

## Steve McDaniel, Director, and Foellinger Theatre

- ✦ We started the month with our state association conference. Several of the staff were in attendance for education classes and visited the expo hall to interact with our vendors. We were the recipient of two awards. The first was the Outstanding Design Award for Promenade Phase 2A. The second we accepted on behalf of Mayor Henry for Outstanding Elected Official.
- ✦ We were able to celebrate Veterans Day at our Community Center with our annual breakfast. It was a full house with a great meal, live entertainment, as well as celebrating our various branches of the military.
- ✦ The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the entrance into Franke Park happened early in the month. This was followed by the opening of the new pavilion in the first part of December. This project starting with the Master Plan 5 years ago culminates in a great first phase.
- ✦ Packard Park was the site for our Ground-Breaking Ceremony mid-month as we started the next phase of the project with construction. This project will continue on through the summer/fall of next year.
- ✦ We are exploring a possible property opportunity in the northeastern part of the city. One conversation with the current owner which I thought went well will be followed up as we move past the holidays.
- ✦ Chad and I have met with Redevelopment regarding the Treeline District at the former Pepsi site just north of Promenade Park. We will start meeting with the development team to talk about design elements.
- ✦ The team took several projects for approval to the City Council this month. These included Riverfront Phase 2B, Headwater's fountain, Packard Park playground, Kreager Park soccer irrigation, and six new playground replacements. All were approved with requisitions being processed for purchase orders to be issued.
- ✦ Our team is continuing to work with the city's computer team on the Park's Map portion of our app. This new map will hopefully identify amenities throughout our park system. We are shooting for the second quarter of next year to be able to launch.
- ✦ The holiday season kicked off towards the end of the month. Several programs happened throughout the city. These include the Unity Lighting at McKinnie Commons, Downtown lighting at the Community Center and Botanical Conservatory, ice rink opened at Headwater's Park, Gnome for the Holiday display opened at the Botanical Conservatory, and the 71<sup>st</sup> Wassail at the Jennings Center.
- ✦ I would like to take a moment and thank all the people who made this year possible. First, I want to start with the great staff here at the Parks and Recreation Department. Their dedication, talent, and heart do not go unnoticed. Second, I want to thank our volunteers. There are so many of you who give your time and talent to help us provide so much. We would not be able to do what we do without you being a volunteer. Third, I want to thank the administration and Mayor Tucker. She has stepped into big shoes this year and really shown her support for the department and all that we do in the city. Along with the Mayor, I would like to thank our Council Members. Their support continues on approvals of our projects to show up at our press conferences. And lastly, I would like to thank our Park Board Members. Your dedication and support mean a lot to me and the rest of us at Parks and Recreation.

## Chuck Reddinger – Deputy Director of Recreation

**Salomon Farm Park, Neighborhood Outreach Community Centers (Youth/Downtown/McMillen Park), Riverfront, Athletics, Aquatics, Golf, Outdoor Recreation, Special Events, Headwaters Park, and Travel Service**

### ✦ Community Center

- Christopher "Brice" Vinson-Schisler started as Clerical on November 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The Veterans' Breakfast and Bingo event was held on November 8th from 9:30 am to 11:30 am. A total of 129 people signed up, and 119 attended. The Community Center honored men and women who served the

country with a free breakfast and Bingo, accompanied by music from the Shepard's Brass Quintet and a Presentation of the Flags. There were 3 Gold Sponsors and 2 Silver Sponsors. The event had a huge turnout, and all feedback was positive. Approximately 15 volunteers assisted in various roles. The event received the most donations for door prizes, thanks to the staff. Each veteran received a free key chain and t-shirt. Additionally, 12 sponsors and health fair vendors gave away items and helped serve. Upcoming events – next 30 days

- The Holiday Dinner and Light Tour will be held on December 9th, Monday at 5:30 pm. It is already full, and a waitlist will be taken. The evening will begin with dinner and music, followed by a motor coach ride downtown to view the Christmas light displays and then to the Fantasy of Lights.



### McMillen Community Center

- Lego class for children 9 and younger. The class is held every Monday from 5:30-6:30. The Lego class serves to teach the kids STEM in a unique way that they are used to; the idea is if they are playing while learning they will not even notice what we are doing is educational.
- Trivia club is making its way back to the after-school program, last week kids ages 10 and older played a competitive game of Jeopardy. The topics include Math, history, riddles, geography, and sports.
- Esports program, we went on two field trips and had a competition. We had a competition with the South Side High School esports team. Four of our 3<sup>rd</sup> year members competed. They competed in Super Smash Bros 2v2. partnering with a high school team member. We got first and second place. We will have another tournament in the spring. Our esports team also got to go to Indiana Tech to see their Esports lab and meet the head coach. They got a chance to play on their systems. We will be going back to meet the team in the spring.
- Our Erin's House program came to an end this month. The students had 6 sessions on various topics like bullying, grief, how to be a friend and others. They ended the session with a pizza party.



### Community Outreach

- Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation partnered with the Greater Fort Wayne Chapter of the National Panhellenic Council (NPHC) to present the Unity Lighting at McKinnie Commons on November 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:45 P.M. Councilwoman Rohli Booker and Parks Director Steve McDaniel spoke. Live music and live dancing were featured. NPHC provided 100 Thanksgiving baskets which included turkeys and side dishes to attendees. 85 people were estimated in attendance.
- Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation is working with the Fort Wayne Police Department (FWPD) and the Fort Wayne Optimist's Club to begin a program that can bolster relationships between FWPD officers and youth attending the Community Youth Center after-school programs.



### Weisser Park Youth Center

- We continue to offer fun STEM learning for the youth. Just to name a few, during this period the youth enjoyed participating in the Film Canister Rocket experiment. The Youth used a film canister, placed an antacid tablet inside, and then water. They placed the lid on the canister, watched it fizz and finally shoot off into the air. They learned that the water and antacid create carbon dioxide which cause pressure within the canister causing the elevation of the canister. The Density Tower experiment taught our youth some physics concepts as to why rocks sink, boats float and balloons fly. The youth also had a great time building apparatuses to compete in our Egg Drop Challenge. After building their apparatuses they were given a raw

egg and had to drop the egg from various heights to see if their apparatus would protect the egg from breaking.

- We provided several great games and challenges for the youth. We had a Nintendo Switch Sports Party in which the youth played basketball and tennis. They also had a blast with our Limbo Challenge. A new game the youth learned was Helicopter which assists youth in eye-foot coordination and jump rope skills. Youth enjoyed several days of flag football and kickball, played Wiffle ball, tag games, musical chairs, and played BINGO for candy prizes.
- **Turner Chapel AME Ubuntu Learning Lab was held on** Thursday, October 24. Dave Thomas the owner of Health Hut and l'tal garden facilitated the session. Youth learned the benefits of healthy eating and growing their own food. He shared with the youth that the number one killer of African Americans is heart disease. He also explained that bad eating habits can affect their mental health. The youth learned that they are physical, mental and spiritual human-beings and they need to take care of all three. On Thursday, November 14, 2024, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and up youth read two books to groups of our younger youth, *Thanksgiving on Our Plantation* by Kimberly Jones and *Thanks a Million* by Nikki Grimes. The youth learned the importance of reading and it was explained that African Americans during their enslavement in the USA were not allowed to read.
- Monday, November 18, 2024, we had our first session of Scouting America Career Club. The facilitator explained that the program is to assist youth in receiving exposure to careers. The youth gave feedback on what they are interested in as a career which will assist the facilitator in choosing professionals to speak with the youth.
- Monday, October 28, 2024, we held our annual Harvest Fest. Our youth enjoyed a meal with chili cheese corn dogs, harvest popcorn mix and Capri Sun. After the meal, youth enjoyed a caramel apple Sunday bar, hot cocoa bar, pumpkin painting contest, pumpkin sucker game, pumpkin ring toss game and pumpkin beanbag toss game. Also, the youth took pictures in our harvest fest photo booth.

