FORT WAYNE PARKS AND RECREATION

Staff Reports - Submitted 10.8.2026

Steve McDaniel, Director

- The team and I had our quarterly meeting with the Inclusion Institute to discuss a variety of initiatives we are working on. This month's topics included construction projects, website improvements, and specialized mapping.
- I attended Redevelopment's North River Advisory Committee meeting to learn about the development planned for the North River area. Price Brothers gave an informative presentation on the plans for the area. It was high-level and included pedestrian and vehicular connections.
- I also attended the Community Foundation's Philanthropy in Action event hosted at the Pearl Street Arts Center. The staff of the Community Foundation presented their vision for the future and were able to celebrate two individuals in our community who have given back.
- The annual Blue-Ribbon Show was held at McMillen Park's Community Center. This event showcased so many wonderful plants for area elementary schools. It was great to see all the kids' hard work pay off.
- I walked in two Mayor's Neighborhood walks this past month. These were in Eastland Gardens and Memorial Park Neighborhoods. In both walks, we were able to hear from several citizens on issues addressing their neighborhoods. I will share that there wasn't really anything major regarding Parks and Recreation.
- I was asked to talk with a consulting firm that is doing work with the Zoo. I was able to share more information regarding our working relationship over the last several decades, and I believe I have given a good account of how we currently operate.
- Several of the staff were able to tour the new development located in the Schaab Riverfront adjacent to Phase 2. Parts of this are about to open to the public, and our tour was an opportunity to see how the two will blend.
- The Mayor held a press conference where she and Controller Roller announced the kickoff to next year's budget. I was able to attend and represent the department.
- I was the main presenter at this month's Building Contractor Association's Young Professionals group. The main focus for me was talking about Riverfront Phase 2 and how Riverfront development has impacted several other projects in proximity.
- I presented at the quarterly meeting of the Park Foundation. This meeting focused more on fundraising, grants, and sponsorships, and on seeking private funding for projects. It was a very good discussion and opened up to lots of questions from many of the board members.

- The team and I are working on a new grant from the Community Parks Initiative funded by Lilly Endowment Inc. This is being offered to parks and recreation agencies in Indiana. The overall grant is in two phases, and we are applying for the first phase towards planning. Keep your fingers crossed.

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, Athletic Fields & Courts, Aquatics (Bob Arnold/Northside Park Pools/McMillen Park Pools), Golf (Foster Park/McMillen Park/Shoaff Park), Outdoor Recreation, Campgrounds, Lindenwood, Hurshtown Reservoir, Special Events, Ice Skating, & Travel Service.

Salomon Farm Park

- The final Farmers' Market of the 2026 season was held Wednesday, September 2, featuring fresh produce, baked goods, honey, and artisan goods. The 2026 season drew 4,792 attendees, a 9% increase from 4,395 attendees in the 2025 season.
- Summit City Music Theatre's A Christmas Carol returns to Salomon Farm Park in the historic Old Barn. Performances will run December 4–13, 2026. Tickets are $30 for adults and $25 for seniors and students and are available through the Fort Wayne Parks website.

Sweet Breeze

- Similar to the high-water protocol exercised in August, Sweet Breeze operations were impacted by another significant rainfall event in September. Rain beginning Wednesday, September 16, caused river levels to rise from 8.36 feet to just over 16 feet, reaching levels not seen in several years. Operations completed two days of scheduled field trips before rescheduling the remaining trips. All public tours scheduled for September 19–20 were canceled, and field trips scheduled for September 21–25 were rescheduled for the following week.
- Two Sweet Breeze specialty tours were held in September. River Eco Trivia, hosted by Little River Wetlands, took place September 11 and sold 18 tickets. Wings on the Water, held in partnership with Three Rivers Birding Club on September 12, was sold out with 38 passengers. Operations will evaluate the River Eco Trivia program for potential continuation in 2027.

Johnny Appleseed Campground

- Johnny Appleseed Campground closed to campers on Sunday, September 13, in preparation for the Johnny Appleseed Festival held September 19–20. Despite significant rainfall, the festival proceeded as scheduled, resulting in muddy campground conditions. The campground reopened Thursday, September 24, with operations resuming despite the remaining wet conditions.

Riverfront

- Notable Events: Fitness on the Riverfront, Riverfront Film Nights, Blue Bash Fundraiser, Fort Wayne Community Schools Gear Up Family Rally, Labor Day Picnic, Northwestern Mutual Company Gathering

- Riverfront Fort Wayne entered the fall season with strong momentum following a busy and successful summer season. 18 rental reservations were hosted on the Riverfront—16 at Promenade Park and 2 at Headwaters Park—with a combined attendance of 2,384.
- Riverfront hosted 12 programs including Fitness on the Riverfront, Riverfront Film Night, Ecstatic Dance, and more. September programming focused on park activation, recreation and wellness, and family-friendly fun.
- Riverfront kicked off September with its first Riverfront Film Night of the season featuring "Jumanji". Held on the Friday of Labor Day weekend, the event provided the community with a fun, free way to enjoy the start of the holiday weekend. Approximately 290 individuals attended the movie on the Auer Lawn.
- Regularly scheduled fitness programs continued throughout the month with attendance remaining consistent compared to previous months. Riverfront Social Run Club continues to grow both online and in person, with an average of 23 runners each week and over 400 members on Strava.
- Movement along the Riverfront continued with Ecstatic Dance in partnership with In-Body Connection and Tulip Tree. The event brought approximately 60 attendees together at Promenade Park to enjoy an evening of free-form dancing. This event was free and open to all ages.

Community Outreach

- On August 29, 2026, the Supervisor of Community Outreach attended Taste of the Arts STEAM Park, providing a tie-dye coloring activity and information about Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation. Approximately 300 people were reached through the event.
- On September 18, 2026, Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation hosted a party at Reservoir Park. Youth Center representatives provided art activities and sold more than $250 in items, with proceeds returned to the Youth Centers. The event also featured live music, a food truck, and an outdoor movie, with approximately 150 people in attendance.

Weisser Park Youth Center

- 102 youth were registered in the After-School Program. The program recorded 1,017 youth attendances and served 660 Kids Café meals.
- Youth participated in a variety of recreational activities, including sports, games, tournaments, and obstacle courses. Creative activities included scratch art, decorative postcards, and painting canvases, with five youth creating artwork for the Youth Market held at Reservoir Park on September 18, 2026.
- Youth participated in tournaments and challenges, including team trivia, ping pong, air hockey, a 100-piece puzzle competition, and obstacle courses. These activities promoted teamwork, problem-solving, and healthy competition.
- Core programming included an Air Pressure Can Crusher STEM experiment, a social-emotional learning activity focused on identifying emotions, and a team trivia activity highlighting African American history and culture.
- Allen County Public Library facilitated a craft session in which youth created dinosaur terrariums. Erin's House for Grieving Children provided a session focused on understanding grief, negative decision-making, and positive coping strategies.
- Goree Hung Ga Academy facilitated a martial arts session focused on agility and strengthening exercises.

Jennings Recreation Center

- Jennings Recreation Center averaged 16 youth participants per day. Attendance increased with the connection to Fort Wayne Community Schools transportation, and staff continued outreach to families and community partners.
- Allen County Public Library provided a craft activity using recycled materials, including DVDs and CDs. Youth used the materials to create individual art projects.
- Erin's House continued providing activities that encouraged youth to explore emotions, life experiences, and positive coping strategies.
- Sankofa Sessions continued weekly with community Elders and members of the Jennings Council. Youth participated in activities focused on life skills, literacy, and knowledge of self.
- Jennings Recreation Center partnered with Weisser Park Youth Center and McMillen Park Community Center for a flag football game against the Boys & Girls Clubs of Fort Wayne. The event provided youth with an opportunity to participate in team sports and build connections with youth from other centers.

