

100 NEWS RELEASE

From: Rockford Park District – Executive Director's Team

For Immediate Release: March 23, 2009

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Rockford Park District Celebrates 100th Anniversary

ROCKFORD IL – The Rockford Park District will be 100 years old on March 27, 2009, and a year-long celebration is planned for the entire community to enjoy.

A series of special events is being held to celebrate this remarkable occasion, including the city's largest egg hunt, an old-fashioned golf outing with period clothing and hickory stick clubs, an X-treme action sports competition (representing the future of recreation), a special Music in the Park concert, a family fish fest, and much more.

The "official" 100th Anniversary Celebration will be Friday, March 27, at 7:00 p.m. with an original theatrical and musical production as well as a recognition program and reception at Rockford College.

According to Karen Weis, Chairman of the 100th Anniversary Steering Committee, "Members of the arts community approached the committee over a year ago and proposed creating an original production as a way of saying thanks for all the Park District has meant to them over the years. The show is called 'Building A Dream, A Century of the Rockford Park District' and was written by Jessica MacDonald and Rufus Cadigan. I can't give away the whole show, but founding Park Commissioner Levin Faust is played by Barry Nyquist, and Webbs Norman is paired with Rod MacDonald in a comic relief role. There are many well-known local actors and singers taking part in the production, and everyone is volunteering their time and talents. We are very grateful for their extraordinary commitment. Rockford College is a highly valued partner of the Park District's, and they are providing Maddox Theatre and Clark Arts Center at no fee. The production is partially supported by a grant from the Rockford Area Arts Council."

There is no charge for attending the show, but tickets are required due to limited seating in the Maddox Theatre. People may call the Director's office at 815-987-8851 to reserve seats.

continued



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Immediately following the 50-minute production, a brief recognition program will celebrate Rockford Park District partners and supporters, including sponsor recognition of the year-long celebration. Several citizens will share their personal experiences about what the Park District parks and services have meant to them over the past 100 years.

Weis continued, "Following the program, people are invited to stay for a reception at the Clark Arts Center. We'll have an area set up with old-time playground games like knock-hockey and marbles, there will be live music, and anniversary cake with coffee or lemonade. The Rockford Park District Foundation Board of Directors generously supported the refreshments at the reception with private funds."

The 100th Anniversary Celebration continues throughout 2009 with events and activities involving almost every program and service of the Rockford Park District. Special graphics depicting many areas of service, both active and passive, have been created for use during this special year, designed by Jeff Larson of The Larson Group.

To commemorate 100 years of service to citizens, the new Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens will form the cornerstone and centerpiece of the Centennial Celebration in Sinnissippi Park, the District's first park purchased. A groundbreaking celebration is being planned, with construction expected to get underway this summer.

The Park District is also looking into the acquisition of a public art sculpture as a gift to the community to commemorate the 100th anniversary year.

Retired Executive Director and current Historian, Webbs Norman, is writing a perspective on the 100-year history of the Rockford Park District that will be available for purchase in June, and a special hand painted tree ornament featuring the Sinnissippi Lagoon is available now for purchase.

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The official 100th Anniversary events and elements include:

- The City's Largest Egg Hunt, with 50,000 eggs, Saturday, April 11th at 11:00 a.m. at Anna Page Park. For ages 0-8. Free. Rain site is Kennedy Middle School.
- Turn Back the Clock and play golf like it was made to be played, with hickory sticks and old time balls, and vintage golf attire available for rent. Two shotgun starts are offered for this unique "antique" golf outing at Sinnissippi on Friday, May 1. (For adults 18 and older). Fee to be determined, limited to 144 golfers. Call 815-987-1602 for information or to make foursome reservations.
- "Camp Rockford" Spring Ice Show at Riverview Ice House celebrates 100 years with a cast of hundreds skating their way through a celebration of the Rockford Park District's park and recreation offerings. This fast-paced ice show features special guest skater two-time National Champion, World Bronze Medalist, and Olympic competitor Evan Lysacek. Performances are 7:00 p.m. Friday, May 8; 2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Saturday, May 9, and 2:00 p.m. Sunday, May 10 (Mother's Day). Admission fee: \$12-15
- This spring, look for special flower and landscape plantings throughout the community in orange and yellow, plus a special planting in the floral clock in Sinnissippi Park, and a Centennial tree program.
- Celebrate the grand opening of the new Typhoon Terror thrill ride at Magic Waters, Saturday, May 23. On Wednesday, June 24, Magic Waters will host a special celebration for the Park District's 100th anniversary.
- Music in the Park special 100th anniversary concert, Tuesday, June 23, with the Rockford Concert Band featuring musical selections from the past century with a history narrative throughout the program. Free admission; presented as part of the 2009 Music in the Park series.
- Fish Fest for all ages at Levings Lake, Saturday, July 11, 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will conduct an Urban Fishing Clinic from 10 a.m. to noon with different stations to teach safety and casting. IDNR will also stock Levings with tagged catfish for prizes (catch and release) from 12:30 until 2:00 p.m. Loaner gear for up to 200 people. Free, for all ages.



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- X-Treme Sports Action – youth competitions at Harlem SkateWorks Park and the new Flodin Boys & Girls Club Skate Park; finalists compete on Saturday. Exhibitions and free clinics with professional individuals and teams. For inline, BMX and skateboarding, August 3-8. Free to participate, waivers required. Presented by FatWallet.com.
- Camp Grant Day at Atwood Park. “Report to Duty” to Camp Grant, once the largest military base in the Midwest. Tour the historic sites and visit with re-enactors camped in Atwood Park. Saturday, September 12. Free admission; fees charged for some activities

Karen Weis concluded, “The Steering Committee has been planning this anniversary year for well over two years, and we are very excited that March is finally here. We hope all citizens will join the Rockford Park District in celebrating 100 years of parks, play, and fun.”

For details on dates, times, and more information on 100th anniversary events and activities, please visit <http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org/100years>

100th Anniversary Sponsors:

Culver's
First Northern Credit Union
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100th Anniversary Steering Committee:

Karen Weis, Chair (note: Jan Lockwood provided leadership 2007-2008)
Laura Pigatti Williamson, Rockford Park District Commissioner
Helen Hill, Rockford Park District Foundation Board
Lisa Hodges
Sue Howard
Nancy Kauzlarich
Jessica MacDonald, Midway Village Museum
Sara Saunders
Jay Sandine
Angie Upton

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