#### Jennings Youth Center

- The Jennings Center youth went on three field trips since our last report. We attended McMillen's Harvest Fest Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>, our youth had a great time enjoying other youth in their community and the fun games McMillen had to offer. We went to the Downtown ACPL (Allen County Public Library) November 8<sup>th</sup>, viewing our project we conducted with Mr. Rozier and Mr. Brandon on Fort Wayne's South East side. We also had a blast utilizing the resources and creative opportunities at the library, three youth updated their library cards as well. We attended a collegiate basketball game on Saturday November. 16<sup>th</sup> at the University of Saint Francis vs, Indiana Tech. The Supervisor reached out to the Head Coach and Athletic Department at St, Francis; we were provided entry to the game and one youth won a basketball.
- We hosted our Annual Harvest Fest Thursday November 29<sup>th</sup> with huge success! There were many parents who attended along with adult members of our community.
- We had two successful Lunch & Games as well, with topics on Heart Health & dealing with stress, as well as a carry-in. Our adult Yoga has been constant weekly.
- We welcomed Purdue Fort Wayne Dental Monday November 18<sup>th</sup> teaching the youth about the importance of Dental Hygiene.
- Chantell attended the Community Dinner at United Faith Methodist Church on October 23<sup>rd</sup> to speak with the community attendees about the reopening of Cooper Community Center and the need for them to participate in the survey we have. Also passed out information for programs at the youth centers and other programs and events within the parks department.
- Chantell attended the East Wayne Street Head start Harvest Jubilee October 30<sup>th</sup>. She passed out information about programs and activities that the parks is offering and has coming up as well as the youth

center programs etc. Discussed the need for the community to take part in the survey for Cooper Community Center as we plan to reopen and want their input.

### Salomon Farm Park

- The Salomon Farm staff is excited to announce **Christmas on the Farm**, taking place on **Saturday, December 7, 2024**, from **1 PM to 5 PM**. Admission is just **\$5 per car**. This festive event will feature live Christmas music, letters to Santa, visits with Santa, horse-drawn wagon rides, kids' crafts, holiday vendors, and blacksmith demonstrations. Don't miss this opportunity to kick off the holiday season with fun for the whole family!
- **Rehearsals are underway for *A Christmas Carol***, presented by Summit City Music Theatre at the Salomon Farm Park Old Barn. Now in its **third year** at this venue, the play has become a cherished holiday event. **New this year**, discounted tickets are available for seniors and students, with senior and student tickets priced at **\$20** and adult tickets at **\$25**. Tickets are **on sale now**. Opening night is on Friday, December 6th, and tickets are selling fast, with 94 out of 100 seats already reserved.

### Johnny Appleseed Campground

- Johnny Appleseed Campground officially closed for the season on Monday, November 4, 2024.
- **Lindenwood Nature Preserve**
- In June 2024, spongy moth caterpillars were detected at Lindenwood Nature Preserve. As a destructive invasive species that causes significant damage to Indiana's forests, the DNR was promptly notified to provide guidance and recommendations. On Monday, November 25, 2024, the Outdoor Recreation team and Forestry Department met with the DNR to assess the area and conduct an egg mass count. During the assessment, most of the egg masses found had already been compromised. Based on these findings, it was determined that treatment would not be necessary for the 2025 season. Instead, the DNR, in collaboration with the Parks Department, will monitor the area and install traps to track the moth population throughout the 2025 season.
- A long-standing goal of the Outdoor Recreation team at Lindenwood has been to establish a volunteer program to provide regular assistance. That goal officially became a reality this month with the launch of the program, starting with 10 volunteers. These dedicated individuals will assist with light trail maintenance, event support, and program support. Amanda Black, the Assistant Supervisor of Outdoor Recreation and Boating, is leading this new initiative.

### Golf

- Bryan Keister reported that Dunigan Construction (Foster Park/Big Dig) is starting to clean up and remove the temporary fencing around hole #10. This is a positive step to start restoring the back side of the golf course.
- Gary Whitacre reported that all three of the golf courses closed the day after Veteran's Day. He also stated that there were a number of players that took advantage of the free greens fee play special for Veteran's Day.
- Jason Smith reported that he was informed that Parkview Sports Management intends to continue its sponsorship of the Junior and Pee Wee Golf Tour.

### Riverfront

- The month of November was a busy month for the Riverfront Division with the opening of our Ice Rink at Headwaters Park, rentals at Promenade Park and Riverfront programs including Kickboxing with 9Round and Yoga on the Riverfront, and our Dance Promenade series. Dance Promenade was a great success this month with every class filling up with enthused dancers whether seasoned or just beginning to learn. The instructor, Brenda Diaz, did a wonderful job instructing the classes ensuring everyone received equal amount of attention.

- The Headwaters Ice Rink opened on November 23, 2024, attracting an impressive 232 skaters on opening day, with attendance numbers steadily increasing throughout the month. By the end of November, the rink had welcomed 1,852 visitors, including skaters and spectators, with the busiest days being the Wednesday before and the Saturday after Thanksgiving. Opening weekend alone saw over 550 attendees. The rink's concession stand also saw great success, generating \$2,255 in sales, with hot chocolate being the top seller at 421 cups. The rink will be open 7 days a week, with extended hours starting December 16th, and will introduce new programs to attract visitors on Thursday nights throughout the season.
- Promenade Park hosted a total of five rentals with four out of those five new to Promenade Park, bringing in over 440 guests. The new renters included Huntington University, Pollinator Partnership, OKI Conference, and an engagement party.

## **Sandra Odisho – Finance Manager Payroll & Commercial**

**Vouchers, Registrations, Budgets, Rentals, Tickets, Receptionist, Trust Fund Donations, Banking, Accounts Payable and Receivable**

### **Payroll:**

- The Parks and Recreation Department paid 234 employees (136 full-time and 98 regular part-time and seasonal) for the payroll ending November 30<sup>th</sup> and paid on December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024.
- We currently have the following permanent full-time positions open, posted, interviewing or in the process of being hired, as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024:
  - Heavy Equipment Operator (Fund 121)
  - Supervisor – Grounds Maintenance (Fund 121)
  - Manager VI – Grounds (Fund 121)
  - Relief Person – Facilities (Fund 121)
  - Superintendent – Planning, Development, and Botanical Conservatory (Fund 121)
  - Program Coordinator – Neighborhood Programs – Jennings (Fund 121)
  - Program Coordinator – Riverfront/Headwaters (Fund 439)
- The 2025 Seasonal Requisition is complete and submitted to HR. They will work with us to ensure that our seasonal positions are posted in a timely fashion. We will meet on 12/9 to discuss and finalize seasonal wages.

### **Payroll Conversion to Attendance on Demand (AOD) Software Update:**

- We have received all of our new Cellular iPads that we are going to be using for Payroll timekeeping at some of the more remote locations, such as: Lindenwood, Hurshtown, and the Golf maintenance barns.
- The Maintenance Department has installed all the new time clocks at all of the various buildings and are all functional.
- Phase 2 employees have moved into active status along with Phase 1 employees in our new AOD payroll software. We have continued offering in-person training and assistance to help our staff feel comfortable and confident during this transitional period.
- We will continue to use our paper time cards in tandem with the new AOD payroll software until the pay period ending December 14<sup>th</sup>.
- For the pay period starting December 15<sup>th</sup> and ending on December 28<sup>th</sup> we will be using only AOD Software to process our payroll.

- We have been working with IT and Payroll to make sure that our export information from the new software matches the format that Payroll needs it to have in order to successfully pull in our department's information.
- We have been working with IT to get a permanent process in place for the updating of our employee leave time balances in the new payroll software. This would replace the current practice of having to manually upload an updated file at the end of every payroll period.

#### **Receptionist/Rental Office:**

- The front office was still under construction until about mid-November to repair water damage around the front windows and also to replace carpet in the front office. The front office staff temporarily moved to other offices, but they are now back in their own space and the improvements are appreciated!
- The Winter Fun Times registration began November 6<sup>th</sup>. The most popular programs in this brochure in the past have been Breakfast with Santa at the Conservatory, the Holiday Dinner and Light Tour at the Community Center, the cooking classes and The Christmas Carol production, both at Salomon Farm as well as Winterval festival in late January.
- The summer pavilions closed on October 31<sup>st</sup> for the year. Beginning November 1<sup>st</sup>, we are only renting eight pavilions: Sears, Psi Ote Upper, Psi Ote Lower, Franke #1, Franke Pond, David Hefner, Riverlodge and Lakeside #1. Many families celebrate the holidays year after year at one of these pavilions.
- The McMillen Family Pavilion can start being rented for use on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 and will take our winter pavilion count to nine pavilions.
- The Johnny Appleseed Campground closed on November 3<sup>rd</sup> for the winter. Reservations for the campground rentals for next year will now be handled by the Front Office until April 1st, when the Campground opens again.
- Rhonda attended the IPRA Conference the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of November. There were so many great sessions on customer service and employee relations this year.
- Rhonda was contacted by two different Indiana Park Departments in November seeking references on our parks and recreation point of sale software. We don't envy them as purchasing software is not an easy task. Rhonda was more than happy to share how well we think our software, Vermont Systems, works for us and to emphasize that when looking for a software program finding out about their customer service is one of, if not, the most important feature!