Community Center

- On September 17, Josh attended the Senior Information Fair. Josh serves on the board of directors representing Parks and Recreation. Between 800 and 900 participants attended the fair.
- Caleb hosted another Free Lego Build on September 17 with the support of Schmidt-N-Bricks. The ongoing partnership is strong, and staff will look to use them for summer camps.

Placer A.I.

- In August 2026, there were approximately 683,000 total visits to the parks system.
- The three highest-attended parks were Franke Park (142.5k), Kreager Park (67k), and Shoaff Park (60k).
- Parks not listed in the monthly Placer AI report due to proximity to sensitive locations include:
- Indian Village Park
- Klug Park
- Miner Playground
- Ronald G. Repka Memorial Park
- Study Park

Athletics

- Daryn Schwartz reported the annual Midwest Invitational Homeschool Soccer Tournament took place on Friday, September 18, and Saturday, September 19, 2026, at Kreager Park. The annual tournament brings in teams from around the Midwest.

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 September 30th, 2026:
  - Program Facility Coordinator – McMillen (Fund 121)
  - Park Person C – Facilities (Fund 121)
  - Manager – Program & Events Riverfront (Fund 121)
  - Fleet Mechanic – Golf (Fund 439)
  - Manager – Neighborhood Programs (Fund 439)
- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 339 employees (145 full-time and 194 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending September 19th and paid on September 25th.
- 44 total P-Card statements were processed for September for charges made at the end of July to almost the end of August.
- There was a total of 712 invoices processed during September from 9/1 to 9/30.
- Most of our seasonal staff have been separated. There are remaining seasonal staff for Foellinger Theatre, Sweet Breeze, and seasonal maintenance staff. Positions for the ice rink have also been posted.

Customer Service and Finance

- The Front Office staff have been working hard with the registrations from the Fall Fun Times and continue to provide great customer service.
- Several classes, programs, and Sweet Breeze tours had to be cancelled again in September due to the large amount of rain we received. The front office staff handled making calls to participants and answering questions. Joyce completed refunds or transfers as needed.
- Joyce has begun to train Maddie Gore in some Accounts Payable tasks. Maddie is working on this as time permits.
- Joyce has completed her goal of cleaning up the basement by submitting Notice of Destruction forms to have Parks and Recreation records destroyed. She followed the schedule for record retention from the Allen County Records Commission to stay in compliance with State and County regulations for the length of time records must be retained. 281 boxes of records were able to be sent for destruction. The basement was also organized so that each year it will be easier to find boxes that can be destroyed according to the record retention schedule.
- Rhonda and Jarin attended a Teams Meeting to learn about the National Weather Service's Event-Ready situational awareness tool. We will use this to monitor weather systems on days/nights of Foellinger Theatre concerts.
- Rhonda, Joyce, and Jarin attended Human Resources three-day training on Management Policies and Procedures to review policies such as anti-discrimination, anti-harassment, reasonable accommodation, attendance, leaves of absence, FMLA, documentation, discipline, and discharge.
- Rhonda attended Mayor Tucker's Quarterly Department Head meeting.
- Rhonda attended the 2027 Budget Press Conference.
- Rhonda attended the Park Foundation's quarterly meeting with Steve and Rob.
- Rhonda attended mandatory Stormwater Pollution Training.

- Rhonda attended NRPA in Philadelphia with eight other Fort Wayne Parks employees.

Foellinger Theatre:

September marked the return to active event operations at Foellinger Theatre, with three public performances presented across 17 days: Ninja Kidz Live on September 4, the Fort Wayne Area Community Band (rescheduled from July) on September 8, and Three Dog Night on September 20 (rescheduled from July). The schedule included a major family touring production and two events successfully returned to the calendar after weather-related postponements.

The month demonstrated the venue's ability to execute distinct event formats, coordinate extended production and staffing needs, and honor commitments to artists and audiences after earlier schedule disruptions while maintaining a safe, professional, and welcoming patron experience.

September Highlights Date	Event	Attendance	Paid / Distributed
September 4	Ninja Kidz Live	1,384 - 79% scan rate	1,352 / 1,755
September 8	Fort Wayne Area Community Band	538	FREE
September 20 (rescheduled from July 17)	Three Dog Night	1083 - 79% scan rate	1,297 / 1,377

Performance Highlights

Ninja Kidz Live – September 4 / Ticketed Family Touring Production

Attendance / Scan Rate: 79% Paid Tickets: 1,352 total distributed: 1,755 Bars & Concessions: $6,392.77 Merchandise Commissions: $3,261.15

Ninja Kidz Live required an extended day-of-show operation beginning with early-morning cleaning and hospitality, followed by production load-in, merchandise and lawn setup, talent and VIP activity, soundcheck, and coordinated front-of-house, box-office, security, concessions, and guest-services coverage. The event also incorporated local media and pre-show community partners. Net ticket sales totaled $73,433.60, with an additional $5,152.14 in ticket royalties and $3,261.15 in merchandise commissions. After $80,801.51 in total event expenses, the event generated $7,438.15 to split, resulting in a $3,719.07 Foellinger Theatre profit share plus bars and concessions expense reimbursement of $5,652.23.

Fort Wayne Area Community Band – September 8 | FREE Community Concert

Attendance: 538 Bars & concessions revenue: $938.84

The Fort Wayne Area Community Band performance was presented after the original July 14 concert was postponed due to extreme heat. Returning the free community concert to the calendar preserved an important local partnership and provided audiences another opportunity to experience accessible live music at Foellinger Theatre. This concert was the highest attended free community event of the 2026 season.

Three Dog Night – September 20 | Rescheduled Ticketed Concert

Attendance: 1,083 Paid tickets: 1,297 Total distributed: 1,377 Bars & concessions: $5,834.37 Merch Commissions: $270

Three Dog Night returned to the Foellinger Theatre calendar after the original July 17 performance was postponed because of poor air quality. The rescheduled concert resulted in 1,297 tickets sold and, despite cooler temperatures and rain throughout the day and evening, final attendance was 1,083.

- **Operations & Guest Experience**

  September required the venue to transition among large-scale family production, a free community concert, and a national touring concert. Department leads coordinated production, guest flow, security, hospitality, ticketing, concessions, lawn activation, and front-of-house coverage while applying procedures refined during the first half of the season.

  The pre-show community event for Ninja Kidz Live successfully activated the lawn as an extension of the guest experience. Demonstrations from local gymnastics and martial arts businesses, along with interactive activities provided by Fort Wayne Arcade Rental, encouraged families to arrive early, engage with community partners, and enjoy the venue before the performance. The activation created a lively, family-friendly atmosphere and demonstrated the lawn's potential as a flexible space for future pre-show programming and community partnerships.

- **Staffing & Leadership**

  Seasonal employees and department leaders supported three different event models within a compressed schedule. Coaching remained focused on safety, customer service, accountability, timely communication, physical-workload coordination, and adherence to assigned roles and reporting structures.

- **Facility & Technology**

  Routine maintenance, cleaning, grounds care, production support, and technology oversight continued throughout September. Three 800-watt balloon lights were added to the lawn area to improve visibility and safety for patrons and staff during evening events. Staff also began identifying post-season work needed after the final performance.

- **Season Closeout**

  Following Three Dog Night, attention shifted to the final scheduled event of the 2026 season, Ghostbusters in Concert on October 10, and to season closeout. UB40, previously scheduled for October 4, was officially canceled. Planning also continued for post-season facility work, staff evaluation, financial reconciliation, and the 2027 season.

