

## 2014 Park and Recreation Activity Summary

### KPI's for 2014:

- Program attendance at all park facilities 921,021
- 3,013 program surveys resulted in an overall rating of 4.74 out of 5.
- Annual volunteer program produced 12,892 hours valued at \$238,472. Does not include the zoo.
- Park's website had 130,005 users and 622,758 page views in 2014
- Staff training for all Park's staff in 2014 was 4,128 hours
- 568 graffiti sites cleaned
- 8,817 acres mowed in city parks
- Central mowing crews mowed 6,682 public/ private owned properties
- 252.2 tons of trash hauled from city parks
- 1,238 truckloads of snow hauled from streets and parks
- 3355 feet of asphalt cracking repairs on city parks basketball and tennis courts
- Trimmed 2,100 trees
- Removed 810 trees
- Planted 125 trees

### Good government:

-2014 Parks Five Year Master Plan- The six month process included 24 public meetings held throughout all six council districts. The public meetings provided a good exchange of information that has provided a good insight as to the priorities of the residents of South Bend. We also conducted three surveys that resulted in over 800 responses. Survey priorities mirrored the public meeting discussions. The top five priorities listed 1. Maintain and Repair Existing Parks and Facilities, 2. Maintain all Parks and Recreation Programming, 3. Improve/ Upgrade Parks and Facilities, 4. Create Safe Parks, and 5. Improve Park Connectivity and Trails. The 177 page document goes into great detail describing the results of the public meetings, the statistically valid surveys, program trending, demographics, deferred maintenance results and recommended capital improvements totally \$35,000,000. You can also find this document on the South Bend Parks and Recreation's website.

-Zoo Transition- The Potawatomi Zoo transition has ran smoothly to date. The Potawatomi Zoological Society has negotiated a work group agreement with the Teamsters and by all accounts moving successfully ahead with all zoo operations. The Zoo was also successful with obtaining their five year AZA Accreditation from the American Zoo's and Aquarium Association.

-Schools/ AYI- We are proposing current Active Youth Initiative "AYI" strategies with the local schools by encouraging the school principals and nurses to participate and generate student interest in the Passport to Play, Prescription to Play, Let's Move, and other Parks Department After School Programs. This initiative continues to be a powerful partnership of interested stakeholders in childhood development and community involvement. The Park's AYI program serves as a partner organization with the St. Joseph County Health Departments efforts in reducing childhood obesity and improving the overall health of those who are considered most at risk.

-IT Improvements- We are currently in the process of setting up a new Facility Management Software Programs for all parks and facilities within the Department. We are designing a program that will use the current Navoline system in place. This will allow us to link into the system that aligns payroll, purchasing, and accounts payables with the maintenance work orders and preventative maintenance programs.

-Youth Mentoring- This past summer a new expansion of the current Made Men Program at Martin Luther King Center was established. We hired two FT employees who work specifically with young teens teaching and demonstrating appropriate and long term sustainable life skills. Made Men participation is typically young teenage males who are looking for positive role models in their lives. This has been an extremely successful program throughout the year and demonstrated many positive outcomes. We are seeing increases in the number of children participating as the program continues to grow. In addition to the Made Men Program a youth Job Corp Program was funded and implemented this summer. The Park Department hired approximately 25 youth to work in the areas of maintenance and programming predominately at MLK and the CBC. They also did an outstanding job assisting with the storm damage we had at several parks around the city this past summer.

-Special Events- We hosted four large events over the past few months. Introduced Country Fest at the Four Winds Field with about 3000 in attendance on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June. In August we hosted the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Amateur Softball Associations National Fast Pitch Championships at the Belleville Softball Complex and the St. Joseph Metro Golf Tournament at Elbel and Erskine Golf Courses. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September we celebrated the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Rum Village Nature Center and followed that with the Fall Family Fun Fair at Rum Village Park with approximately 3000 in attendance.

-Customer Service- Our Customer Service Index rating of recreation programs based on 3013 surveys conducted in 2014 is 4.74 out of five. The staff continues to do a great job with the public providing information, programming, and overall services. The Park Website had 130,005 users and 622,758 page views by the end of 2014. We are continually building a better product that is our website and we have been very aggressive with our postings on social media promoting as many Park events and programs as possible.

#### 2015 Initiatives:

- Implementing Park Bond resources to address facilities and deferred maintenance concerns throughout the parks system.
- Maintaining our CAPRA Accreditation with the National Recreation and Parks Association.
- Activating a new facility software program within the park's maintenance division.
- Develop a more complete strategic plan to address tree lawn concerns.
- Continue building partnerships and expanding community outreach.
- Continue focusing on priority programs and facilities.
- Successfully hosting the 2015 International Softball Congress World Championship Tournament at the Belleville Softball Complex

## South Bend Parks and Recreation Department 2014 Annual Report

Our Mission: "We Build Community through People, Parks, and Programs"

As the City of South Bend plans to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015, the City Parks and Recreation Department is preparing Howard Park, which happens to be the City's oldest park at 119 years, to serve as one of the host sites for the upcoming "City 150" celebration occurring this spring during the Memorial Day Holiday weekend.