#### **Accounts Payable and Budget:**

- In November, we processed the following: 442 accounts payable invoices, 49 P-card statements, 14 purchase requisitions, numerous change orders, and 2 payroll periods.

## **Steve Schuhmacher – Deputy Director of Park**

**Maintenance**, Facilities, Grounds, Projects Administration, Safety Compliance, Storeroom, Fleet & Mechanical Operations

#### **Facilities Maintenance**

- Pavilion rentals totaled: **174** for November. This is **down** from **259** in October.



- Graffiti was removed from the following locations: Swinney Park, Martin Luther King Bridge, Lawton Park Skate Park, and Bloomingdale Park.
- Vandalism occurred at the following locations: Foster Park Playground- Playground sign
- All equipment has been brought in from the summer rental buildings to be serviced and repaired for the start of the summer rental season in May of 2025. Once this is all completed, the equipment in the yearlong rentals will be serviced and repaired.

### **Maintenance Technicians**

- Maintenance techs completed their portion of the work for the holiday showcase at the Botanical Conservatory. This involved removing the sculpture and pergola that were installed as part of the summer showcase. The pergola will be reinstalled in the sales garden at the conservatory in the spring.
- While waiting for the power restoration to be complete at Lakeside Park pavilion #1, renovations were completed inside the pavilion. This work included; replacing and upgrading kitchen appliances, repainting the interior, and updating the lights to LED.
- New timeclocks were installed at the following locations; McMillen Community Center, Jennings Center, Weisser Center, Salomon Farm, and the downtown community center.
- Concrete sidewalk repairs were completed at Northside and Bowser Parks.
- Holiday light displays were installed on; McMillen, Jennings, Weisser, and Cooper centers as well as the downtown community center which took place in the annual lighting ceremony on the night before Thanksgiving. Light displays were also installed at McKinney Park for the annual lighting ceremony on the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Annual winterization and seasonal water shut-offs were completed on all non-heated facilities and drinking fountains.

### **Grounds Maintenance/Heavy Equipment**

- All smaller mowers have been switched to Polar Tracks for winter snow removal.
- Heavy equipment staff serviced and installed snow plows and salt spreaders.
- Mowing crews continue to mulch and blow leaves.
- Sports fields at Foster Park West, Tillman Park, and Kreager Park have been aerated.
- The garbage truck is running twice a week. Monday and Friday and as needed.
- Conservatory, Lakeside, and Foster Park bins have been emptied numerous times this month.
- Heavy Equipment helped the Police Department set up drone pads.
- Soil and stone bins at the Rea property were constructed at the REA property.
- A portion of the asphalt path Hanna Homestead was removed by the heavy equipment crew.
- Heavy Equipment staff graded parking lots and boat ramps at several park locations.

### **Volunteers**

- Nicole Roth and KayeC Jones, started training on how to develop our new Parks & Recreation Maintenance Division volunteer program, for the website. We will begin working on building the website for our specific Department needs next week.

### **Lawton Garage/Operations - Garage Operations Highlights:**

- 115 work orders were scheduled this month, 33 of which were services.
- A 2019 Ford E450 step van was purchased and transported to Lawton Park to replace the older model at the Conservatory. Measurements will be taken to determine the size of graphics that can be applied to the side of the van for promoting the Parks Department and the Botanical Conservatory.
- A 2004 Zamboni ice machine was purchased from SportONE Parkview Icehouse. This unit is a bit older and does need some mechanical work to be ready for service. It was purchased at a low enough price to make the repairs worthwhile and allows the Park Department to have a backup Zamboni for the Headwaters ice rink.

- There was enough left-over funding from the 2024 lease program to purchase a lift gate for one of the Headwaters utility trucks. This gate is being installed and should be ready by the beginning of next year.
- All items from the 2024 lease have been ordered and all but one purchase has been delivered to the Parks Department. New Motorola radios have been delivered, but are at the radio shop being programmed.
- Mechanics got a head start on assembling axles for the zoo train. These spare axles will be ready to install once the train is removed from the tracks and transported inside for winter maintenance and repairs.
- Fuel deliveries have been reduced to minimum required amounts to allow the department to get to the end of the year with enough budget to cover the costs. Golf course fuel usage has dropped off dramatically and with seasonal employees largely gone for the season, fuel consumption at Lawton Park has been reduced as well.
- Garage staff has been assisting grounds as they convert Toro 7210 mowers to polar track snow machines in preparation for the snow season.
- The large heavy equipment trucks were serviced and small plow trucks were inspected to make sure all of their systems were ready for snow removal which could begin at any time depending on the weather.
- The Headwaters Zamboni was transported to the ice rink and has been used to instruct new employees on the proper operation.
- Golf course equipment has started to be delivered to the Lawton garage for winter repairs and maintenance.

### **Storeroom and Property:**

- Storeroom staff began doing spot checks on inventory numbers in preparation for the end-of-the-year audit. The final counts will occur in mid-December.
- A purchase order was submitted for the purchase of fuel management computers for all 4 outlying fuel tank locations and an additional one for Lawton Park. This upgrade will eliminate paper gas tickets and manual data entry.

### **Project Administration**

- Botanical Conservatory Boilers Replacement – NIPSCO energy efficiency incentive program in progress.
- Brewer Park Construction – Pavilion foundation completed, site utility construction in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Improvements – Bidding in progress.
- Foellinger Theatre Lighting Components Package – Bidding in progress.
- Foster Park Golf Course Restoration Plan – Awaiting completion of utility work on golf course.
- Foster Golf Course Cart Path Bridge Renovation – Project completed.
- Franke Park Playground Equipment – Contract approval in progress.
- Foster Park West Bridge Renovation – Project completed.
- Hamilton Park Trail Renovation – Project completed.
- Headwaters Park Fountain – Awaiting purchase order issuance.
- Headwaters Park Lighting Improvements – Project completed.
- Indian Village Park Playground Equipment – Contract approval in progress.
- Jehl Park Playground Equipment – Contract approval in progress.
- Jehl Park Playground Border – Construction in progress.
- Kreager Park Soccer Fields Irrigation – Contract approval in progress.
- Lakeside Park Playground Equipment – Contract approval in progress.
- Lawton Park Trestle Bridge – Construction in progress.
- Lawton Park Pavilion Deck Replacement – Project completed.
- McCormick Park Playground Equipment – Contract approval in progress.
- Mechanic St. Bridge Construction – Work in progress. Painting of the bridge halted due to temperatures. Completion is planned for April 2025.
- Packard Park Redevelopment – Contract approval in progress.
- Salomon Farm Animal Barn – Planning in progress.
- Waynedale Park Playground Equipment – Project approval in progress.



- Waynedale Park Playground Border – Construction to begin in November.











## **Safety**

- The Parks & Recreation Safety Committee met on 11-26-24. 3 employees were present.
- 1 vehicle crash was reported for this period.
- 1 employee injury was reported during this time period.
- *Mandatory Compliance Training* continues. 50 employees in 5 divisions were trained during this period.
- 2 *CPR/FA* classes were held. 12 employees were certified
- 11 Riverfront (Ice rink) seasonal employees were given *General Safety Training*.

