fort-wayne/>

WANE, Several businesses in downtown voice support of proposed homeless center

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/businesses-in-downtown-fort-wayne-voice-support-of-proposed-homeless-center/>

WFFT, Fort Wayne is fastest growing big city in the Midwest, Census says

[https://www.wfft.com/news/fort-wayne-is-fastest-growing-big-city-in-midwest-census-says/article\\_9783191a-119f-41c5-bfb1-d75daf2b582c.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/fort-wayne-is-fastest-growing-big-city-in-midwest-census-says/article_9783191a-119f-41c5-bfb1-d75daf2b582c.html)

City TV, FWPD awards ceremony

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=na7dVMT2RQ3bzy7G>

City TV, On the Move with Councilwoman Chambers – Public safety focus

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=rcqhwS2UHJfEbKMA>

WPTA, Mayor Tucker accepting MYEC applications

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/05/07/mayor-tucker-now-accepting-youth-engagement-council-applications/>

WOWO, Arbitrator makes a decision on the contract between the city and the fire union

<https://wowo.com/update-on-the-fort-wayne-fire-department-2/>

FW Bus Weekly, Visit Fort Wayne creates sports commission

[https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article\\_813fc441-0ed8-4aa8-a3fb-44a3692b4b76.html](https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article_813fc441-0ed8-4aa8-a3fb-44a3692b4b76.html)

FW Bus Weekly, Zacher 2026 Retail Market Report shows Fort Wayne market remains strong

[https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article\\_c0bc2edd-2655-4ca2-a050-ddef6e6b9a41.html](https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article_c0bc2edd-2655-4ca2-a050-ddef6e6b9a41.html)

WANE, Habitat for Humanity milestone

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/raising-walls-in-greater-fort-wayne-for-40-years-habitat-for-humanity-of-greater-fort-wayne-celebrates-four-decades/>

Ind. Cap. Chronicle, Braun pauses 2 taxes on gas

<https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2026/05/06/braun-adds-indiana-gas-tax-suspension-on-top-of-sales-tax-break/>

WPTA, Plans for homeless resource center

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/30/fort-wayne-mayor-reveals-east-washington-site-new-homeless-services-center/>

WANE, Living Local program with a feature on the FWPD's recruitment efforts

<https://www.wane.com/lifestyle/living-local-15/full-episode-april-30-2026/>

WANE, Feature on Dan and Judi Wire

<https://www.wane.com/news/positively-fort-wayne/unsung-heroes-dan-and-judi-wire-are-dynamic-duo/>

WANE, Clerk's office hosting Star Wars themed weddings today

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fort-wayne-clerk-to-hold-free-star-wars-themed-weddings-on-may-4th/>

WOWO, Commissioner candidate Paul Moss interview

<https://wowo.com/candidate-for-allen-county-commissioner-paul-moss/>

FW Bus Weekly, 99<sup>th</sup> fire class graduates

[https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/government/article\\_4c97bee6-0df1-4c6e-bf68-070d1ba5c7f2.html](https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/government/article_4c97bee6-0df1-4c6e-bf68-070d1ba5c7f2.html)

City TV, FWFD 99<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=ehz0FQS8vZ8YXRMr>

WANE, Fort Wayne expects to save money with changes to city-owned vehicle policy

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-expects-to-save-500000-with-new-city-owned-vehicle-policy/>

WPTA, City announces changes to vehicle policy; money-saving effort follows state budget cuts

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/24/city-fort-wayne-announces-changes-vehicle-policy-money-saving-effort-following-state-budget-cuts/>

WPTA, Event at the Conservatory

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/26/foellinger-freimann-botanical-conservatory-hosts-spring-artisan-market-wraps-up-slightly-used-bulb-sale/>

**Foster, McMillen and Shoaff Golf Courses are open**

**First Start Time: \*9:00 a.m. weather permitting**

***Foster-3900 Old Mill Road, McMillen-3900 Hessen Cassel Road, Shoaff-6401 St. Joe Road***

First tee time will be moved to \*8:00 a.m. beginning on Saturday, April 18 weather permitting. Cart conditions for each course and driving ranges at Shoaff and McMillen will be determined day-to-day. Please call the clubhouse to inquire and follow FortWayneParksGolf on Facebook for course conditions and range announcements.

