

2010 NRPA Congress Experience

Chad Weir, Recreation Superintendent, Marshalltown Parks and Recreation, was the recipient of an Iowa Foundation for Parks and Recreation fellowship which enabled him to attend the NRPA Congress in Minneapolis October 26 -29. at no charge to the department. Chad shares a day-by-day account of his experience .



Monday, October 25, was a travel day. After working a few hours in my office, Terry Gray and I made the four-hour trip north from Marshalltown to Minneapolis. After arriving at the Crowne Plaza, checking in and Terry accidentally dialing "911", we went to pick up our registration materials. We met up with other Iowa delegates who had arrived, and we proceeded to the convention center.

Downtown Minneapolis has quite the extensive sky-walk system which was very convenient, but also very confusing. The group of us eventually found the convention center and other Iowa delegates. A group of about 15 of us decided to go to dinner together. This was great fun and a wonderful time to network and talk about the upcoming congress and what we felt the week ahead would entail. Thus ended my first day at the NRPA Congress.

Tuesday, October 26, was the start of many sessions. I attended "Campus Organizations" with the mind set of working with our local community college to establish student body intramurals. The session was very informative and intimate with only about 12 participants, and half of those were students. The session was not strictly related to sports which offered a great way to get many ideas for not only campus organizations, but ways to make current programming fresh and new!

After the session, I made my way to the exhibit hall. Realizing I had a limited amount of time in my schedule, I decided to simply walk through the hall and see who was there and who I would talk with later when I had more time. The exhibit hall was very impressive.

I then attended the Council of State Affiliate Presidents meeting with IPRA President Ben Page. After a short "official meeting", the group began round table discussions. These discussions focused on the future of parks and recreation, technology, partnerships, staff/board relationships and certification. Due to time restraints, I was not able to participate in the certification round table discussion, but

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Volume XI, Issue 5**

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the other four round table discussions were very informative and could have gone on much longer than the allotted time.

Next on my agenda was the Welcome Party at The Guthrie Center where a small jazz band entertained the large crowd enjoying great food, dessert and networking. I had the opportunity to talk with the Director of Parks & Recreation in Valdez, Alaska which was quite the eye-opening experience. This small town of 4,500 people has a budget of \$53 million.

After the Welcome Party, it was on to the Miracle Recreation Social at The Shout! House where a trio of amazing musicians rotated and entertained us all with dueling pianos. Again, I was afforded another wonderful opportunity to network with not only delegates from Iowa but from around the country.

Wednesday, October 27, started with the Opening General Session. After the colors were presented and the Cassidy Brothers sang the National Anthem, Lois Finkelman, Elizabeth Kessler and Barbara Tulipane presented their version of "The View". Their presentation was a unique way of disseminating information to the crowd assembled. After the discussion, IPRA Executive Director Steve Jordison presented the NRPA awards to worthy members of the organization and did an excellent job! The keynote speaker, Roch Parayre, gave a great presentation on Blue Ocean strategy and how it related to the park and recreation field. Even though much of what he presented is designed for "profit" businesses, he made a seamless transition to municipalities and how these strategies apply. I certainly hope his presentation will be available online at the NRPA website because I would highly recommend watching/listening.



After the general session, I attended a very interesting session called "Do You See What I See" which was about incident/accident reports and how you should fill them out. The presentation included actual incident reports that were jaw dropping. It is hard to believe people actually filled them out the way they did. I should not give you examples in this summary, but find me at IPRA Spring Conference. I will be glad to share. The session was an eye-opening experience to the do's and don'ts when it comes to accident report forms.

The Great Lakes Regional Council meeting was where I went next and learned about the new NRPA Network system they are implementing. This meeting enlightened me on the impact the Great Lakes Region has within NRPA and its strong participation base at the national level. Being new to this larger scale, it is hard for me to have an opinion either way. Hopefully, this new network will be successful for the NRPA.

That evening was the IPRA President's Social which was held at The Local and sponsored by Fry & Associates. The social was well attended by the Iowa delegation and many others. This was a great opportunity to network with many of my Iowa colleagues, and the venue was very nice.

Thursday, October 28, was a busy day! I started my day with "Coaching Boys Into Men" which was a wonderful session on how to use youth sports and their coaches as mentors and how young men need to act in society, especially around women.

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Next I attended a session with Steve about social media and how to convince your boss of its impact. I don't need to convince my boss about social media as Marshalltown currently uses social media outlets, but the session was a wonderful avenue for how to use your current social media and maximize your exposure.