## Chad Shaw, Deputy Director of Planning & Development, Forestry,



## Greenhouse, Landscape & Horticulture, Riparian and the

-  **Forestry Report** – This year's fall tree planting project was delayed because of the unusually dry conditions. Shade Trees Unlimited has done a great job of catching and should have the remaining street trees planted within the next two weeks. The trees scheduled for planting within our parks are expected to be planted in the spring following the completion of Brewer and Packard Park improvements.
-  The 2024/2025 Street Tree Removal Project is underway. R&T Tree Experts is expected to complete the removal of 153 street trees by April 26<sup>th</sup>. We anticipate awarding two additional street tree removal projects in early 2025.
-  Tony and Derek attended the 2024 Partners in Community Forestry Conference in Chicago. This conference is a gathering that unites passionate individuals, communities, organizations, and leaders to explore innovative solutions, share insights, and collaborate on the future of urban forestry.
-  Responded to one Tort Claim during November. Tort Claims can be filed when a tree fails and causes personal injury or property loss. It is not possible to eliminate all risks associated with trees. Some level of risk must be accepted to enjoy the benefits that trees offer.
-  Collaborated with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) concerning a Spangy Moth infestation within Lindenwood Nature Preserve. IDNR representatives lead staff on an egg mass survey within the Nature Preserve. The results were encouraging and they no longer feel that treatment is necessary. Additionally, they took us to a site near Electric Works where Spotted Lanternfly egg masses have been confirmed. This will be valuable as crews continue their work throughout the City.
-  In November, Forestry crews completed 55 out-of-cycle tree maintenance requests. Examples of these requests include tree limb elevation to facilitate buses, removal of limbs touching homes, clearing street lighting and signage, and removal of dead limbs.
-  In-house crews removed 33 trees in November. 3 of these were storm-related and 6 were the result of vehicle damage.
-  Crews responded to and cleared 13 storm-related broken/fallen/hanging limbs. 1 of these was a privately-owned tree impacting the right of way.
-  Staff assisted with the removal and delivery of spruce trees to be used as part of the Botanical Conservatories' Holiday display and with delivering the holiday decorations to the Community Center roof.
-  Responded to and closed 33, 311 Call Center requests for service this month.

## **Botanical Conservatory Report – November 2024**

- “Raise a Glass!” welcomed enthusiastic visitors into a space of celebration, boasting a stunning display of vibrant color through November 17. After the close of business on November 17, work hurriedly began to set up “Gnome for the Holidays” – which opened officially on November 23 – just six days after “Raise a Glass!” wrapped up. “Gnome for the Holidays” welcomes visitors to a whimsical holiday display full of stunning poinsettias, large-cut evergreens, and a large variety of other thematically appropriate plant material. “Gnome for the Holidays” has been very well received by visitors and could not have happened without the hard work of the teams at the Botanical Conservatory, Lawton Park Landscape & Greenhouse, Lawton Park Maintenance, and the Grounds Crew among others.
- The Botanical Conservatory facilitated several well-received events and programs in November 2024 including Gnome for the Holidays (Opened November 23), \$1 Night of Lights (November 27), Black Friday featuring Those 2 Guys in Suits & Ties (November 29), and Holly Shopping (November 30). Staff are gearing up for \$1 Night Light Display (Thursdays & Fridays through December 20 from 5 pm – 8 pm), Santa & Reindeer Saturdays (December 7, 14 & 21), Member/Volunteer Holi-Day (December 11), as well as several pre-registered programs and workshops throughout the month.

## **Botanical Conservatory KPIs**

- In November 2024, the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory recorded an 11.13% increase in attendance, welcoming 7,758 visitors compared to 6,981 in November 2023. Year-to-date (YTD) attendance rose by 7.04%, totaling 98,796 visitors.
- Admissions revenue increased by 1.17% in November, reaching \$25,874, with YTD admissions revenue up 11.85%. Membership revenue saw a significant 15.11% increase for the month, and YTD membership revenue grew by 10.79%. The Conservatory Shop revenue for November rose by 7.89%, with YTD shop revenue up 14.32%.
- While rental and catering revenue for November declined by 16.70%, total revenue for the month grew by 6.14%, reaching \$76,990.93. YTD's total revenue stands at \$1,201,571.06, reflecting an increase of 4.78% compared to the previous year.

### **Attendance**

November 2023:	6,981 visitors
November 2024:	7,758 visitors
An increase of 777 visitors or +11.13% to 2023	

### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Attendance:	92,298 visitors
2024 Attendance:	98,796 visitors
An increase of 6,498 visitors or +7.04% to 2023	

### **Admissions Revenue**

November 2023:	\$25,575.11
November 2024:	\$25,874.00
An increase of \$298.89 or +1.17% to 2023	

### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Admissions Revenue:	\$333,690.59
2024 Admissions Revenue:	\$373,237.46
An increase of \$39,546.87 or +11.85% to 2023	

#### **Membership Revenue**

November 2023:	\$6,937.00
November 2024:	\$7,985.00
An increase of \$1,048.00 or +15.11% to 2023	

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Membership Revenue:	\$75,887.26
2024 Membership Revenue:	\$84,078.00
An increase of \$8,190.74 or +10.79% to 2023	

#### **Conservatory Shop Revenue**

November 2023:	\$20,100.66
November 2024:	\$21,686.08
An increase of \$1,585.42 or +7.89% to 2023	

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$245,506.60
2024 Gift Shop Revenue:	\$280,672.78
An increase of \$35,166.18 or +14.32% to 2023	

#### **Rental & Catering Fee Revenue**

November 2023:	\$8,505.00
November 2024:	\$7,085.00
A decrease of \$1,420.00 or -16.70% to 2023	

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Rental Revenue:	\$93,273.50
2024 Rental Revenue:	\$80,190.00
A decrease of \$13,083.50 or -14.03% to 2023	

#### **Other Revenue (includes Activity Enrollments, Donations, Plant Sale, etc.)**

November 2023:	\$11,421.27
November 2024:	\$14,360.85

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Other Revenue:	\$398,360.04
2024 Other Revenue:	\$383,392.82

#### **Conservatory Total Revenue**

November 2023:	\$72,539.04
November 2024:	\$76,990.93
An increase of \$4,451.89 or +6.14% to 2023	

#### **YTD Comparisons**

2023 Total Revenue: \$1,146,717.99  
 2024 Total Revenue: \$1,201,571.06  
 An increase of \$54,853.07 or +4.78% to 2023

**Botanical Conservatory Business Development**

- The Staff submitted an application to the Howard P. Arnold Foundation for support for the Conservatory’s Desert House Improvements Project. The foundation has requested that the Botanical Conservatory ask for support for this capital project instead of support of the upcoming 2025 Showcase Garden exhibits.
- Staff submitted final sponsorship reports to Fort Wayne Metals and Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne for support of the 2024 ROOTS Music Fest. Also submitted a promotional report to 96.3 XKE for media support of the 2024 ROOTS Music Fest. These reports will enable us to approach these agencies for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.

➤ Staff secured sponsorships for the following 2025 special events and exhibits:

- The Floor is Lava! Exhibit: 103.9 FM
- Color in Motion Live Butterflies Exhibit: 21Alive and 97.3 WMEE
- ... Something Blue Exhibit: Majic 95.1
- Fern’s Fairylight Express Exhibit: PBS Fort Wayne and Majic 95.1
- (2025 holiday and 2026 winter exhibit)
  
- Great Train Connection: US 93.3
- Bunny Tales in the Garden: FOX55 and Majic 95.1
- Mother’s Day Plant Sale: FOX55 and Majic 95.1
- Mother’s Day in the Garden: 21Alive and Majic 95.1
- Father’s Day in the Garden: 103.9 FM
- Jazzworks!: WANE 15 and 89.1 WBOI
- ROOTS Music Fest: 96.3 XKE
- Pumpkin Path Display: Majic 95.1
- Botanical Brew: WANE 15 & 89.1 WBOI
- Rocky Horror Picture Show: 99.5 & 102.3
- Garden Trick-or-Treat: FOX55 & Majic 95.1
- Santa Saturdays: PBS Fort Wayne and Majic 95.1

- Staff submitted the final sponsorship report to FOX 55 for support of the 2024 Garden Trick-or-Treat. These reports enable us to approach these media for continuing support of upcoming special events and exhibits.
- Staff submitted final sponsorship reports to Majic 95.1 for support of the 2024 Garden Trick-or-Treat and Pumpkin Path and to ALT 99.5 & 102.3 for the Rocky Horror Picture Show. These reports enable us to approach these media for continuing support of special events and exhibits.
- Staff sent a second request appeal to 47 local corporations on possible interest in our 2025 corporate sponsorships.
- Staff completed the 2024 Fall Annual Appeal to our members – it was sent on November 20.

**Conservatory Public Programs**

- **Events**

Night of Lights at the Botanical Conservatory (November 27)

Although the weather was cold and wet, 770 guests visited the Botanical Conservatory for the start of the \$1 Night Light Display from 5:00-8:00 pm. Of these, 36 were members (5%) and 212 were children (28%). A holiday scavenger hunt was very popular with at least 61 being returned for a small prize. In addition, several surveys were completed with raving reviews of the Gnome for the Holidays showcase exhibit. The evening was hosted in partnership with Downtown Fort Wayne during this year's Night of Lights event.