Looking Ahead

October priorities will include executing Ghostbusters in Concert, completing the 2026 season closeout, reviewing departmental and financial performance, advancing post-season facility projects, and continuing development of the 2027 Foellinger Theatre season.

Steve Schuhmacher – Deputy Director of Park Maintenance,

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

Facilities Supervisor: Jesse Sayre

- Pavilion rentals totaled 234 for this month.
- Facilities workers pressure washed various points of interest, splash pads, and shelters including: Buckner Park Splashpad and Shelter, Brewer Park splash pad, Kreager Park splash pad. Franklin Park splashpad, Guldlin Park boat ramp and dock, Lakeside Park Restrooms, Lawton Skate Park, McCormick Park splashpad, pavilion patio and entry way, Packard Park shelter and playground, Rockhill pavilion #1, Shoaff Park splashpad, Swinney Park shelter, Kettler tennis courts, Foster pavilion #2, Foster playground #1 washed and disinfected,
- Paper product and soap dispensers at Brewer Park, Lakeside Park, Weisser Park, and Waynedale had to be replaced due to vandalism.
- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Bowser Park shelter, Lawton skate park, Kids Crossing restrooms, Packard Park shelter and playground, Brewer Park splashpad, Gren Park playground, and McCormick splashpad
- Facilities Staff logged 380 hours of litter removal in the month of September
- Following flooding at the Foster Park gardeners' workshop, Facilities Relief staff assisted by pressure washing the space.
- Park Person C Kathrine Cress filled the vacant Facilities Relief position, creating an opening on the Franke Park Route. Park Person C Malcom Jones moved from the Foster Park Route to the Franke Park Route. The Foster Park Route is currently unassigned, with plans to fill the vacancy.
- Facilities staff participated in Stormwater Pollution Prevention training at the Public Safety Academy
- Facilities Supervisor, Jesse Sayre, participated in a three-part policies and procedures training.

Maintenance Technician Supervisor: Mike Cremeans

- The kitchen in the pavilion at Memorial Park was updated. This included remodeling the countertop and cabinets, and a fresh coat of paint. The aging cooktop was replaced by a standard oven as well.
- The Johnny Appleseed festival took place on the 19th and 20th. Preparations for the festival took place the week prior, which included constructing stages, installing signs, and delivering tables, chairs, and straw bales. Tear down and clean-up took place on the week of the 21st.
- Decorations for this year's Halloween Haunt at the downtown community center were installed the week of the 28th.
- Freimann Square fountains will be shut down on October 1st. The Maintenance Technicians completed repairs on the winter covers and ensured they are ready to be installed once the pond is emptied.

- A new electrical pedestal for RV electricity was installed to replace one that had been damaged at the Johnny Appleseed Campground.
- Playground repairs continued as new inspections have been turned in.
- Repairs were made on the aging walls and doors of the Albert Jennings Youth Center. New basement doors were also ordered and will be installed by a contractor once they are assembled.
- Pre-season work has started on holiday light displays. This includes structural inspections for the framework, electrical connections and lighting, and cosmetic repairs as needed. Installation of these displays will take place in mid/late October.
- The entire maintenance tech team attended stormwater training, which took place at the Public Safety Academy.
- There were a total of **22** calls to on-call personnel this month. **7** of which were lock issues, and **15** were miscellaneous issues regarding patron concerns.

Maintenance Technician completed the following:

12: Alarm Maintenance, **13**: Building Maintenance, **13**: Carpentry, **42**: Electrical Repair
5: HVAC Maintenance, **2**: Key Core Maintenance, **3**: Light Maintenance,
9: Lock Maintenance, **7**: Paint, **11**: Playground Maintenance,
15: Plumbing Maintenance, **3**: Sign Maintenance, **5**: Vandalism

Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment: Rob Schenkel

- Crews service the Rivergreenway Trail weekly to keep it clean, safe, and usable for the public. Maintenance includes mowing, cutting trees and brush from the path, removing debris, and addressing damage caused by flooding.
- Botanical Conservatory, Foster Park, and Lakeside Park compost bins continue to be emptied as needed.
- The Grounds crews run trash collection routes seven days a week, ensuring all park receptacles are emptied regularly. This helps keep the parks clean, sanitary, and visually appealing for visitors.
- Mowing crews maintain the parks on a 7–10-day rotation, including mowing grass, string trimming around trees and fence lines, blowing off walkways, removing sticks and debris, and spraying weeds. These efforts help keep the parks clean, well-maintained, and welcoming visitors.
- Safety mulch (FIBAR) was added to Northside Park, Gren Park, and Johnny Appleseed Park playgrounds to improve safety and enhance their overall appearance.
- Crews assisted with setup and cleanup for the Johnny Appleseed Festival. Crews unloaded approximately 1,000 bales of straw, placed several loads of firewood at designated locations, filled and seeded holes as needed, and graded 90 tons of stone to construct a new road for improved accessibility to certain areas of the park. Following the festival, crews hauled nearly 24 tons of debris to the Lakeside Biosolids dumping area.
- Heavy Equipment crews excavated a water leak at Shoaff Park to provide access for the Maintenance Techs to make the necessary repairs.
- The soccer fields at Foster West Park were aerated, top-dressed, and overseeded to improve turf quality, appearance, and playability.

- Nicholas Roberts was hired as a new full-time Equipment Operator in the Grounds Department. He will be a great addition to our team.
- Robert Schenkel completed a 3-day Policies & Procedures Training.
- All employees in the Grounds and Heavy Equipment Departments completed their annual Stormwater Pollution Prevention training at the Public Safety Academy, along with their Harassment Prevention and Violence in the Workplace training completed on their office computers.

Main Trac Coordinator: Nicole Roth

- Main Trac Entries: 10,620 for the month.
- We have had 59, 311 calls this month.
- We reported there were 0 hours of volunteer hours.
- Attended a 3-day Policies & Procedures Training class.
- Busy entering timesheets and contracted/sales invoices.
- Running monthly reports for Recreation Staff.

Superintendent: Mike Gore

- Approving and recording invoices for various materials that are being used in our grounds, maintenance, and facilities departments.
- Overseeing a variety of issues on all sides of Maintenance, and working with contractors to ensure 2026 purchase orders are completed.
- Starting the MMR reports for IDEM at the spray parks for the 2026 season.

Operations and Support: Travis Roth Storeroom and Property:

- Staff assisted with supplies and signage for the annual Johnny Appleseed Festival.
- Old paperwork and documents were boxed up during a clean-up of the storeroom storage area. This paperwork dates to the 1970s and 1980s, and we have been working with Northside staff to determine a proper disposal method.
- Gasoline can storage cabinets were purchased for the Forestry barn and for the Rea Building.

