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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MUNDELEIN PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT RECEIVES ILLINOIS DISTINGUISHED ACCREDITED AGENCY AWARD**

MUNDELEIN, IL - - Mundelein Park & Recreation District has again 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 recognized as having the best park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies in the nation," said Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO. "Our Distinguished Accreditation program provides an opportunity for these agencies to undergo a voluntary, comprehensive evaluation process to demonstrate that they have met established guidelines to provide exceptional park and recreation services to their communities."

"This outstanding program gives recognition to park and recreation agencies and forest preserve districts that go above and beyond in their dedication to provide quality programs, services, and facilities designed to fulfill their community's needs," said Margaret Resnick, IPRA Interim Executive Director. "The end result is to improve the quality of life for Illinois residents."

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 Bill Cohen, 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 Cohen, 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.

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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 during the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference in January.

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

Mundelein Park & Recreation District began the re-application process for the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program in March 2022. “This program gave us the opportunity to look at best practices in the industry and ensure we were offering the best we could to our constituents,” said Ron Salski, Executive Director of Mundelein Park & Recreation District. “Where we needed to make improvements, we did. This is just one more tool we used to make us the best agency possible.”

“Receiving this award is a testament to Mundelein Park & Recreation District’s Board and staff,” said Wally Frasier, President of Mundelein Park & Recreation District Board of Commissioners. “Residents should be proud to know that its Park District is among the best in the state.”

The JDPRAC approved Mundelein Park & Recreation District for Distinguished Accredited status in November 2023 and highlighted operational procedures, presentation of the budget for public review, and KPI reports as excellent. Also noted was a positive, friendly, and professional culture where employees move forward together and work as a team.

In compliance with the program, Mundelein Park & Recreation 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.

Established in 1944, IPRA provides and promotes exceptional standards of education, networking, and resources for all professionals in the Illinois park, recreation, and conservation communities.