Holiday Performance by Those 2 Guys in Suits & Ties (November 29)

As part of the \$1 Night Light Display, Tom Didier and Todd Frymier performed holiday music in the showcase exhibit. Many guests enjoyed the opportunity for musical entertainment when out with friends and family the day after Thanksgiving.

- **Education**

Bones for Life® (October 1-November 5)

This pre-registered program concluded with 8 registered participants. All 5 participants who completed a comment card rated their customer satisfaction as a 10. At least one participant asked for the class to be repeated.

T'ai Chi Tuesdays (October 8-November 5)

T'ai Chi Tuesdays concluded with 19 registered participants. Sandy Gebhard who is a very popular instructor will be offering her next series beginning January 14, 2025.

- **Youth Field Trips**

This month, 5 groups brought 133 students for field trip programming. There were 5 youth group visits totaling 192 children in November of 2023; 5 visits totaling 119 students in 2022; no visits in 2021 or 2020; 2 visits totaling 19 students in 2019; and 5 visits totaling 94 students in 2018.

- **Exhibits & Displays**

*Raise a Glass! (June 29-November 17)*

An absolutely stunning showcase, the summer/fall exhibit commemorated a final celebration of the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Conservatory guests found themselves in awe as they entered the garden to see a large center pond with varying levels of hanging glass bowls. These colorful art glass pieces from a 2004 exhibit were repurposed 20 years later as a major feature in 2024. Hand-blown by artist James Michael Kahle, they are available for purchase at [shop.botanicalconservatory.org](http://shop.botanicalconservatory.org).

*From Concept to Celebration (June 29-November 17)*

This special display highlighted the history of the Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory from an original idea to 40 years later. A collaboration of archives from both the Foellinger Foundation and Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory made this visual timeline possible.

*Ben Klinger: Down on Main Street (November 23-January 5)*

A Fort Wayne native, Ben is a visual artist whose preferred mediums include ink and acrylic paint. He enjoys paying homage to his hometown and the Hoosier state with bright colors and bold lines, as Ben has always been drawn to bold fonts, neon signs, and historic architecture. His work is available for purchase at [shop.botanicalconservatory.org](http://shop.botanicalconservatory.org) and in the Conservatory Shop. An upcoming artist reception is being held on December 15 from 1-3 pm.

Gnome for the Holidays (November 23-January 5)

Gnome is where the garden is! A variety of poinsettias play a prominent role as part of this holiday exhibit alongside other plants to create whimsical forms and offer seasonal interest. Also featured this year are a new Santa bench, retro-colored lights, gnome home vignettes, and topiary gnomes. Such playful touches offer guests something fun and unexpected this holiday season.

*\$1 Night Light Display (November 27-December 20)*

This seasonal display is emphasized as part of special holiday hours when the Botanical Conservatory is open late from 5-8 pm on Thursdays and Fridays from Thanksgiving up until Christmas. Only \$1 admission, there are 8 different dates to choose from when the gardens in light are best seen at night!

#### **Volunteers/Staff**

During November, 8 volunteers covered 34 shifts at the Front Desk while 11 volunteers covered 41 shifts in the Gift Shop. An additional volunteer groomed the interior gardens on Tuesday mornings while Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana continued to sweep and tidy walkways. CAS students committed 10 hours with a majority of their time being dedicated to preparing the grounds for the holidays. During the week of showchange, 13 different volunteers assisted with decorating and holiday installation. Three volunteers supported the start of the \$1 Night Light Display during the downtown Night of Lights event. In addition, 3 volunteers assisted with vendor load-in and support of Holly Shopping at the Botanical Conservatory.

#### **Upcoming**

November 23-January 5: Gnome for the Holidays, garden exhibit

November 23-January 5: Down on Main Street, art display by Ben Klinger

November 27-December 20: \$1 Night Light Display, Thursday & Friday evenings

December 5: String Jams Holiday Concert, \$1 Night Light Display

December 7, 14 & 21: Santa and Reindeer Saturdays

December 7: Breakfast with Santa, pre-registered program

December 8: Succulent Christmas Tree, pre-registered program

December 11: Member & Volunteer Holi-Day

December 12 & 14: Evergreen Centerpiece, pre-registered program

December 13: PFW Holiday Carolers, \$1 Night Light Display

December 15: Public Art Reception with Ben Klinger, 1-3 pm

December 15: Suzuki Strings Holiday Performance, 2-2:45 pm

December 24 & 25: CLOSED Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

December 31: New Year's Eve, open 10 am-5 pm

January 1: CLOSED New Year's Day



January 5-10: Showchange week  
January 11-April 6: Floor is Lava, winter exhibit  
January 14-February 4: Continuing T'ai Chi, pre-registered program  
January 14-February 18: T'ai Chi for Relaxation, pre-registered program  
January 25: Winterval

### **Botanical Conservatory Landscape and Horticulture**

- Botanical Conservatory and Lawton staff worked together to install the Conservatory's new holiday exhibit Gnome for the Holidays. The Showcase features the traditional poinsettia tree with a new twist this year—poinsettias in the form of a gnome. Red poinsettias create the 'hat', peach poinsettias create the 'nose,' and white poinsettias create the 'beard.' The Showcase Exhibit also features 'gnome homes' crafted from stumps stored at the Rea facility from Forestry tree removals throughout the City.
- Sycamore Tree Care de-installed the hardware used to hang the glass bowls for the Raise a Glass! Showcase and remove the old theatre lighting through the use of climbing ropes, saddles, and rigging. They also assisted us in hoisting up the large donated cut evergreens for the Gnome for the Holidays Showcase.
- The pergola used in the Raise a Glass! Showcase was disassembled by the MTs and is currently being stored off-site. This spring, the MTs will be rebuilding it and installing it to replace the current pergola found in the Sales Garden. This will provide a much-needed facelift for the Sales Garden and enhance the aesthetics of this garden space.
- Students from the Center for Academic Success (CAS) have assisted Conservatory staff in the continued removal of invasive wintercreeper from the outdoor gardens this fall. CAS students also assisted in preparing the outdoor greens for the holiday greens pots.
- Several new plant species have been procured and will be added to our collection including new Tillandsia species such as Tillandsia hildae. The species acquired will continue to enhance our permanent collection and provide interest for visitors.

### **Botanical Conservatory Facility Maintenance**

- Major prop work was completed to prepare for the Gnome for the Holidays show. Outside displays were retrieved, built, and installed prior to the start of the showchange.
- Katie Pratt started employment as the Seasonal Maintenance person.
- Mutton Rental has been engaged for the purchase of sides for the 20x30 upper level tent on the Terrace Garden. This will give the Botanical Conservatory a storage area for the tables and chairs as well as other items that are in the basement during the elevator replacement project beginning in January 2025.
- LanCon Electric installed new lighting, new receptacles in the Connector, and made a number of other much-needed electrical repairs.
- Allied Mechanical made repairs to a motor and Freeze Stat for AHU-9. Allied Mechanical is working toward the start of the replacement of the aged flue for the industrial domestic water heater.
- B Squared Quality Construction installed new countertops and painted front-facing panels to improve the appearance of the Front Desk

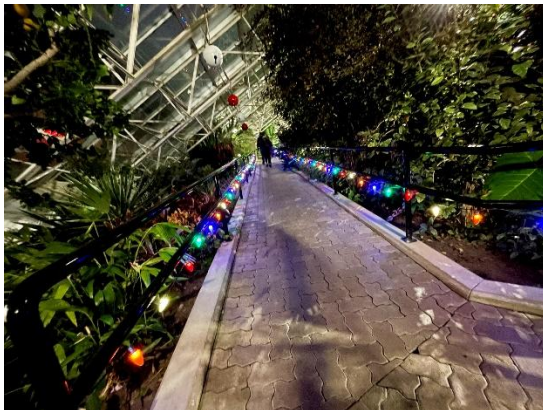
- Rob Rider Productions installed a new video screen in the Kessler Room after the mechanical failure of the prior screen.
- 