WBCL, the Mayor states proposed quarry project

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/fw-mayor-tucker-issues-statement-on-proposed-quarry-project>

WBOI, City Utilities' employees look back at decades of work to keep the city's rivers clean

<https://www.wboi.org/government/2026-04-24/fort-wayne-city-utilities-employees-look-back-at-decades-of-work-to-keep-the-citys-rivers-clean>

WANE, Reps. GiaQuinta and Miller against quarry

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/leaders-express-opposition-to-proposed-quarry-ahead-of-may-hearing/>

Adams Radio Group, Fort Wayne named Tree City USA

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2026/04/26/97605/>

Ind Cap Chronicle, Data centers doing the right thing for the wrong reasons

<https://indianacapitalchronicle.com/2026/04/27/data-centers-doing-the-right-thing-for-the-wrong-reasons/>

City TV, Mayor Tucker's City Beat program

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=uhzc2KIEdEsS02AN>

WANE, Bluffton Road Bridge fully reopens following lengthy project

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/bluffton-road-bridge-fully-reopens-following-lengthy-project/>

WPTA, FWFD welcomes new firefighters

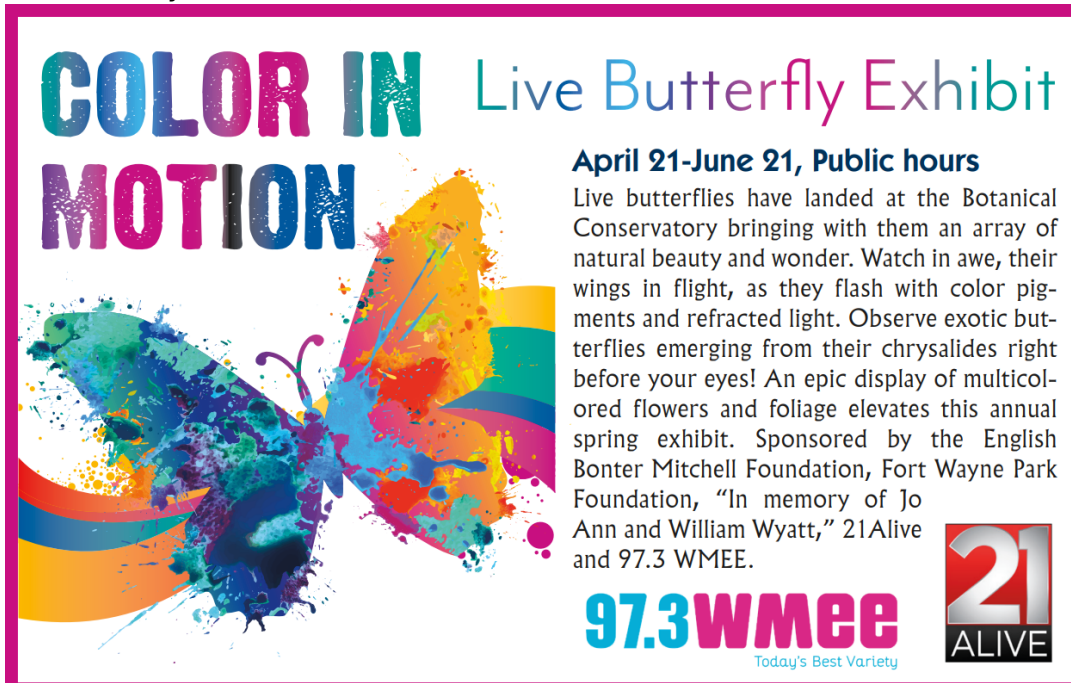
<https://www.21alivenews.com/video/2026/04/24/fwfd-welcomes-16-new-firefighters/>