Property Transactions:

19 RedMax Reciprocator	Scrapped	P210
Ford F250 Truck Beds (7)	Auction	P210
26 Stihl FS94 Spin Trimmers (2)	Added Into Inventory	P240
26 Stihl BG86 Blowers (2)	Added Into Inventory	P240
06 Ford F250	Decommissioned, still in Inventory	P250F
26 Stihl MS661 Chainsaw	Added Into Inventory	P260
Gasoline Storage Cabinets (2)	Added Into Inventory	P280
06 Honda Water Pump	Scrapped	R211
98 Billy Goat Lawn Vacuum	Scrapped	R610

2026 Vehicle and Equipment Purchase Update:

Forestry Bucket Truck	Chassis complete
Ford F250 Pickup	Delivered
Toro 5910 Mower	Delivered

Garage Operations Highlights:

- 192 work orders were scheduled this month, 23 of which were services.
- Stormwater inspections were performed at Lawton Maintenance, Northside Pool, McMillen Pool, McMillen Golf, Foster Golf, Shoaff Golf, the Rea property, Kreager Maintenance, Lakeside Garden shed, and Buckner Park. Some corrections have already been made, with others to follow when the official report is finished.
- The underground diesel fuel dispenser at Lawton lost power and stopped working. Gasoline Equipment determined that the wire in the underground conduit had gone bad. New wiring was run, and the pumps were brought back online. The keypad on the FuelLock computer at the Kreager fuel station developed an issue, and Maintenance Tech was able to replace the faulty keypad with a new one, which we keep in stock.
- 7 surplus Ford F250 truck beds were sold via an online auction. All of them were picked up by the buyers, resulting in over $3,500 being brought in to fund new equipment.
- Two trucks required replacement windshields during September. Both were the result of hairline cracks forming that threatened to keep spreading unless the window was replaced.
- A newer (2024) facilities pickup truck developed a leaking fuel tank, which required the tank to be removed to locate the cause of the fuel loss.
- A forestry bucket truck had a leaking rotating joint requiring a rebuild. The cost of rebuilding this swivel is much lower than replacing the part with a new piece. This work was performed by Hoff Mobile Bucket Truck Repair.
- Toro 7210 and 5910 deck tires were repaired and replaced to ensure that there is an ample supply of these tires on the shelf for replacements as we continue through the mowing season.
- New wireless magnetic trailer lights were purchased to be used on the Sweet Breeze trailer. This is extremely important when the trailer is moved without the boat and without a police escort. Garage mechanics will assist with removing the boat from the water on October 14th.
- A new vendor was sourced to handle the garage's used oil recycling and parts washer service. The previous vendor has had billing and customer service issues. The City's fleet department uses GFL and has been happy with the service, and the cost is lower than the previous vendor.
- A youth center van (178) became stuck in mud at the Cooper Youth Center, and mechanics were able to recover the vehicle in time for the next staff event, which required the use of that vehicle.
- Ford Transit van #179 was serviced and prepped for staff to use it to travel to Philadelphia for the 2026 NRPA convention.
- The Headwater's Zamboni was serviced and repaired in preparation for this year's ice-skating season. Grounds will move the ice machine downtown. The backup Zamboni will then be moved from the Rea building to the garage so some final repairs can be made to ensure there are 2 machines available all winter.
- Garage staff met with the golf course superintendent to discuss replacement for the Toro 1200 pull-behind mower decks currently used on all 3 courses. These models have not been robust enough to stand up to the daily use on a municipal course, so alternative mower decks are being explored.

Project Administration: Dave Weadock

- Botanical Conservatory Gallery Corridor Design – Planning is in progress; bidding is planned for late 2026.
- Botanical Conservatory Roof Glass Replacement – Installation is in progress; completion planned by mid-October.

- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Construction – Construction is scheduled to begin in early October.
- Botanical Conservatory South Linkway Design – Design work is complete.
- Buckner Park Stream Crossing – Planning is ongoing through the Landscape Division.
- Community Center Classroom Renovation – Planning is in progress.
- Community Center Front Desk Renovation – Planning is in progress.
- Community Center Exterior Façade Tuckpointing – Construction work is scheduled to begin in early October.
- Daryl B. Cobin Park Sidewalk Replacement – Construction is planned for October.
- Foster Park Golf Course Clubhouse Restrooms Design – A purchase order has been issued to the architect. Planning is in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Practice Facility Architectural Services – Site grading plan preparation is in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Practice Facility Permitting Services – Floodplain review is in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Practice Facility Topographic Survey – Utility coordination work is in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Trail Fence – Project is complete.
- Foster and Franke Parks Floodplain Projects – Planning is in progress.
- Gren Park Picnic Shelter – Construction is scheduled to begin in early October.
- Hamilton Park Trail Lighting – Contractor bidding is in progress.
- Johnny Appleseed Campground Paving Projects – Construction is in progress; completion is planned for early October.
- Johnny Appleseed Parnell Bridge Boardwalk Repairs – Project is complete.
- Kettler Park New Sidewalk to Tennis Courts – Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-October.
- Lakeside Park Lawton Monument Restoration – Planning is in progress; project oversight is being provided by the Landscape Division.
- Lawton Park Barn Exterior Renovation – Construction is scheduled to begin in early October.
- Lawton Park Barn Roof Replacement – Construction is scheduled to begin October 13.
- Lawton Park Pedestrian Bridge Structural Engineering Report – The engineering study is complete.
- McCulloch Park Monument Cleaning – Work is scheduled for late September 2026.
- McCulloch Park Sidewalks Replacement – Construction is scheduled to begin in mid-October.
- McMillen Park Basketball Courts Paving – Construction is scheduled to begin in late September.
- McMillen Park Community Center Front Entrance Paving – Project is complete.
- McMillen Park Community Center Shingle Roof Replacement – Project is complete.
- McMillen Park Golf Course Irrigation – Contractor bidding is complete. Work is scheduled to begin late October or early November.
- McMillen Park Pool Deck Construction – Construction is ongoing; completion is scheduled for late October.
- McMillen Park Pool Deck Engineering Design – Design is complete; the engineer will remain engaged in project through construction.
- McMillen Park Pool Slides Reconditioning – Work is in progress; completion is scheduled for mid-October.
- Multiple Park Locations Pavement Repairs and Striping – Work is complete.
- Multiple Park Locations Playground Communication Panels – Work is complete.
- Northside Park Pool Slides Reconditioning – Work is in progress; completion is scheduled for mid-October.

- Northside Park Trail Construction – Bidding is ongoing for the paving portion of the project; concrete sidewalk is scheduled for installation in late October.
- Packard Park Drainage Improvements – Project is complete.
- Psi-Ote Park Playground Equipment Replacement – Awaiting purchase order.
- Roosevelt Park Trail Lighting – Bidding is in progress.
- Salomon Farm Animal Barn Renovation – Siding replacement is complete; painting is in progress.
- Salomon Farm Barns Exterior Painting – Work is in progress.
- Shoaff Park Driving Range Drainage – Work is scheduled to begin in late October or early November.
- Various Parks Paving Projects 2026 – Project is complete.
- Various Parks Sidewalks Replacement – Headwaters Park sidewalks are complete; Swinney Homestead ramp and sidewalk construction is in progress.
- Various Parks Bench Pads – Concrete bench pads are scheduled for installation in October; bench installation is scheduled for mid-November.
- Waynedale Park Fitness Equipment Replacement – Awaiting purchase order.
- Weisser Park Youth Center Entrance Improvements – Work is scheduled to begin in early October.

Other work:

- Engage Fort Wayne – Preparing project and program content for Engage Fort Wayne.
- Parks Mobile Application – Updating GIS content for the Parks mobile application and data records.
- Project Cost Estimates – Preparing cost estimates for various Parks projects as requested.
- Playground Inspections and Work Orders – Conducting playground inspections and preparing work order requests as needed.
- Park Assessments – Completing assessments at various park locations.
- 2027 Capital Planning – Developing and evaluating projects for the 2027 budget.

Safety: Tony DeVido

- Parks & Rec. Safety Committee meeting was held on 9/29. 4 employees were present.
- 0 vehicle crashes were reported for this period.
- 2 employee injuries were reported during this time.
- 1 *CPR/FA* class was held. 4 employees were certified.
- I participated in the city-wide Safety Review Council meeting.
- The biennial AED inspections were completed.
- SDS book collection and digitization continue.
- Conducted 22 individual worksite inspections.
- 2 employees renewed their CDL physicals, and 1 completed his respirator physical.
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention training was done Department-wide.
- Annual Forklift training has begun.