*Blooming flowers lighting up the front entrance during Night of*



*Guests enjoying the Gnome for the Holidays 2024 holiday*



*The Tropical House lit up as part of the \$1 Night Light*



*Volunteers fluffing greenery and adding lights during holiday*

## Kathryn Pargmann – Manager Lead of Marketing

- + [www.RiverfrontFW.org](http://www.RiverfrontFW.org) had 4,656 hits to the site this month and the Promenade Park link had 1,657 hits. The Rental link continues to be a popular source of information. A total of 699 hits in November.
- + The Marketing Team organized press conferences for the Goshen Road Entrance opening to Franke Park (November 8) and Ground is Broken for Packard Park Renovation (November 12). Also, a Photo Op. for the Unity Lighting Ceremony was held on November 25.
- + Continuously worked on the Engage website. Currently at 25 projects now to monitor. Updated list of projects and sent to team as well as working on various updates to links.
- + **Web Statistics:** Users: 27,415 Hits: 99,050
- + 42 design projects created.
- + Completed donation appeals for the Department and the Botanical Conservatory.
- + Winterval poster, brochure almost complete, social posts for all areas/organizations to use.
- + Props/promos/signage for Headwaters and Christmas on the Farm completed.
- + Sent first Winterval e-mail call for sponsorships.
- + Held November meetings with media sponsors to discuss 2025 plans.
- + Set up paid ads for Christmas on the Farm and Headwaters Rink.
- + Social media promotions for Veterans Day Golf, Franke Park New Entrance, Packard Park Groundbreaking, Unity Lighting, and more.
- + Arranged for 10 media interviews with select staff.

✚ November Media Mentions: 56

✚ Social Media Totals for November:

FB Followers	98,028
FB Reach	205,628
X (formerly Twitter) Followers	14,014
Instagram Followers	26,939

## Gary Whitacre – Manager, Golf Operations

### ✚ 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

- 2024 continued a significant upward trend for golf, both locally and nationally. Nationally, play was up 2% over 2023, and play at the Park's courses was right on that. Revenue at the courses increased 14.5% year over year, continuing a trend that started in 2021.

				<b>Revenue</b>
	<b><u>FOSTER PARK</u></b>	<b><u>MCMILLEN PARK</u></b>	<b><u>SHOAFF PARK</u></b>	<b><u>% GAIN (Year/Year)</u></b>
2022	\$355,303.50/17,196	\$217,088.50/12,560	\$448,137.50/21,723	+13.3%
2023	\$472,051.75/21,469	\$289,831.50/16,677	\$556,089.75/26,019	+29.1%
<b>2024</b>	<b>\$442,639.50/19,135</b>	<b>\$349,977.25/17,983</b>	<b>\$659,780.30/28,272</b>	<b>+14.5%</b>
	RANGE REVENUE	2022 \$13,078	\$86,777	
		2023 \$17,094	\$109,919	
		<b>2024 \$23,302</b>	<b>\$114,878</b>	
	<b><u>TOTAL ALCOHOL REVENUE:</u></b>	2022 \$36,290		
		2023 \$55,339		
		<b>2024 \$55,352.50</b>		

✚ *The total revenue shown at the top includes the range and alcohol revenue at each course, and range revenue is broken down by course below the total figures. Alcohol totals are the three courses together.*

✚ McMillen and Shoaff Park golf courses opened on March 12, and Foster Park opened on March 13. All of the courses closed following completion of play on Veteran's Day, Monday, November 11.

✚ It was to be expected that play at Foster Park would be down this year. The continuation of the Deep Rock Tunnel project forced the closure of the seventh hole, and modifications to three additional holes. A temporary green was created on the fourth hole, and it was divided into a short par 3 (with a provisional green) and a short par 4 to the existing green complex. The eighth hole was shortened to a par 4. This caused the front nine to play to a par of 34.

✚ It was unknown at the time how much this would affect play numbers, but the fear was it could be in the 15-20% range. This proved to be untrue, as the decrease in play was about 6.5%. Foster over-performed compared to the early fears.

- ✚ For 2025, the project continues, but shifts further to the south. For '25, the nines will be reversed (the nine relatively unaffected by the project will be the front, the previous front nine will be the back). The course will play to par 35-34/69. Preliminary plans are already being formulated to restore the affected holes when the project wraps up, hopefully summer of 2025.
- ✚ Sixteen new golf carts were received in May and put into service at Foster Park, replacing 2015 carts. Seven of the carts they replaced will upgrade Shoaff Park's fleet, and will replace the remaining 2007 and earlier carts. Six of the 2015 carts were added to McMillen's fleet, and the final three remained at Foster. The year ended with 24 carts at Shoaff, 28 at McMillen, and 43 at Foster. The projected optimal number of carts is 30 at both McMillen and Shoaff and 50 at Foster.
- ✚ As we approach the "optimal" number of carts available, storage will become an issue. The carts at Shoaff Park sit exposed to the weather at all times (even when charging), and the current physical space does not allow for the six additional carts projected to be housed and charged. A proper storage and charging facility would be a huge upgrade and would add to the lifespan and durability of the carts.
- ✚ As the cart fleet gets "younger", maintenance (while still vital and important) becomes a less pressing issue. A quote is being gathered for more new carts, and the older (2002-2007) carts will be traded in or auctioned off.
- ✚ Pricing changed a bit for this season. Cart prices went up \$1/9 holes at all of the courses for 2024, and green fees increased nominally at McMillen and Shoaff. The green fees did not change at Foster. Moving into 2025, the only suggested changes in fees are raising the Weekday Special rate and the outing fee at McMillen Park from \$23 to \$25, and raising the Weekday Special rate at Shoaff from \$26 to \$28. Even at the suggested new prices, we are still well below the comparable area prices.

#### ✚ LOOKING FORWARD TO 2025

- The Parks courses are well positioned in the current market. We offer value-priced golf options in an expanding market. We continue to upgrade and expand our offerings, and we have a great demographic that utilizes our facilities. There is no reason to think that the operation will not continue to grow in the foreseeable future. Value-based golf courses (defined by the National Golf Foundation as having a green fee <=\$40) is the largest area of contraction in the industry since 2016. Courses in this segment that survived through COVID are now reaping the benefits. Since 2020, demand has been increasing significantly, even as the value options have decreased.
- This positions us well in the market. Demand for value-priced alternatives now outpaces the supply. Our combination of courses that are accessible to beginning golfers while still challenging for the experienced player puts us in a great position.
- Again, this year, we contracted two instructors to provide lessons to players of all skill levels and offered courses and practice facilities to grow interest in the game.
- The future should concentrate on expanding these opportunities while maintaining a value-oriented approach. Expanding and upgrading the cart fleet is being looked into. At some point improving the physical facilities for carts (and even the clubhouse facility) at Shoaff Park would be a great opportunity that would pay for itself over time.
- An alternative to the current POS and online tee time system in use at the courses is also being looked into. The current system was almost an afterthought to the RecTrac system, and is not terribly efficient for either the end user or the course personnel. There exist systems designed especially for golf that integrate with our current system, and would greatly assist efficiency and upgrade user experience.



- With (hopefully) the completion of the Deep Rock Tunnel project this summer, it is time to turn our attention to what will happen moving forward at Foster Park. Just restoring the disruption that the project has caused will take nearly as much time to fix as if we moved forward with the Master Plan which has been approved for the complete renovation and remodeling of the course. It would be a shame to fix the disrupted areas only to dig up the whole place the following year. With Foster Park's 100-year anniversary coming up in 2028, time is growing short to decide how to proceed.
- Golf, both locally and nationally, continues to grow and should continue in the foreseeable future. The Parks courses should continue to grow with them.

## Ritchie – Greenway & Trails Manager



FW PUBLIC WORKS  
**Greenways  
& Trails**  
*In Your Neighborhood*

- ✚ The pedestrian bridge was set on the Covington Road Trail: Hadley to Getz on 11/20. The trail is 98% complete.
- ✚ Crosby Excavating has started working along Lima Road and Coliseum Boulevard to construct the Pufferbelly Trail.
- ✚ Malott Contractors will be the contractor for the South Anthony Streetscape Project, including a west side trail between Pontiac and Creighton.
- ✚ The Diebold Road Improvement project between the Roundabout and Clinton was bid. The project includes a trail on the west side. Brooks Construction will be the contractor.
- ✚ The Urban Trail along Harrison between Main and Washington was awarded to Crosby Excavating.
- ✚ The Illinois Road Trail from North Rockhill Park to the intersection of Illinois and Getz will be routed to utilities in December and then bid out in January.
- ✚ The Winter Solstice Walk and Bike Ride along the Salomon Farm loop and the Pufferbelly Trail will be held on Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at Salomon Farm.



