

100 ONE NEWS RELEASE

From: Rockford Park District - Foundation
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Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens Meets Fundraising Goal: Construction Project Funded by Donations & Grants

Rockford, IL –The Rockford Park District Foundation announced today at a press conference that the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens Public Campaign Project has met its \$9.1 million Phase I fundraising goal. Over 900 donors participated in the campaign, which capped a five-year fundraising effort.

“With the Nicholas family coming forward in March 2006 as the lead donor for the project, we were off to an outstanding start on our fundraising efforts with over 900 donors contributing to this project. The unveiling of our Conservatory plans shortly thereafter resulted in new donors enthusiastically supporting the project with major gifts, naming rights, and the sale of engraved walkway bricks,” said Rockford Park District Executive Director Tim Dimke.

Fundraising Committee co-chairs Kent Mallquist and Webbs Norman said they – along with their entire 10-member fundraising committee -- were excited to meet their fundraising goal and timeline. “We are thrilled that we have met our Phase I campaign goal and can begin moving forward on a summer groundbreaking. This is wonderful news for the Foundation and our community,” said Mallquist.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

In early 2004, the Rockford Park District Board of Commissioners selected Sinnissippi Park as the site for a centerpiece project for the District’s 100-year anniversary celebration. Sinnissippi Park was the first land purchased by the newly-formed Rockford Park District in 1909.

In March 2006, the Nicholas family announced their donation of \$2,150,000 toward the conservatory project in honor of their parents, William and Ruby Nicholas. The gift was donated by Bill, Dan, and Ab Nicholas who envisioned the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens as a gathering place for our community and a catalyst for future riverfront development. William and Ruby Nicholas met, married, and raised their family in Rockford. Like many families growing up in Rockford in the 1940s and 1950s, the three Nicholas brothers spent much of their time outdoors enjoying Sinnissippi Park and the Rock River. They were all born in Rockford, grew up on Hancock Street, and graduated from West High School.

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PROJECT SCOPE HIGHLIGHTS

Phase I of the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens Project will include construction of the Conservatory and several site improvements.

Total Project Cost: \$11,200,000
Phase I Project Cost: \$9,100,000
Future Phases: \$2,100,000

Size: Entire Building - 21,000 square feet (approximate)
The Conservatory - 10,800 square feet; 52 feet tall

Project Timeline: Proposed Date for Groundbreaking: July 2009
Proposed Date Open to the Public: December 2010

PHASE I: CONSERVATORY and BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

Conservatory and Site Development

Phase I includes construction of the Conservatory and site development such as some landscaping, benches, parking lot, and parking lot lighting. This includes trees, shrubs, flowers, aquatic plants, streams, a waterfall, stone walls, an infinity pool (inside and outside), Koi, educational exhibits, glass art totems, additional sculptures, a children's education and play area, and various seating areas and benches.

In addition, Phase I of the Conservatory Project also features a spacious lobby area for displays and exhibits, a catering kitchen, classroom and workroom space, a sizeable meeting room with an outdoor courtyard, a historical mural, the growing greenhouse, and limited permanent exhibits. The entry circle to the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens will also be completed in this phase, along with the path connections to the Lagoon featuring plantings, waterfalls, and a stream.

The Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens will be pursuing "LEED" silver certification. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ encourages and accelerates global adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of universally understood and accepted tools and performance criteria.

Summary of Amenities

- Indoor and Outdoor Gardens Open to the Public (year round)
- Growing Greenhouse
- Meeting Room and Classroom Space (available for rent)
- Location for Small Weddings, Receptions, and Catered Events
- Children's Educational and Play Area
- Gift Shop
- Sculptures
- Catering Kitchen
- Outdoor Terrace

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Future Phases: Include water gardens, additional landscaping, and additional exterior amenities; future phases will be completed as funds become available.

AMENITIES & PROGRAMS

Upon its completion in December 2010, The Nicholas Conservatory will be the third-largest in Illinois and will feature changing floral exhibits and a year-round exhibition of tropical trees, plants, and flowers. The lobby area will be available to rent for private receptions, meetings, weddings, and other catered events for groups up to 150. A private meeting room will also be used to hold educational seminars, not-for-profit organizations' meetings, and various group gatherings. The goal is for the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens to be a "green" LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) building and site - a leading example for our community. Special efforts will be made to incorporate recycled materials throughout the building and grounds. In addition, educational seminars and programs will be offered, including: designing, building and operating "green buildings," recycling, gardening, and special programs on community beautification. The Conservatory will also be made available for local and regional school field trips.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Contact the Rockford Park District Foundation for giving opportunities, including "Buy a Brick" and other ways to contribute to the project. There are still significant donor opportunities available for future phases. Phone: 815-987-1630, e-mail elaineharrington@rockfordparkdistrict.org or visit www.rockfordparkdistrict.org/foundation.

For more information contact Rockford Park District Foundation Executive Director, Elaine Harrington at 815-987-1670.

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