Chad Shaw - Deputy Director, Botanical Conservatory Planning & Development, Forestry, Greenhouse, Landscape & Horticulture, and Riparian.

Botanical Conservatory Report – September 2026

September marked the beginning of a busy fall season at the Botanical Conservatory, with *Pueblo Garden: Styles of the Southwest* continuing in the Showcase House, Jeremy Stroup's *Touching Grass* continuing in the Gallery Hall, and *From Storybook to Showcase* remaining on display at the Allen County Public Library.

September also brought the return of Be a Tourist in Your Own Hometown, welcoming 1,840 visitors during the four-hour event in partnership with Visit Fort Wayne, as well as the Fall Plant Swap and the debut of Poetry in the Garden in the recently opened INcrEDIBLE Discovery Garden. Staff and volunteers also worked collaboratively to install the annual Pumpkin Path display, which opened September 29 with seasonal plantings, photo opportunities, and a new Seek and Find activity. Looking ahead, staff are preparing for Botanical Brew, the Fall Bonsai Show, Rocky Horror Picture Show & Fright Night Market, Garden Trick or Treat, and the transition into the *Silver Bells* holiday season.

Staffing efforts also progressed during September, with Megan Moriarty selected and cleared through Human Resources for the open Café Flora barista position. Megan will begin work on October 8, returning the café team to full staffing as the Botanical Conservatory enters the busy fall and holiday season.

Botanical Conservatory KPIs

September 2026 represented a strong month for the Botanical Conservatory, with attendance reaching 8,840 visitors, an increase of 1,341 guests or 17.88% compared to September 2025. While year-to-date attendance remains below the prior year, with 86,749 visitors representing a decrease of 6.54%, the September increase reflects positive momentum heading into the fall season.

Admissions revenue performed particularly well during the month, increasing 36.24% to $17,730.00. Membership revenue also saw significant growth, increasing 48.41% to $4,816.00. Year-to-date, admissions revenue remains 8.35% below 2025, while membership revenue has moved slightly ahead of the prior year by 1.17%.

Retail and event-related revenues produced mixed results. Conservatory Shop revenue totaled $15,349.38 for September, a decrease of 9.29% compared to the prior year; however, year-to-date Shop revenue remains 4.02% ahead of 2025. Rental and catering revenue increased 31.14% for the month to $9,032.50, though year-to-date rental revenue remains 11.59% below the same period last year. Café Flora contributed an additional $8,431.34 in September and has generated $99,508.81 year-to-date.

Overall, September total revenue reached $105,024.52, an increase of $54,282.03 or 106.98% compared to September 2025. Year-to-date total revenue now stands at $1,264,573.76, an increase of $139,286.02 or 12.38% over 2025. Despite year-to-date attendance and admissions revenue remaining below the prior year, the Botanical Conservatory continues to demonstrate strong overall financial performance through diversified revenue streams, including membership, retail, Café Flora, rentals, and other contributed and earned revenue.

Attendance

September 2025:	7,499 visitors
September 2026:	8,840 visitors

An increase of 1,341 visitors or +17.88% to 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Attendance:	92,824 visitors
2026 Attendance:	86,749 visitors

A decrease of 6,075 visitors or -6.54% to 2025

Admissions Revenue

September 2025:	$13,014.00
September 2026:	$17,730.00

An increase of $4,716.00 or +36.24% to 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Admissions Revenue:	$323,292.63
2026 Admissions Revenue:	$296,303.37

A decrease of $26,989.26 or -8.35% to 2025

Membership Revenue

September 2025:	$3,245.00
September 2026:	$4,816.00

An increase of $1,571.00 or +48.41% to 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Membership Revenue:	$73,993.00
2026 Membership Revenue:	$74,859.80

An increase of $866.80 or +1.17% to 2025

Conservatory Shop Revenue

September 2025:	$16,921.41
September 2026:	$15,349.38

A decrease of $1,572.03 or -9.29% to 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Gift Shop Revenue:	$231,953.45
2026 Gift Shop Revenue:	$241,267.17

An increase of $9,313.72 or +4.02% to 2025

Café Flora Revenue

September 2026:	$8,431.34
YTD 2026:	$99,508.81

Rental & Catering Fee Revenue

September 2025:	$6,887.50
September 2026:	$9,032.50

An increase of $2,145.00 or +31.14% to 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Rental Revenue:	$71,787.50
2026 Rental Revenue:	$63,468.00

A decrease of $8,319.50 or -11.59% to 2025

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

September 2025:	$10,674.58
September 2026:	$49,665.30

YTD Comparisons

2025 Other Revenue:	$424,261.16
2026 Other Revenue:	$489,166.61

Conservatory Total Revenue

September 2025:	$50,742.49
September 2026:	$105,024.52

An increase of $54,282.03 or +106.98% from 2025

YTD Comparisons

2025 Total Revenue:	$1,125,287.74
2026 Total Revenue:	$1,264,573.76

An increase of $139,286.02 or +12.38% from 2025

Botanical Conservatory Business Development

Staff submitted a grant proposal to the English Bonter Mitchell Foundation for $10,000 support of the 2027 Showcase Garden exhibits.

The Botanical Conservatory received support of $10,000 from PNC Charitable Trusts for the 2026 Silver Bells Exhibit and the 2027 Botanical Builders Exhibit in the Showcase Garden.

Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to Fort Wayne Metals, 103.9 Wayne FM, and 21Alive for the 2026 Garden-Trick-or-Treat special event. Provided information for the stations' promotional spots.

Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to HOT 107.9 and 96.3 XKE for the 2026 Rocky Horror Picture Show special event. Provided information for the station's promotional spots.

Complimentary tickets and fliers were distributed to PBS Fort Wayne and 103.9 Wayne FM and HOT 107.9 for the 2026 Silver Bells Showcase Garden Exhibit. Provided information for the stations' promotional spots.

Staff coordinated details with media and corporate sponsors for their participation at Botanical Brew, Garden Trick-or-Treat, and Rocky Horror Picture Show. (Possible media sponsor participation includes staffing a table, providing their banner, and/or serving as event co-hosts.)

Botanical Conservatory Public Programs

Events

Be A Tourist at the Botanical Conservatory (September 13)

As part of this favored downtown event hosted by Fort Wayne's Visitor Center, the Botanical Conservatory offered free admission during its Sunday hours of 12-4 pm. This year's event welcomed 1,840 tourists who were able to take advantage and enjoy a garden visit, equating to about 460 guests an hour. Attendance went down 32% from 2,526 tourists in 2025.

Poetry in the Garden (September 17)
Following the success of Back to Our Roots in the outdoor Prado Garden on Thursday $1 Nights, this new event presented local poets in the recently opened INcrEDIBLE Discovery Garden. Although it was a smaller gathering with 16 attendees, this smaller outdoor space was at nearly three-fourths capacity. Original poetry was presented by Judith Hadley, Tim Brown, and Debbie Allen, who were all arranged and introduced by Conservatory Volunteer Craig Nix.

Education
Fall Plant Swap (September 5)
This semiannual free program had 31 participants this fall, many arriving early in eager anticipation! It began with an abundance of plants thanks to contributions from Lawton Park Greenhouse and donations from volunteers and participants. Volunteer Denise Lock kicked things off with fun nature trivia and wrapped up the program with a giveaway. Feedback from the survey and participant conversations was overwhelmingly positive.

Botanical Wellness: T'ai Chi for Relaxation (September 22-October 27)
Liz Monnier is instructing 15 students in the Qigong form during this 6-week series on Tuesday evenings.