## Division News and Media Coverage:

**Summit City Music Theatre presents: *A Christmas Carol***  
**December 6 – 15                      Friday, Saturday, 7:30 p.m.    Sunday, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Salomon Farm Park, 817 West Dupont Road**

Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* captivates, entertains, and changes hearts. This holiday season, Gavin Thomas Drew and Chapman Shields return their immersive adaptation of this classic tale to the Old Barn at Salomon Farm Park along with a cast of talented local artists and musicians. This show is rated G and is family-friendly. Tickets are \$25 per adult, \$20 per senior



(65+) and student. Seating is general admission. The historic venue is not a temperature-controlled building. There will be a heater blowing warm air into the Old Barn but it cannot maintain a warm temperature during the cold winter months, so guests are encouraged to bring blankets to stay cozy and warm. Hot chocolate and concessions will be available for purchase. Heated restrooms will be available right next to the Old Barn and restroom facilities on the north side of the Wolf Family Learning Center will be available for use. Purchase tickets online at [www.fortwayneparks.org](http://www.fortwayneparks.org) or by phone at 260-427-6000.

## **Blue Jacket's Fantasy of Lights** in **Franke Park**

5:30 pm – **Open every day through Dec. 31st**

- Sunday through Thursday 5:30 – 9:00 PM - Friday and Saturday 5:30 – 10:00 PM

Admission is just \$15 per personal vehicle, \$30 per 12-passenger van/limo, and \$60 for a bus/trolley. Pay cash and credit/debit at the gate, or pay ahead of time and Download the App!

WANE, City Council recap – ARPA

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/how-fort-wayne-spent-50-8m-of-covid-19-relief-money/>

WANE, City Council recap – Appointments to boards and commissions

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/look-all-newly-appointed-fort-wayne-government-board-members/>

WANE, Commissioners to leave TRAA agreement on Jan. 10

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/allen-county-commissioners-to-leave-traa-agreement-jan-10/>

WANE, Gov. Holcomb reflects on time in office and people of northeast Indiana

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/holcomb-reflects-on-time-in-office-and-people-of-ne-indiana/>

WFFT, New Haven casino meeting

[https://www.wfft.com/news/hundreds-show-up-to-support-new-haven-casino-project/article\\_4a436778-b771-11ef-8814-1f2a8dc786ee.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/hundreds-show-up-to-support-new-haven-casino-project/article_4a436778-b771-11ef-8814-1f2a8dc786ee.html)

Adams Radio Group, City to buy Don Chava's property for expanded riverfront development

<https://www.1039waynefm.com/2024/12/10/city-to-buy-don-chavas-property-for-expanded-riverfront-development/>

WBCL, City announces agreement to buy Chava's property for riverfront

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/fort-wayne-announces-agreement-to-buy-don-chavas-property-for-riverfront>

FW Bus Weekly, City to buy Don Chava's property for expanded riverfront development

[https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article\\_21230d96-b66b-11ef-9b60-1742af90de39.html](https://www.fwbusiness.com/news/article_21230d96-b66b-11ef-9b60-1742af90de39.html)

### **Create the Bright: Winter Solstice Walk/Ride and Campfire**

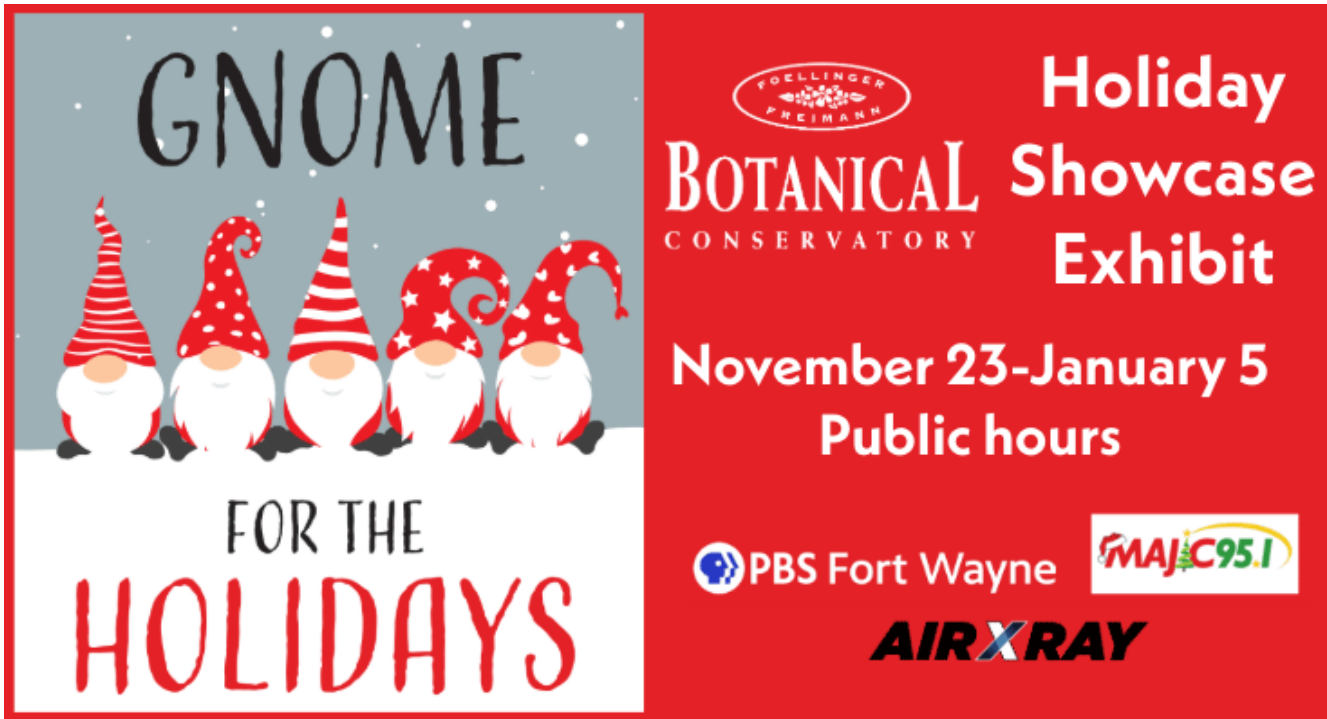
*Fort Wayne, Ind.* – Gather friends and family and join us for the Winter Solstice Walk/Ride and Campfire at the Wolf Family Learning Center, **Salomon Farm Park, 817 W. Dupont Road, 5:30 p.m., Saturday, December 21.** The City of Fort Wayne Greenways and Trails Department and the Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation Department are partnering to present this **FREE** event.

On the shortest day of the year, let's create the bright! Bring a flashlight, battery-operated lantern or Christmas lights and join us by wheel or by heel as we enjoy the Winter Solstice on the Pufferbelly Trail and

Salomon Farm Trail Loop. We encourage all cyclists to light up their bicycles for fun, but require at least a front white light and red, rear reflector for safety. Walkers can deck out with Christmas decorations, lights and bells.

Bicyclists will depart at 5:30 p.m. for a 6.5-mile ride. The 1.65-mile walk around the Salomon Farm Trail Loop will begin immediately after riders depart. We will gather back at Salomon Farm following the ride and walk for food, a campfire, and stories of the history of Salomon Farm.

The Winter Solstice event is sponsored by DLZ, a full-service, multidisciplinary, family-and minority-owned professional consulting firm that has earned a reputation for over 100 years as a leader in the architecture/engineering and construction services industries throughout the Midwest. Follow Salomon Farm on Facebook for updates and weather-related cancellations.