## Color in Motion

**April 21 to June 21, public hours**

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

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



**COLOR IN MOTION** Live Butterfly Exhibit

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**97.3 WMEE**  
Today's Best Variety

**21 ALIVE**

**Julie Wall: Grounded in Light**

**April 21 to June 21, public hours**

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

Every star in the sky has a flower on the ground... This sentiment—echoed through poetry, literature, art and mythology for hundreds of years—resonates deeply with Julie Wall. She is drawn to the idea of an inherent interconnectedness within the universe, a network of links that bind us to our surroundings. To her, the seemingly infinite stars above are reflected in the immeasurable flowers below, forming a quiet cosmic balance. Wall has been making prints for nearly 20 years and has been an artist for even longer. The opportunity to share her work and process brings her immense joy and offers her a sense of balance in her own life.

## Riverfront Social Runners

***Promenade Park, 202 West Superior Street***

The Riverfront Social Runners are calling all runners and walkers—no matter your experience level! Join the club on the Strava App (<https://bit.ly/RFWStravaClub>) and discover your community at your own pace. Stay connected and up to date on upcoming meetups, fun challenges and Riverfront adventures

by following Riverfront Fort Wayne on Strava and social media. Don't miss the chance to get active and make new friends along the way!

WFFT, FWACC event coming up on May 2

[https://www.wfft.com/news/fort-waynes-barks-and-mews-gala-supports-animals-in-need/article\\_5c9e01d2-11d7-44b4-bd1d-4a1c71254f95.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/fort-waynes-barks-and-mews-gala-supports-animals-in-need/article_5c9e01d2-11d7-44b4-bd1d-4a1c71254f95.html)

Adams Radio Group, City receives \$400k Indiana Trails Program grant

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2026/04/24/city-receives-400000-indiana-trails-program-grant/>

WPTA, Walk in the Park – Spring Celebration 2026

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/23/walk-park-spring-celebration-2026/>

WOWO, Jeremy Bush on Fort Wayne's Morning News discussing the county fire position

<https://wowo.com/jeremy-bush-selected-as-executive-fire-chief-in-allen-count/>

WPTA, The Landing Exchange groundbreaking

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/16/groundbreaking-ceremony-held-downtown-fort-waynes-landing-exchange/>

## **Trek the Trails and Tread the Trails Season Kick-Off**

The 2026 season for Trek the Trails and Tread the Trails will begin on Tuesday, April 28 at 6:00 p.m. at Promenade Park. This kick-off event includes a free Trails Celebration Party hosted by Fort Wayne Trails from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. TEDS Snack + Bar will be open with drinks for purchase and Fort Wayne Trails will have light snacks on hand.

Trek the Trails and Tread the Trails will take place during the same weeks this year.

Date and locations for the next 4 Trek the Trails bicycle rides:

- 5/26: Rockhill Park, Catalpa St & W Jefferson Boulevard
- 6/09: Jack R. Harris Park, N. Main St., Grabill
- 6/23: Shoaff Park, 6401 St. Joe Rd.

Locations for the next 4 Tread the Trails for walkers, runners and wheelchairs:

- 5/28: Rockhill Park, Catalpa St & W Jefferson Boulevard
- 6/11: Jack R. Harris Park, N. Main St., Grabill
- 6/25: Shoaff Park, 6401 St. Joe Rd

Full schedule of Trek the Trails bike rides:

<https://www.cityoffortwayne.in.gov//Trek-the-Trails>

Full schedule of Tread the Trails walks/runs:

<https://www.cityoffortwayne.in.gov//Tread-the-Trails>

Trek the Trails is presented by the City of Fort Wayne and Fort Wayne Trails Inc. and proudly sponsored by Northeastern REMC, UAW Local #2209, VS Engineering, and Old Fort Bicycle. More info:

<https://fwtrails.org/trek-the-trails/>.

