

100 NEWS RELEASE

From: Rockford Park District

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Park Space and Recreation are Essential to the Quality of Life In the Rockford Park District

ROCKFORD, IL – Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners received a report quantifying results of District performance during the past year that meets their Global Priority Result “Park space and recreation are essential to the quality of life in the Rockford Park District, resulting in a high return on investment of available resources.”

According to Tim Dimke, Executive Director, who has provided the Commissioners with 24 monitoring reports of proof of performance since January, 2009, “It is my reasonable interpretation that successful achievement of the Board’s Priority Results as previously reported constitutes successful achievement of the Global Priority Result. This report demonstrates that District citizens perceive they are receiving a good return for their investment of taxes, participation fees, and also that they are able to contribute through volunteering their time and talents, partnering through sponsorship, and giving through donations.”

He illustrated several major highlights that demonstrate the citizens of the Rockford Park District do use and value the District’s services, and quantified through many examples that the District is giving a high return on investment through leveraging the resources it receives from its citizens to provide those services, and to acquire and develop land through a variety of alternative funding sources.

The past year has been particularly growth and development-oriented, considering the relative stagnancy of the past several years:

- The Riverside Blvd./I-90/Highway Five project is completed, providing much greater access to Sportscore Two
- Kaye Anderson Park was dedicated this spring
- Elliot Park expansion and development was completed this summer
- Loves Park Playground and Olson Park will soon be developed with the help of IDNR grant funds
- Puri Park was donated to the District and will open next spring

Further, the District has several new projects now under construction following several years of successful private fundraising campaigns:

- Burpee Museum
- Discovery Center Museum
- Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens
- Midway Village Museum

(more)



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Global Priority Results

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Dimke concluded, "In the last few years, almost \$30 million in new construction projects are in process or will be shortly, of which \$28 million is leveraged with just \$2 million of Park District public funds, a good return on taxpayer's investment. The District is moving forward with cautious optimism; we're setting realistic fee revenue goals tempered with ongoing financial restraint as our community continues to struggle with economic concerns. It is the role of the Rockford Park District to provide a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities to people so that they may enjoy life, regardless of their circumstances. We are here for citizens in good times, but especially in difficult times because people use their public parks and recreation facilities even more. We're committed to living within the resources we are given, and to give our taxpayers a good return on their investment."

Highlights of the report:

- Resident registration in District and partner programs is 77% compared to 74% in 2008, which demonstrates that more residents are participating and taking advantage of the programs and services offered as a result of their tax investment.
- The Therapeutic Recreation area showed the greatest growth in participation in 2009 with total registrations up 14.5% from 2008, a direct result of the increased number of families learning about District services because of increased outreach programs coupled with the reduction in state-funded programs having been reduced or eliminated due to state budget cuts.
- Registration for Ice Facilities programs year to date shows 4,769 figure skating and hockey registrations compared to 4,332 in 2008; a 10% increase
- Total participation at Ice Facilities is 270,194 compared to 243,561 in 2008, an 11% increase
- The greatest growth in participation occurred in Adult and Youth Open Hockey with an additional 1,221 participants, a 51% increase
- Group golf lesson participation increased 36% from 2008; adult lesson participation increased 41%, and youth lessons increased 34%. Golf Services staff attribute these increases to the following: getting the information in the hands of prospects earlier so people could plan their entire summer out and sign up for multiple sessions; the new guide book format and TV spots helped to reach more new people; and the times classes were offered were improved with more classes added in areas that had traditionally filled up. These improvements occurred as a direct result of customer feedback from lesson evaluations taken in the 2008 season.

The entire report (14 pages) can be accessed at <http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org/reports>

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