Botanical Wellness: Continuing T'ai Chi (September 29-October 27)
Sandy Gebhard is instructing 16 students to advance their skills with ongoing practice during this 5-week series on Tuesday mornings.

Grow it! School Plant Program
Grow it! celebrated its 100-year tradition this September! A total of 53 schools hosted their own plant shows in August and September, with approximately 145 judging slots coordinated and filled by Botanical Conservatory Volunteers. At the City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show on September 12th, there were 284 student entries, with young people participating from schools throughout Fort Wayne and surrounding communities. The public show welcomed over 400 guests, happy to help celebrate 100 years of horticulture education. This fun event wouldn't have been possible without the 29 volunteers whose hard work contributed to its success. Looking ahead to 2027, staff have already begun preparations for the next plant season and will be gathering online orders early next month.

Youth Field Trips
The Botanical Conservatory hosted 299 visitors for field trips this September, compared to 43 in 2025. Of these visitors, 89% chose to participate in additional educational programming, with staff-led labs being the most popular choice.

Exhibits & Displays

Pueblo Garden: Style of the Southwest (June 27-November 15)
This one-of-a-kind showcase exhibit has quickly become a top favorite of Conservatory guests. Inspired by the landscapes and gardening traditions of the American Southwest, Pueblo Garden: Styles of the Southwest celebrates the resourcefulness, beauty, and enduring influence of Pueblo-inspired design in a breathtaking seasonal display. The exhibit also features adobe-inspired structures and information on pueblo gardening techniques. This beautiful blend of heritage, artistry, and horticulture is at the Botanical Conservatory from summer through fall.

Jeremy Stroup: Touching Grass (June 27-November 15)
Jeremy Stroup's exhibition *Touching Grass* celebrates nature, memory, and the sensory experiences that connect us to the world around us. Developed through Stroup's daily art practice, the exhibition encourages viewers to step away from screens and reconnect with the textures, colors, and beauty of the outdoors.

From Storybook to Showcase (July 1-October 31)
Visitors to the main branch of the Allen County Public Library are invited to peek into the creative process of showcase development for the Botanical Conservatory. Four display cases feature original sketches, concept materials, and exhibit props from the recent immersive garden experience, *Fern's Fairylight Express* in partnership with author and illustrator, Talitha Shipman.

Pumpkin Path Display (September 29-October 25)
This annual display continues to grow as a popular seasonal attraction, bringing staff and volunteers together to create a festive fall experience that visitors love! Conservatory guests are invited to explore this outdoor display, which includes a variety of photo opportunities and a Seek and Find activity. It adds a welcoming seasonal experience to the Botanical Conservatory grounds and is expected to contribute to increased attendance throughout its run.

Volunteers/Staff
September was full of volunteer activities, including plant judging and student registration as part of the Grow it! School Plant Program. Three different volunteers helped greet guests during Be a Tourist in Your Hometown. A single volunteer helped during the Fall Plant Swap while another coordinated and introduced the poets during Poetry in the Garden. Volunteer and musician Teresa Long again performed acoustically on the third Saturday of the month. Easterseals volunteers continued their biweekly service. As for day-to-day operations, 7 volunteers filled 33 shifts at the Front Desk while 8 volunteers offered 36 shifts in the Gift Shop. The Gift Shop Plant Groomer maintained their weekly schedule while the Hort Support Team grew from 2 to 5 weekly volunteers!

When it came to preparing for fall events and displays, there were different groups who assisted in the outdoor gardens; this included 14 students from Concordia Lutheran High School and 4 students from CAS, Center for Academic Success. The same 4 CAS students returned to help install the Pumpkin Path Display and were joined by 40+ students from Anthis and 8 students from PFW. This year's installation was supported by MORE THAN 70 volunteers, including 13 from the Botanical Conservatory – a true day of community gathering and service.

Upcoming

Thru October 25: Pumpkin Path Display, public hours
Thru November 15: Pueblo Garden: Style of the Southwest, public hours
Thru November 15: Touching Grass: Art Display by Jeremy Stroup, public hours

October 2: Botanical Brew, 5-10 pm
October 3: Fall Bonsai Show, public hours
October 8: Dried Flower Mini Pumpkins, pre-registered
October 17: Rocky Horror Picture Show & Fright Night Market, doors open 7 pm
October 24: Garden Trick or Treat, 12-3 pm

November 11: Veterans Day in the Garden, public hours
November 15-20: Showchange Week
November 21-January 3: Silver Bells Holiday Exhibit, public hours
November 25: $1-Night of Lights at the Conservatory, 5-8 pm
November 26: CLOSED Thanksgiving Day
November 27-December 18: $1-Night Light Display, Thursdays & Fridays, 5-8 pm
November 27: Those 2 Guys in Suits & Ties Holiday Performance, 5:30-7:30 pm
November 28: Holly Shopping at the Conservatory, public hours

Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture

Botanical Conservatory staff have been diligently working on planting on the Terrace to add new plant material to further enhance the aesthetics of the space and add to the autumnal season and the Pumpkin Path display.

Horticulture staff have worked with volunteer groups throughout the month to continue to plant, weed, and prune throughout the gardens. In particular, the Botanical Conservatory had a volunteer group from Concordia and CAS which made a considerable positive impact on our preparations for Pumpkin Path and Botanical Brew.

Botanical Conservatory staff along with the assistance of Lawton gardeners and volunteers, worked together as a team to create this year's Pumpkin Path display. This year's display features stalwart mums, cabbage, kale, and grasses but also includes fun and unexpected plants such as celosia, peppers, and pumpkin on a stick—a species of eggplant reminiscent of small pumpkins.

Sycamore Tree Care removed the Southern Magnolia tree from the Showcase House. The Botanical Conservatory has two beautiful specimens in the Prado Garden and by eliminating the duplicate tree indoors, it will provide additional space to add even more new and interesting species of plants for guests to enjoy.

Ordered retaining wall block to install in Showcase House to create bed space for new plant material adjacent to the west Mediterranean Bed. The retaining wall block will also enable staff to create wells for the vents in Showcase to reduce the steepness of the slope on the south side inside the Showcase House.

Ordered all the perennial plant material and some of the herbs, annuals, and strawberries for next year's Mother's Day Plant Sale. Due to ordering early, the Botanical Conservatory was able to realize a savings discount from the vendor.

Botanical Conservatory is working with a local vendor, Vanroot, to grow the annuals for the outdoor beds next year. This will support a local grower while giving us the ability to pivot on plant pickup timing based on weather and soil conditions. Contract growing the annuals has freed up space in the Lawton Greenhouse for more production for the annual Mother's Day Plant Sale.

Botanical Conservatory Facility and Maintenance

Homeland Security completed the Botanical Conservatory's annual elevator inspection, and the facility's yearly operating permit was renewed.

Simplx Security also completed the annual Fire Alarm System inspection and full system test, with no deficiencies identified. The final inspection report was filed, and Simplx additionally repaired a security-system repeater, restoring the system to full operation.

O'Neil's Glass also began the 2026 phase of glazing replacements, working in coordination with project management and Botanical Conservatory staff.

Michael Bowman concluded his seasonal employment with the Botanical Conservatory to pursue other opportunities. Following his departure, staff determined that the seasonal maintenance position would not need to be refilled for the remainder of the year.

Maintenance staff worked collaboratively across departments throughout the month, supporting preparation and installation of the 2026 Pumpkin Path display as well as a variety of programs and events, including Grow It! Awards Show at the McMillen Center, weddings and private rentals, the Fall Plant Swap, and educational programming.

