



(February 21, 2020)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **WARRENVILLE PARK DISTRICT RECEIVES ILLINOIS DISTINGUISHED ACCREDITED AGENCY AWARD**

(Warrenville, IL) - - The Warrenville Park District has been recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA).

The two statewide associations administer the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program with the goal of improving the delivery of park and recreation services to Illinois residents. “Illinois is well known for having the best park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies in the nation,” said Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO. “The Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program provides an opportunity for these agencies to undergo a voluntary, comprehensive evaluation process to demonstrate that they have met state guidelines to provide exceptional park and recreation services to their community. The end result is to improve the quality of life for Illinois residents.”

“This program gives recognition to park and recreation agencies that go above and beyond in dedicating themselves to offering quality programs and services designed to fulfill their community’s needs,” said Debbie Trueblood, IPRA Executive Director.

A park district or recreation agency interested in applying for Distinguished Accredited Agency recognition undergoes a detailed, lengthy process of application and evaluation. A Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Committee (JDPRAC) comprised of members from IAPD and IPRA coordinates the process. “Agencies submit a self-evaluation and a formal letter requesting admission into the process,” said Mary Crout, IAPD Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. “If the committee determines the agency is eligible to continue the process, we send them an evaluation date.”

According to Crout, on the day of the evaluation, the agency presents documented information and gives a tour of pertinent facilities and parks for the evaluation team’s review. The team reviews general management procedures, finance and business operations, facilities and parks, personnel, recreation services, legal documentation and other materials including mission statements, goals and safety manuals.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the agency is notified in writing of the official results within ten days. Agencies that have achieved Distinguished Accredited status are recognized with a plaque at the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference Awards Luncheon in January.

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### *Distinguished Accreditation/2*

“There are tremendous benefits for an agency that achieves Distinguished Accredited status,” said Jason Herbster, IPRA Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. “The agency’s application and review process provide an excellent self-evaluation and agencies that apply realize increased operational efficiency and effectiveness. Communities can have confidence that their park district or recreation agency employs qualified professionals and has met professional standards.”

The Warrenville Park District applied for the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program in March 2019. “We have always known that the Warrenville Park District employs the best and the brightest in the field. Attaining the IAPD Distinguished Agency Award after a year-long review of our staff, policies and processes, is state-wide validation of our outstanding staff,” said Barb Thornbury, Warrenville Park District Board President.

The JDPRAC approved the Warrenville Park District for Distinguished Accredited status in November 2019 and highlighted Facilities and Finance and Business Opportunities as outstanding areas.

In compliance with the program, the Warrenville Park District will be reevaluated in six years to verify that they have continued to demonstrate sound management practices in providing quality park and recreation services to the community.

IAPD is a non-profit service, research and education organization that serves park districts, forest preserves, conservation and recreation agencies. The association advances these agencies, their citizen board members and professional staff in their ability to provide outstanding park and recreation opportunities, preserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for all people in Illinois.

IPRA is a not-for-profit organization and public interest group who is an advocate in providing quality park, recreation and conservation education, resources and services to professionals and citizens throughout the state of Illinois.

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