I was a room host for the final session on Thursday for "Raising the Roof on Aquatic Facilities". This session was jam packed with ways to maximize your profit at your facility. Many of the ideas were for very large water parks, but with some innovation, they could easily be applied to a seasonal pool.

The closing party was held Thursday night inside Target Field. The club level of the stadium was filled with delegates and tables and tables of food! They had a DJ and live band providing entertainment. It was a great way to end the day.

Friday, October 29, included one more session about marketing your aquatic center. I gathered some great ideas from this session on how to maximize selling your water.

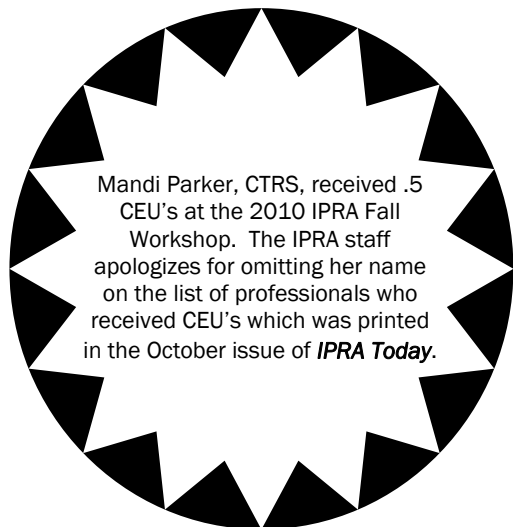
After that it was time to load up the car and drive south.

Overall, the experience was amazing. The opportunity to learn and network at this event is vast! Not only did I get to know my fellow Iowa delegates better, but I had the chance to interact and meet those around the country. The most benefit I received from this congress was when the sessions had some sort of round table discussions. Even at our state level, the open forum discussions can be an incredible source of ideas, suggestions and concerns which in turn can lead to action taken. It would be great to see more round table discussions and open forums offered so more professionals can take advantage of and use the resources available.

Thank you to IPRA and the Iowa Foundation for Parks and Recreation for selecting me to attend this wonderful conference. Thank you to Steve Jordison, Ben Page, Terry Gray, Mark Boland and all of the Iowa delegates who made me feel welcome and made sure my conference experience was all it could be.

If you have not been to a National Congress be sure to apply! If you don't apply you won't be selected. The 2011 National Congress is in Atlanta, Georgia.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the IPRA Spring Conference in Davenport!



For those of you who haven't heard, Mandi Parker, Recreation Superintendent, Sioux City Parks and Recreation, went on full time bed rest October 27. She has nearly a month to go in which to reach her due date and deliver those triplets! You can stay up to date on her progress by going to the Caring Bridge web site. <http://www.caringbridge.org/visit/mandiparker>.



Sign her guest book and leave her a message. Mandi is enjoying her time at the bed and breakfast (hospital). Mandi is attached to various monitors, all ensuring that she and the babies remain healthy.

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New Role for Duane Randall

Duane Randall has accepted the position of manager of The River's Edge recreation facility in Davenport. The process was extensive with over 60 qualified applicants and nine interviewees. The two-day selection process was thorough and is a reflection of the great qualities Duane brings to the table for Davenport Parks and Recreation. The River's Edge is an 80,000 square-foot facility offering programs in ice skating, hockey, indoor soccer, other turf sports, a bevy of special events and choice of birthday parties. In addition, the department administrative headquarters is also located there. Duane joins a growing department with many possibilities to take the facility and programs to the next level of professionalism and expertise. Duane begins his journey in Davenport on November 29. Congratulations and best wishes to you, Duane!



Introducing Curt Strouth

"The city of Rock Valley is very excited to become a member of the IPRA, and we are looking forward to working closely with other members of this association to improve our programs," stated Curt Strouth. Curt has been the recreation director for the city of Rock Valley for nine years, and he and his wife Emily, are happy to call this community their home. Since they moved to Rock Valley in 2001, their family has grown by two. They have a daughter Reese (6) and a son Gavin (4) who keep them very busy day in and day out, but Curt affirms that they absolutely love where they are in life. Both Emily and Curt graduated from Sibley-Ocheyedan High School, and Curt attended Augustana College in Sioux Falls, SD, where he majored in Exercise Science and minored in Fitness Management, receiving his degree in 2001. Curt said, "You are probably wondering how I got involved in a field not directly related to my major. Well the answer is the job I took was the only one made available to me upon graduating, and it was supposed to be a stepping stone and a way to pass a little time until I could get into a job that pertained to what I went to college for. Ideally I was hoping to get a job as an exercise specialist and work one-on-one with high school and collegiate athletes. This may be where my life heads someday but for now I have found a new passion after taking this job nine years ago, and I absolutely love what I am doing today. I don't necessarily see a career change coming anytime soon." When Curt took this job in Rock Valley, it was a brand new position because of the demand for organized recreational programs for the community. There were no expectations, and Curt was allowed leniency on how he wanted to build the programs.