Botanical Conservatory Photos



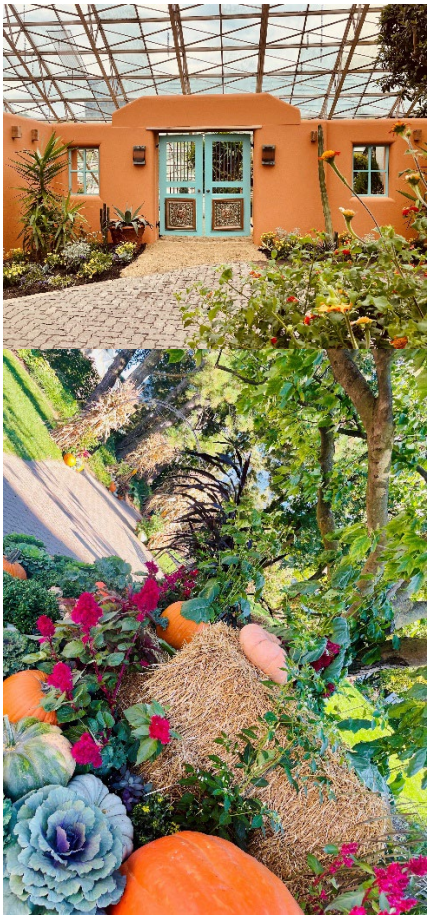
The INcrEDIBLE Discovery Garden as a lovely setting for Poetry in the Garden



Grow it! Merit Winner with Certificate and Keynote Speaker at the 2026 City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show



Grow it! Merit Winner of the Cut Flower Category at the 2026 City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show



A memorable entrance to Pueblo Garden: Styles of the SW

Beautiful scenery within this year's Pumpkin Path Display



Guests take advantage of a photo op as part of the Pumpkin Path Display



Volunteers with Easterseals pausing for a smile in the Tropical Garden



Volunteers receiving Grow it! Student Plant entries for the 2026 City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show



CAS Students finessing the Terrace Garden for fall events



Concordia Lutheran Students complete service work in the outdoor gardens



PFW Student Volunteers assisting with Pumpkin Path Installation

Planning Report – September 2026

Riverfront Phase IIB construction continues. The planting is near completion in the Esplanade and the final stretches of walk and trail are being prepared for installation. Staff continue to coordinate construction activities with adjacent developments at the old Schaab Metals building, More Brewing, relocated Depot, and the Eddy.

Staff met with the design team to review phasing plans for the Foster Park Entrance design.

Staff met with the design team to review conceptual plans for the Hanna Homestead Park Redevelopment project.

Staff is drafting construction documents for Wells Street Park improvements.

Staff met with the design team to review the final concept plan for the Conservatory's Exploration and Terrace Garden Design.

Staff met with the Inclusion Institute for a quarterly coordination meeting.

Staff led a tour of Promenade Park/Riverfront with a University of St. Francis biology class.

Staff attended the American Society of Landscape Architects annual conference in Los Angeles.

Horticulture and Landscape Report- September 2026

The School Children's Flower and Vegetable Association had its City-Wide Blue-Ribbon Show on Saturday, September 12. The Blue-Ribbon Show was a culmination of all the school shows held in August and September.

30 plants were sent to the Botanical Conservatory for the Fall Plant Swap, and 74 plants were sent to the gift shop.

We transplanted 300 plants for the upcoming Holiday Showcase "Silver Bells" and over 200 Cyclamen.

The Greenhouse provided 1,000 plants for the Botanical Conservatories Pumpkin Path Event that consisted of garden mums, flowering cabbages and kales, decorative grass, and so on.

30 volunteers worked 172.7 hours in the greenhouse.

We continued improving the community gardens by partnering with the Parks Main Office, Communications, and the Marketing Department. This partnership has allowed us to streamline our

registration process, improve communication with our community/gardeners, and enhance our online presence.

The Lakeside Park team focused on daily litter pickup; watering and weeding of all annual beds; weekly mowing and spin trimming; sidewalk edging; fountain maintenance, including vacuuming; pruning ornamental trees, landscape bed weeding, and herbicide treatments; rose bed maintenance that included pesticide treatments, specifically for Powdery Mildew and Black Spot this month, as well as rose pruning. Staff also spent time pruning the Yews, Barberry, and boxwood, picking up limbs following storm damage, and edging and mulching landscape beds. The annual flowers in the urns were removed and replaced with Mums this month.

The Foster Park team focused on daily litter pickup; weekly mowing of the Bridal Glen; regularly removing tree debris from the tennis courts; limb pickup after a storm event; began park leaf removal; watering/weeding/deadheading of all annual beds; fountain maintenance and cleaning; landscape bed weeding and both pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicide treatments; perennial bed cleanup; stump removal; and turf repair. Staff also spent time mulching landscape beds. Some annual beds that were blooming for the season were removed. Gardeners began putting mums and other fall décor in the park.

The Downtown Team focused on daily litter and trash removal in downtown parks; daily fountain maintenance in Freimann Square; weed management that included post-emergent herbicide treatments and/or hand weeding at the Arts United Japanese Garden, Community Center, Freimann, and Headwaters. Staff also made seasonal adjustments to irrigation systems. Staff spent most of the month on stump grinding, turf repairs, and landscape bed reductions in Headwaters Park. Time was also spent at Freimann on turf repairs and bed cleanup at Riverfront IIA. Some leaf cleanup was done in the south parking lot at Headwaters since the construction is wrapping up.

The City Team continued to mow Northside and Lawton office weekly. Post-emergent herbicide applications and general weeding/bed cleanups were made in Brewer, Camp Canine, Foellinger, Jennings Center, Lawton, McMillen, Packard, Shoaff, Swinney, and Tillman parks. Staff visited Foellinger Theatre for landscape cleanups before shows. They also cleaned up at Johnny Appleseed Park before the festival. Seasonal adjustments were made on all irrigation systems. Staff spent most of the month on stump grinding, turf repairs, and landscape bed reductions at Lions, Vesey Greenway, Northside, Franke, and McCulloch.

Landscape staff picked up pumpkins at Kurtz Farms and delivered them to the Botanical Conservatory prior to their Pumpkin Path setup.

Due to storm events, the Staff spent time at Bloomingdale, Franke, Freimann, Gren, Guldlin, Hamilton, Headwaters, Klug, Lawton, Lawton Place Blvd, Lions, Little Turtle, Northside, Old Fort, Shoaff, and Study, picking up downed limbs.

Pride Landcare, and MJK Total Lawn Care continued mowing all contracted maintenance areas.

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

Olympia Pools continued sweeping the Freimann Square fountain every other week per contract.

Aquatic Management continued to maintain the Thomas Property pond, spraying for algae and submerged weeds as per contract.

- **Riparian Management Report- September 2026**

  Removed 20 bags of litter as well as bikes, mattresses, barrels, tires, carts, push mowers, and tents from the rivers and riverbanks this month.

  Began opening the viewshed along Riverfront IIB riverbank. Completed the first half within the viewshed before being halted by a substantial flood event. Removed 4.97 tons of brush/trees within an approximate 22,000 ft^2 area.

  Removed 99.37 tons of logs from Main, Old Fort, Tecumseh, Hale, and Harrison bridges.

  Realigned Headwaters dock's gangway and transition plate after the last major flood caused it to pinch the transition plate under the gangway.

  Kept Promenade and Guldlin clean from silt after each flood event.

  Attended Stormwater Training at PSA.

  Attended HR Procedure Training at Promenade.

  Attended Forklift classroom training.

- **Forestry Report- September 2026**

  During September, forestry crews completed 108 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to accommodate the safe passage of pedestrians and vehicles, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.

  29 high-priority trees were removed by in-house crews this month. 10 of these were due to storm damage. One was due to vehicle damage. 3 trees were in parks.

