

Dear friend of the Naperville Park District:

These days, the word “value” seems to be turning up in conversations more than ever. A dollar just doesn’t go as far as it once did, and understandably more families are being increasingly selective about how and where they’re spending. Like many other governing bodies that are supported in part through tax dollars, the Park District knows what it’s like to be good stewards of resources as we, too, experience the need to do more with less. And, with no growth in the tax rate for next year, our operations as a whole are challenged.

Add to that a decline in the golf market across the country, even here in Naperville, and undoubtedly we have our work cut out for us in 2010. Speaking of golf, not many people are aware that both of our courses operate under an Enterprise Fund. That means that they do not receive any tax support. Instead, our golf operations are funded solely through green fees and other golf purchases.

For the Park District, these challenges have meant finding ways to be even more efficient in our operations. I’ve mentioned our Strategic Planning initiative several times in various communications, and finalizing this document will be a key element in continuing to set the direction for the organization. After receiving input from key community leaders and Park District staff over the past few months, in addition to considering feedback from the 2009 Community Interest and Opinion Survey, we are in the final stages of completing the Strategic Plan. The document will serve as an organizational roadmap to drive the accomplishment of short-term and longer-term goals. It will cover everything from parks and recreation programs, to our image and brand, and staff is poised to carry out the established goals to keep the organization moving in the right direction. One of the most important aspects that we’ve been focusing on during this process is the outlining of our strengths as a recreation provider. It is our intention that by focusing in more on what we offer, we will heighten the recreation experience while increasing the value to our participants.

We’re also extending value of the Park District experience through our increase in communication channels. With the rapid change in technology and the new means for communicating, from blogs, to e-mail, to social media, each person has their own preference for receiving information. Now that we’re fully up and running on the current social media channels, there are a variety of ways for you to stay connected with us and learn more about what’s going on in your community.

I think we all can agree that these are tough times for nearly everyone, and that many families have had to do their part to be more efficient. However, we certainly don’t want a lack of family funds to preclude individuals from participating in our programs. To assist those in need, we offer a scholarship program that provides families with the opportunity to take part in recreation. And, special thanks to Athletic Park Partner, National City, now a part of PNC, for their support of our scholarship program. This partnership truly illustrates the importance of community in supporting one another.

I certainly believe in the great value of the Naperville Park District, and I hope you do as well. Although there are challenges ahead, we see unique opportunities to streamline our operations and offerings. However, our ultimate goal always will be to provide learning experiences and opportunities to have fun, make available enjoyable fitness options and team sports for kids and adults of all ages, and much more – all at an affordable price. We look forward to continuing to provide the Naperville community with a great value in recreation.

Sincerely,

Ray McGury
Executive Director