Our local Parks system continues a long tradition of playing a key role throughout the community with its facilities and programs. While providing a wide array of quality programming and activities for our local residents, there are few to no restrictions for those who want to take advantage of the opportunities that await in our 57 city parks. Recognizing we have a responsibility to provide numerous leisure activities throughout our community and to further be inclusive to all who desire to use our parks, we offer a wide variety of programs and facilities that serve our mission well. The Parks Department provides three recreation centers, two pools, three golf courses, a municipal zoo, a conservatory, the East Race Waterway, a Nature Center, and numerous other facilities and parks including the very scenic and accessible eleven mile trail system along South Bend's greatest treasure, the St. Joseph River. There are also numerous additional bike and walking trails scattered throughout the city that help connect local residents to various leisure sites within our community.

A major component of any Parks agency should always be providing active and available open green space which is critical to the overall well-being of a community's health and vitality. Open play areas provided by the Parks and Recreation Department provides the young and old an opportunity to enjoy leisure activities in neighborhood parks throughout the City. Access to clean and safe open green space for our citizens to enjoy healthy outdoor activities will always be of the highest priority for the Parks and Recreation Department.

South Bend Parks also provides many fee base activities that are immensely popular throughout the community. Public private partnerships with the S.B. Silver Hawks (now the S.B. Cubs) the Potawatomi Zoological Society, and the S.B. Botanical Society, all operating from City Park Department owned facilities have helped the City Parks by improving attendance, cost sharing of expenses, and saving valuable tax revenues that could be distributed to other much needed park initiatives. Attendance at our fee based facilities totaled 921,021 participants in 2014. This represents turnstile attendance at the Potawatomi Zoo, Four Winds Field, the Park Recreation Centers, our three municipal Golf Courses, and the Park Department's special events activities. In addition, there were thousands upon thousands of people who used our parks for athletic leagues, school functions, organization outings, neighborhood events, family gatherings and individual leisure activities. These numbers represent just one reason why our city parks play an integral part in creating a sense of community for the residents of South Bend.

This past year we had the opportunity to get terrific citizen engagement as part of our Five Year Park's Master Plan. As part of the Park's Department CAPRA Accreditation we are required to develop a five year plan that describes our mission, resources, goals and objectives, citizen input / evaluations, and the Parks Department's overall strategic plan. Over the span of several months we conducted 26 public meetings throughout the city's six districts and in addition received over 800 statistically valid survey responses. Overwhelmingly, the message we heard time and again was, 1. Maintain existing parks and facilities, 2. Maintain existing programming, and 3. Improve existing parks and facilities. Due largely from the outcomes of the Park's Master Plan process, the City Administration has given the green light to move forward with a five million dollar bond to help improve our current parks and facilities. This long overdue funding mechanism is the first bond dedicated strictly for park improvements in 43 years. Although nearly \$35 million dollars' worth of improvements were listed in the Master Plan, immediate needs such as the Howard Park Ice Rink, additional gym space at the Recreation Centers, and numerous deferred maintenance items will likely get the most attention.

Each year brings challenges and opportunities for the Parks and Recreation Department. Highlighting some of the past year's activities include a tremendous effort by the Park's Maintenance Division cleaning up hundreds of downed trees throughout the City and at many popular City Parks. The park crews were able to clean up the southeast section of the city and open Potawatomi and Howard Park within days of the storm. A massive cleanup effort by the Park and Recreation Department's staff at Keller Park, where nearly half of all the trees in the park were destroyed by the strong winds of the storm, took over six weeks to complete. 2014 saw the startup of a much needed program that mentors local youth with staff and resources at the Martin Luther King Jr. and Charles Black Recreation Centers. Our recreation staff proposed several innovative programs that brought local kids to the centers to learn life skills, provide after school programming, guidance with mentoring, accountability, recreation activities, and future job skills. Those who participated were eligible for the Park Department's Summer Job Corp Program, which offered summer employment opportunities at the two west side recreation centers.

As providers of services and facilities, it is vitally important that customer service always be a priority for the Parks and Recreation Department. In 2014 the Recreation Division collected 3013 program and facility evaluations. The overall customer satisfaction index resulting from these evaluations was 4.74 with 5.0 being the highest rating allowed. Another means to improving customer service included Facebook and other social media activity. This past year we saw a dramatic increase in the use of private messaging service provided on our social media page. This service has enabled the public to express comments of appreciation or matters of concern to our staff. All messages of concern were corrected within a 24 period. Community partnerships and outreach have continued to be a very important component to our overall sustainability. When residents and Parks work together it's a win for the community. This past year our volunteer program netted 12,892 volunteer hours, a \$238,472. value to the Parks Department. Volunteer activities consisted of park maintenance, programming, and special events. Volunteers are and continue to be essential for our success in so many areas. As we approach 2015 we will moving forward with the Park Bond addressing much needed repairs to facilities and parks. We will focus on prioritizing these activities in order to provide the best in programming and outreach to all in the community. We will continue to embrace new technology, strive for better efficiencies, and always serve our community with professionalism and pride at what we can accomplish for our City. We will rely on a well-trained dedicated staff that has consistently performed at a high level and who carry out the mission of the Parks and Recreation Department each and every day.