  This month, crews responded to 62 storm-related fallen/hanging limbs. 5 were private trees blocking streets.

  Completed 2 inspections/appraisals of trees that had been damaged by vehicles. In total, these incidents resulted in $1,125.00 in city tree damage in September.

  Forestry staff responded to and resolved 118 (311) Call Center requests for service this month.

Kathryn Pargmann – Manager, Lead of Marketing

- www.RiverfrontFW.org had 7,991 hits to the site this month. We continue to use RiverfrontFW.org to promote upcoming events and share current Riverfront news.
- **Web Statistics: Active** Users: 25,057 **Event Counts:** 121,497

- The Marketing Team worked on various promotional pieces for Ghostbusters, including web promotions, social media promotions, billboards, PFW electronic signboard, YouTube campaign, Scavenger Hunt promotions, and more.
- Marketing Team working with Headwaters Team on marketing promotions for the opening of the Ice Rink in November.
- 27 graphic projects produced for the Department.
- Started on Winter Fun Times.
- Lined up training for InDesign Accessibility Compliance.
- Completed Botanical Sponsor brochure.
- Began work on Community Parks Initiative grant application plans.
- Confirmed media sponsors for Winter Fun Times.
- Completed updates to Youth Scholarship processes.
- Social media promotions for: World Rivers Day, Sweet Breeze specialty tours, Grow IT!, Ghostbusters, Great Tree Canopy Comeback, and more.
- Arranged for 10 media interviews with selected staff promoting September events.
- September Media Mentions: 47.

Social Media Totals for September:

FB Followers	117,918
FB Viewers	527,845
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	13,881
Instagram Followers	34,113

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

- An extended stretch of major precipitation shortly after Labor Day devastated the golf courses. All 3 courses were closed for a few days, and two facilities (Shoaff, McMillen) were available only for walking with no driving range, for almost a week. Foster was almost completely submerged, and the golf shop could not even be accessed for a number of days because the entrance road was flooded. Water DID NOT get into the golf shop or cart barn.
- This is reflected in the revenue numbers:

SEPTEMBER	FOSTER	MCMILLEN	SHOAFF

2025 REVENUE	44,140	50,036.75	80,603.00
2026 REVENUE	**29,043**	**36,095.50**	**54,347**
YTD 2025	363,460.50	312,722,75	571,296.75
YTD 2026	**295,252.25**	**327,051**	**533,513**

- Foster re-opened on October 2, but standing water greatly affected play areas on #4, # 5, 16, and #18. Fortunately, no greens were adversely affected. Hopefully, there will be enough decent weather left to try and get these areas headed in the right direction this year.

- Upon golf courses closing after Veterans Day, greens at all of the courses will be aerified, and we will be getting on a regular aerification/top dressing schedule to greatly improve turf health. Special emphasis will be put on the Mad Anthony's III course at McMillen, and an irrigation upgrade there will greatly improve a course that has suffered for the last 2-3 years.

- As we head into the last stretch of the season, we continue to look forward. A quote has been acquired to continue to modernize and upgrade the cart fleet. A restroom renovation/expansion at Foster Park is in the design phase. Survey work and permitting are in process for a Foster Park driving range. The golf course at Foster will reopen in 2027 in its traditional layout. Although this year has had more challenges than usual, the golf operation will finish strong and in good shape moving forward.

Dawn Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager

- We were successful in getting $1 million from the Allen County – Fort Wayne Capital Improvement Board for the Vann Family Crossing. Plus, we are working with the engineer and contractor to look at some cost savings for construction. We can cut at least $700,000. We meet with the County Commissioners on 10/1; the Redevelopment Commission on 10/19; and the NE Indiana Strategic Development Commission on 10/20 to try to reduce the remaining $1.6 million shortfall. We hope to start bridge construction no later than December.

- We had our final *Trek the Trails* ride on 9/29 with 63 participants. It was a nighttime ride on the Rivergreenway and Beckett's Run trails. We gave away two free bikes from one of the sponsors, Old Fort Bicycle. We also had our final *Tread the Trails* walk/run on 9/17.

- Dawn Ritchie will be presenting at the upcoming IPRA Conference in Fort Wayne on 11/6. She'll discuss electric devices in our parks and on our trails. A member of FWPD and Kent Castleman from Fort Wayne Trails will present with Dawn.

- We'll be planting 34 trees on the Pufferbelly Trail between Coliseum Boulevard and Ley Road with volunteers as part of the Great Tree Canopy Comeback on October 17th.

- We'll be hiring a consultant to design a pedestrian bridge for the 6-Mile Creek Trail crossing of the Trier Ditch on Tillman Road. We are designing the trail in-house. The trail and bridge will be constructed in 2028 or 2029.
- Our part-time seasonal worker, Brad Baumgartner, has one more month of work. He'll spend most of his time removing leaves from the trails.
- We'll be hiring an asphalt contractor to provide some asphalt work on the Pufferbelly this fall where tree roots are causing trip hazards.
- We recently finished crack sealing the Maumee Pathway.

National / State / Division News and Media Coverage:

Parks Recreation Magazine • October 2026

✓ Parks & Recreation Magazine (NRPA) – September 2026

- https://parksandrecmag.mydigitalpublication.com/september-2026/cover1

✓ Fort Wayne magazine September 2026 | FortWayne.com
✓ Crossroads - Fort Wayne | Crossroads | wdrb.com

Around FW, City seeking trail volunteer of the year award nominations
https://aroundfortwayne.com/news/2026/10/05/city-seeking-trail-volunteer-of-the-year-award-nominations-2/

Around FW, FWACC cat adoption event
https://aroundfortwayne.com/news/2026/10/05/fwacc-4-feline-adoption-fees-for-pick-meowt-october-promotion/

WANE, Confidence and concern grow over Allen County Fire and EMS District budget
https://www.wane.com/top-stories/confidence-and-concern-grow-over-allen-county-fire-and-ems-district-budget/

FW Bus Weekly, Bush tells Rotarians consolidated fire district is blazing a trail
https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/government/article_2f69ee6f-ff18-4857-95d0-32b5c62d6882.html

WPTA, FWACC cat adoption event
https://www.21alivenews.com/video/2026/10/05/pick-meowt-fwacc-offering-4-cat-adoptions/

WPTA, Citilink leader, reflects on 5-year tenure and what's next for Fort Wayne transit

https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/10/05/citilink-leader-reflects-5-year-tenure-whats-next-fort-wayne-transit/

WOWO, Commissioner's Corner – Data center moratoriums
https://wowo.com/commissioners-corner-data-center-moratoriums/

WPTA, Annual firefighter memorial commemorates fallen firefighters
https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/10/03/annual-firefighter-memorial-commemorates-fallen-firefighters/

WPTA, Walk in the Park – Active Aging Week
https://www.21alivenews.com/2026/10/03/walk-park-active-aging-week/

City's Megan Grable featured on a recent podcast
Reducing Crime Through Environmental Design With Megan Grable

Fort Wayne Magazine, Mayor Tucker and Sarah Lance featured
http://thedesignhornet.com/books/Fort-Wayne-Monthly-October-2026/

WOWO, City seeking nominations for 2026 trail volunteer of the year
https://wowo.com/city-seeking-nominations-for-2026-trail-volunteer-of-the-year/

City TV, Broadway/Taylor project public meeting
https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=vbXznr9YvHAbsdRQ

WPTA, Fort Wayne Rescue Mission expands their services
https://www.21alivenews.com/video/2026/10/01/fort-wayne-rescue-mission-expands-their-services/

WANE, Bridge of Grace building affordable housing triplexes in southeast Fort Wayne
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