One of Curt's biggest goals upon taking this job was to expand the facilities that the recreation department made available to the community. Curt feels that in the past nine years, the programs have come along way, and as recent as this past summer the city completed its latest addition. It currently has a sports complex that features two Little League baseball/softball fields and six full-sized soccer fields. By spring of 2011, the city plans to expand the sports complex by two additional fields. Programs have grown to the point where the department has run out of space for practices and games and these two additional fields will greatly enhance their facilities. Each year Rock Valley also hosts three Little League tournaments with over 50 teams participating, and the tournaments generate much needed money to help fund their programs. This past summer the city put up a bathroom addition as well as an additional storage shed to help house all the equipment.

"I will continue to build upon what we have here in Rock Valley. My next major project is to spearhead a committee to bring a community center to Rock Valley that will be able to host indoor recreational opportunities. This is a huge need for our community, and one that will benefit our programs," Curt concluded.

2010 Placekick, Punt and Pass

The Bergstrom Indoor Practice Football Facility located on the Iowa State University campus provided the setting for the 2010 IPRA Placekick, Punt and Pass State Competition held Saturday, October 16.

115 youth participated in the one-day event—30 girls and 85 boys. Boys and girls competed separately, and categories were divided into six age groups: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13-year-olds. Children were given two opportunities in each event to placekick, punt and pass the football. Each child's attempt was given a score based upon distance and accuracy to a tape measure. The best attempt in terms of feet for each event was then combined for a total aggregate score. The top four place finishers in each age division were given a finisher-specific plaque and their photographs appear on this page and Page 7. Those who did not place in the top four finishes were given a participation certificate.

Youth advanced to the state finals via a local competition. For the first time ever, the first place competitor in each age and gender advanced directly to the state competition. In previous years, the top three advanced to one of four district competitions offered in the state. First place finishers then advanced to the state level. This change allowed more children to participate in the beautiful Bergstrom Indoor Practice Football Facility. State finals is the highest level participants can reach within the IPRA program. Approximately 600 youth participated at the local level. Communities that hosted a local event were Adel, Ankeny, Belle Plaine, Belmont, Bondurant, Clarion, Clinton, Coon Rapids, Coralville, Des Moines, Emmetsburg, Fairfield, Forest City, Fort Dodge, Garner, Grinnell, Hull, Ida Grove, Iowa Falls, Jefferson, Knoxville, Muscatine, New Hampton, North Liberty, Norwalk, Orange City, Pella, Sheldon, Sibley, Sioux City, Storm Lake, Vinton and West Des Moines.

A big thanks to volunteers from the Community of Christ Church (Ames Congregation), members of the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau, the IPRA Sports Committee members, Matt Fielder, Chairperson, Chelsea Bengford and Rick Courcier.

Results of each age division can be viewed at www.iapra.org.



Bergstrom Indoor Practice Football Facility—Iowa State University campus



8-year-old boys



8-year-old girls



9-year-old boys



9-year-old girls



10-year-old girls



10-year-old boys



11-year-old boys



11-year-old girls



12-year-old girls



12-year-old boys

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Iowa ASA Expresses Thanks!

The Iowa ASA would like to thank the following park and recreation departments that registered adult softball teams with USA/ASA Softball in 2010. There are many benefits to the teams, cities and their adult recreation programs with the ASA Softball team registration. In addition, a number of these departments registered ASA umpires for the past softball season. If your department is not currently registering adult softball teams or umpires, please consider this for 2011. Another service provided by the Iowa ASA is the sale of 12-inch, 14-inch and 16-inch softballs. Slow pitch, fast pitch and youth softballs are available and will be delivered to your department with no shipping charges. For more information, or questions, contact Iowa ASA State Commissioner Tom Topping at 641.236-5766 or e-mail topping@pcpartner.net. The Iowa ASA web address: www.softball.org/iowa.

