

NEWSRELEASE **ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT** MAKING MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME

From: Rockford Park District
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Roy Gayle Park Receives IDNR State Grant for Development

ROCKFORD IL – The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) announced today that the Rockford Park District's matching grant application for the further development of Roy Gayle Baseball Complex was awarded the full amount requested, \$357,000.

The property was purchased in 2006 with assistance from the IDNR and an Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant, and currently contains eight youth baseball fields. The Roy Gayle Baseball Complex has been programmed by an all-volunteer organization, Rockford Pony Baseball/Softball, for about 45 years. The organization has raised the local match funds from private sources necessary for the state matching grant award.

Tim Dimke, Executive Director of the Rockford Park District, commented on the announcement of the grant award saying, "This is great news for the ball players, citizens, and taxpayers of the Rockford and Winnebago park districts, because the funds leveraged for the grant were raised privately by the Rockford Pony baseball organization for needed improvements at the park. We were able to assist them by writing and submitting the grant, and now there will be major development at a key recreation site in southwest Rockford made possible by private donations and a state grant."

Park improvements planned for Roy Gayle Sports Complex include a multi-purpose field, gravel perimeter path and a woodland path through a natural area, an access road and more parking areas, utility services, improvements to existing ball diamonds, and additions to the playground that was installed last summer. Construction is anticipated to begin during the summer of 2010, and completed in 2011.

More than 1,400 children, ages 5 to 17, play baseball each summer at Roy Gayle Park. The improvements at the park will offer Winnebago and Rockford Park District residents and baseball league participants a community shelter, playground, and walking paths. The multi-purpose field offers opportunities for the Park District or partner agencies to offer field programs at this site.

For more information, please contact: **Ken Held**, Treasurer, Rockford Pony Baseball/Softball organization, 815-222-7254 (cell)

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ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT

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