Tread the Trails is presented by the City of Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne Trails Inc and The Fort Wayne Running Club. *The Fort Wayne Area Trails Network consists of 165 miles of trails, with 110 miles inside City limits. Most of the trails in City limits are planned, designed, constructed and maintained by the City of Fort Wayne, under the leadership of Mayor Sharon Tucker.*

WPTA, a documentary, tells the story of the city's first female firefighter

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/04/16/fort-wayne-first-documentary-tells-story-citys-first-female-firefighter/>

WANE, Bond financing for Villages of Arneo development approved

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/fort-wayne-approves-8-1m-bond-financing-for-villages-of-arneo-development/>

Around Fort Wayne, FWPD announces opening of new downtown district

<https://aroundfortwayne.com/news/2026/04/15/fort-wayne-police-department-announces-opening-of-new-downtown-fort-wayne-district/>



**THE  
UNSTOPPABLE  
TOUR**

**OCTOBER 4**  
**FOELLINGER THEATRE**  
**FOELLINGERTHEATRE.ORG**



FORT WAYNE  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION



**HONEYWELL**  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** January 27, 2026

**Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Announces New Performance**  
**Presented by Honeywell Arts & Entertainment**  
*Tickets go on sale Friday, January 30, at 10 a.m.*

Fort Wayne, Ind. – Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation adds a new show to its lineup at the Foellinger Theatre. Honeywell Arts & Entertainment presents UB40 on Sunday, October 4, 2026, at the Foellinger Theatre. Tickets go on sale Friday, January 30, at 10 a.m. and will be available online at [ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com) or in person at the Parks and Recreation Department, 705 East State Blvd.

**UB40: The Unstoppable Tour 2026 – Sun., October 4, at 6:00 p.m.**

UB40 is one of the most successful British groups of all time, having sold more than 100 million albums worldwide. Their global No. 1 hits include “Red Wine” and “(I Can’t Help) Falling in Love with You,” along with U.S. Top 10 favorites “Here I Am (Come and Take Me)” and “The Way You Do The Things You Do.” The reggae/pop legends continue to perform their iconic catalog alongside songs from their 45th-anniversary album, *UB45*.

**About the Foellinger Theatre**

The Foellinger Theatre in Franke Park was constructed in 1949 as a gift to the community from Helene Foellinger in memory of her father, Oscar G. Foellinger, former publisher of the Fort Wayne News Sentinel. The Theatre was designed to provide a unique type of entertainment space—an informal, open-air community gathering and performing area, molded into a grassy hillside in the park. For more information about the Foellinger Theatre, please visit [fortwayneparks.org](https://fortwayneparks.org).

**Media Contact:** April McCampbell | [april.mccampbell@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:april.mccampbell@cityoffortwayne.org) | (260) 427-6024

**About Honeywell Arts & Entertainment**

Honeywell Arts & Entertainment encompasses the full range of arts opportunities and venues of The Honeywell Foundation, a nonprofit public charity based in Wabash, Indiana. The organization is dedicated to providing arts, education, and entertainment for all through live entertainment, movies, arts education, cultural events, culinary experiences, Honeywell Arts Academy, and more. Offerings take place at eight venues, including the Honeywell Center, Honeywell House, Eagles Theatre, Charley Creek Inn, Charley Creek Gardens, Dr. James Ford Historic Home, Clarkson House, and 13-24 Drive In. Honeywell Arts & Entertainment partners with a network of venues throughout the region to further the reach of live entertainment programming. Honeywell Arts & Entertainment programs and activities are made possible by generous donors and in part by Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne; the Indiana Arts Commission, a state agency; and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. For more information about Honeywell Arts & Entertainment, please visit [honeywellarts.org](https://honeywellarts.org). **Media Contact:** Jessica Bott | [pr@honeywellarts.org](mailto:pr@honeywellarts.org) | (260) 274-1429

***Inclement Weather Procedure:*** Any program changes, facility closures or other weather-related adjustments will be posted to the FWPRD social media pages and website. If the Mayor declares an emergency, all Parks and Recreation facilities and programs will be closed or canceled.