Ames	99	Davenport	17
Bettendorf	71	Des Moines	262
Burlington	77	Fairfield	17
Cedar Falls	120	Indianola	24
Cedar Rapids	206	Iowa City	126
Chariton	33	Marshalltown	94
Clinton	123	Mason City	38
Clive	53	Nevada	9
Coralville	83	Urbandale	150
		West Des Moines	116



Huge Victory for IWLL Amendment

Yesterday's voters can tell tomorrow's grandchildren that they not only understood the long-term need to protect water quality and top soil in Iowa, they acted on behalf of their protection in an era when our country's political leaders often used only one, short-term measure of success-economic growth.

On November 2, in a year with a high turn-out at the polls and Iowans divided on many issues, voters sent an overwhelming message of commitment to the protection of Iowa's natural resources. Almost two-thirds of Iowa voters approved an amendment to the Iowa constitution to create a Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund.

The trust fund will begin to accrue an estimated \$150 million a year the next time Iowa legislators approve a sales tax increase. A regular audit will be conducted to ensure monies are used only for specific conservation and recreation work as outlined in a bill passed earlier this year.

Coalition members of the campaign called Iowa Water and Land Legacy are celebrating today."This is a win for all Iowans," said Marian Riggs Gelb, executive director for the Iowa Environmental Council.

"We can attribute this overwhelming victory to the power of coalition-of people working together to accomplish much more than anyone could alone," said Gelb.



One hundred and thirty organizations, representing over 300,000 Iowans have worked together since 2005 to first examine how best to create state funding for natural resources in a way that protected designated funds from being raided for other uses. Later the coalition worked to educate Iowans on how the money would be spent, to protect the intent of the fund by passing legislation that spells out the allocation of the funds, and to get out the vote.

"Much work is still ahead of us, but today is a day for celebrating," said Gelb.

New NRPA Network Structure - Get Connected - Get Involved!

For more than 40 years, NRPA branches, regions, and sections have contributed to the advancement of parks and recreation. As our field continues to evolve, so must NRPA. **To accomplish our mission more effectively, NRPA has created a set of new NRPA Networks to provide better avenues for idea sharing, discussion, and recognition of the best. These new NRPA Networks replace the former branches, regions, and sections.**

The NRPA Networks are a living, breathing resource – they need information and participation from members like you to continue to grow and enrich everyone. You are encouraged to participate in as many networks as you like, with each network offering leadership opportunities and multiple ways for everyone to get involved!

The new NRPA Networks replace the former branches, regions, and sections and are organized into groups of members that have common interests whether they are based on a broad national topic, a job function, or geography.

The Great Lakes Regional Council no longer exists. Be a part of the conversation by joining the Great Lakes Regional network!

As a member, it is up to YOU to **visit the NRPA Web site and sign up for the networks that interest you.** Members are no longer automatically placed into groups when joining and your previous group membership is not being rolled over to the new network structure.

So, how can YOU be a part of the new Networks?

- Login to the NRPA Web site and join as many NRPA Networks as you'd like. There are no restrictions or fees related to joining the Networks.
- Volunteer to be a Network leader or help with projects. The leadership groups of all 18 networks are currently being formed. Many leadership opportunities are available!
- Participate – post a question, share a resource, or respond to someone else's inquiry through the NRPA Online Community.

Why should YOU be a part of the new Networks?

As budgets continue to get cut in local municipalities, members need new ways to learn from each other. This resource is a part of your NRPA membership – allowing you to connect with peers from across the country.

Please remember – the NRPA Networks are a new tool. Just like any program you might start in your community, they need individuals to step up and participate to help drive others to do the same. Be a leader – get involved today!

Sign Up For a Network Now!

Visit NRPA Networks for more information.



National Recreation and Park Association

Photos of 13-year-old finalists at the 2010 PPP State Finals, October 16, Bergstrom Indoor Football Practice Facility, Iowa State University.



Additional photos and details of the event can be found on Page 5.



Travis Bakken has accepted the position of Parks and Recreation Director for the city of Huxley and will begin those duties Monday, November 8. Travis is originally from Iowa and had been working in the Waukegan, Illinois Park District. Watch the December issue of **IPRA Today** for further details, contact information and a photo. Congratulations and welcome to IPRA, Travis!



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Layout design by Cathy Shutts,
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KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SPOT
SHOT COMPETITION INFORMATION
COMING YOUR WAY SOON!!



IPRA Calendar of Events

November

- 7 Daylight Savings Time ends
- 11 State Office closed—Veteran's Holiday
- 13 Coed Volleyball Tournament—Grinnell
- 15 CEU/Aquatic Update—Burlington
- 16-17 Certified Pool Operator's Course—Burlington
- 25-25 State Office closed—Thanksgiving Holiday

December

- 24-27 State Office closed—Christmas Holiday