**Closed on Mondays** *For the Holidays - \$1.00 Admission Fee on Thursdays from 5-8 pm December 12, 13, 19 and 20.*

WOWO, City looks to purchase Don Chava's for future riverfront development  
<https://wowo.com/city-announces-agreement-to-purchase-don-chavas-property/>

WPTA, Kops 4 Kids  
<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/12/10/annual-kops-kids-event-held-dupont-rd-meijer/>

WFFT, Upcoming event at Salomon Farm Park  
[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/winter-solstice-walk-ride-taking-place-at-salomon-farm-park/article\\_b318787e-b64a-11ef-aea3-cf437d065bdc.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/winter-solstice-walk-ride-taking-place-at-salomon-farm-park/article_b318787e-b64a-11ef-aea3-cf437d065bdc.html)

**Headwaters Ice Rink** **Opens on November 23, 12:00 p.m., weather permitting**  
**Headwaters Park, 333 South Clinton Street**

Riverfront Fort Wayne announces plans to open Headwaters Ice Rink for the season at noon on Saturday, November 23. The Saturday before Thanksgiving is the traditional opening day since the rink

opened in 2003, however, opening and operating is dependent on the weather conditions. Following opening day, the rink will be open Monday to Sunday through \*January 6. The regular hours of operation will be 4:00-9:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 12:00-9:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. Admission will be \$6 for skaters age three and above, and free for age two and below. The skate rental will be \$3. An array of special programming is planned at Headwaters Ice Rink for the 2024-2025 season starting in December with themes like *80's Night*, *Skate it Off (Taylor's version)* and *Holiday Cheer* followed by fresh themes in January and February, skating demonstrations and a meet and greet with a very special guest character. Thanks to a donation by Marcia Crawford and Grant Crawford, reduced admission skating and skate rental opportunities will be available in January and February to celebrate the memory and community service of Dr. John Crawford, a physician and radiation oncologist, and 20-year member of the Fort Wayne City Council. Discover all of the details in the Winter edition of the Fun Times Activity Guide. For the latest parking map, please go to [www.fortwayneparks.org](http://www.fortwayneparks.org) and search Headwaters Park. Ten-punch skating passes will be available to purchase at the rink, located at 333 South Clinton Street in downtown Fort Wayne, during normal operation hours.

\*After January 6, the rink will be closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. The rink will also be closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Additional or extended hours will be announced throughout the season. Stay up to date on Facebook pages for @HeadwatersParkFW and @FortWayneParks. Headwaters Ice Rink is sponsored by: WANE 15, Loud 103.3, and Hot 107.9.

WANE, Pontiac Street Market update

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/how-the-pontiac-street-market-is-doing-1-year-after-opening/>

WFFT, Moody's recognition for City Utilities

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/city-utilities-receives-high-grades-on-water-sewer-stormwater-bonds/article\\_5ef30266-b34b-11ef-8c69-b725c799cbfb.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/city-utilities-receives-high-grades-on-water-sewer-stormwater-bonds/article_5ef30266-b34b-11ef-8c69-b725c799cbfb.html)

WBCL, New pavilion at Franke Park

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/new-state-of-the-art-mcmillen-family-pavilion-dedicated-at-franke-park>

WBCL, City Council approves four major neighborhood projects led by Public Works

<https://www.wbcl.org/news/fort-wayne-city-council-approves-four-major-neighborhood-projects>

**Ben Klinger: Down on Main Street November 23 – January 5, public hours  
Foellinger-Freimann Botanical Conservatory, 1100 South Calhoun Street**

As a Fort Wayne native, Ben Klinger has always been drawn to bold fonts, neon signs, and historic architecture. Ben is a visual artist whose preferred mediums include ink and acrylic paints. He enjoys paying homage to his hometown and the Hoosier state with bright colors and bold lines. "I can remember, as a child being fascinated by painted ghost signs, old neon, and the old buildings from my neighborhood. I grew up a few blocks from the Rialto and the sign out front just called my name. I love creating art with the hope of sparking the same nostalgia for others."

City TV, 'Public Works in your Neighborhood' with Dawn Ritchie and Rick Zolman as guests

<https://acpl.viebit.com/watch?hash=Cfuu7Af8sdhcEnOX>

WFFT, Fort Wayne ranks in top 10 for best places to retire

[https://www.wfft.com/news/indiana/fort-wayne-ranks-in-top-10-for-national-2025-best-places-to-retire-list/article\\_15715002-a838-11ef-b433-3f9e99530c38.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/indiana/fort-wayne-ranks-in-top-10-for-national-2025-best-places-to-retire-list/article_15715002-a838-11ef-b433-3f9e99530c38.html)

WPTA, Walk in the Park on McKinnie Commons lighting event

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/11/21/walk-park-unity-lighting-mckinnie-commons/>

WANE, Discussion on diverse housing options in Fort Wayne

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/city-officials-split-on-proposal-aiming-to-encourage-diverse-housing-options-in-fort-wayne/>

WPTA, Walk in the Park on **McMillen Park Community Center**

<https://www.21alivenews.com/2024/11/21/walk-park-adult-athletics-mcmillen-park-community-center/>

WANE, City Council recap – Riverfront development public space

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/price-timetable-for-next-phase-of-fort-wayne-riverfront-development-unveiled/>

WANE, City Council recap – Urban Trail update

<https://www.wane.com/top-stories/urban-trail-gets-closer-to-connecting-key-pieces-of-downtown-fort-wayne/>

WELT, ‘Investing in the City of Fort Wayne’ with Matt Gratz and GFL as guests discussing the upcoming collection day changes

[https://soundcloud.com/mayorfw/public-works-](https://soundcloud.com/mayorfw/public-works-gfl?si=0904feb0f53f47b1b302e3e15fd169d8&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

[gfl?si=0904feb0f53f47b1b302e3e15fd169d8&utm\\_source=clipboard&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=social\\_sharing](https://soundcloud.com/mayorfw/public-works-gfl?si=0904feb0f53f47b1b302e3e15fd169d8&utm_source=clipboard&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=social_sharing)

WFFT, Town hall for a proposed casino

[https://www.wfft.com/news/large-crowd-packs-barn-to-sound-off-on-proposed-new-haven-casino/article\\_3181630a-a693-11ef-b764-1b1912a9a3a0.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/large-crowd-packs-barn-to-sound-off-on-proposed-new-haven-casino/article_3181630a-a693-11ef-b764-1b1912a9a3a0.html)

WFFT, Awards for Parks and Recreation

[https://www.wfft.com/news/local/fort-wayne-parks-and-recreation-receives-two-statewide-awards/article\\_c9e00ee2-a5c3-11ef-8011-5fbca63d41d5.html](https://www.wfft.com/news/local/fort-wayne-parks-and-recreation-receives-two-statewide-awards/article_c9e00ee2-a5c3-11ef-8011-5fbca63d41d5.html)

U.S. News and World Report, Fort Wayne #10 on the list of 2025 best places to retire

<https://realestate.usnews.com/places/rankings/best-places-to-retire>

WANE, FWPD homicide clearance rate beats U.S. average by nearly 30 percentage points

<https://www.wane.com/news/local-news/fwpd-homicide-clearance-rate-beats-u-s-average-by-nearly-30-percentage-points/>

WANE, Banks supports local police helping with deportation

<https://www.wane.com/news/indiana/jim-banks-supports-local-police-helping-with-deportation/>

WANE, El Azteca under new ownership, part of a new trend

<https://www.wane.com/video/el-azteca-under-new-ownership-part-of-new-trend/10228598/>

WOWO, Casino discussion

<https://wowo.com/community-weighs-in-on-proposed-new-haven-casino/>

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[December 2024 – Parks & Recreation \[40 - 41\]](#)

# Winterval 2025

Saturday, January 25

*in Downtown Fort Wayne*



The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department, with the support of many other groups, is hosting the 14th Annual Winterval Event, a full day of indoor and outdoor festivities for all ages including live ice sculpture carving, an Amazing Winterval Race, a hike at Lindenwood Nature Preserve, a market and carnival games at the Community Center, crafts at the Botanical Conservatory, ice skating and sled dogs at Headwater Park, a pickleball tournament at McMillen Park Community Center, Winter Cozy at Promenade Park and events at the Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne Curling Club, Historic Fort Wayne and more! New this year is a Winterval Sculpture Garden at AEP Plaza where pre-carved ice sculptures will be on display along with fun activities and local food trucks.

We invite you to be a part of the Winterval fun and put your business on ice by sponsoring a pre-carved ice sculpture for the Sculpture Garden at AEP Plaza. Your ice sculpture can display your business logo, be an object that represents your business, or any theme of your choice. Each ice block is approximately 20" wide x 10" deep x 40" tall. Ice blocks can be combined to form larger sculptures. Single block sculptures can be sponsored for as little as \$275 with discounts for multiple blocks. (Complete pricing can be found on the enclosed Winterval Ice Art sponsorship form or at [fortwayneparks.org/programs/winterval](http://fortwayneparks.org/programs/winterval)).

#### Ice Sculpture Sponsor Benefits

- Your sculpture will be displayed at the Winterval Sculpture Garden on the AEP Plaza during the event
- Your company logo and a picture of your completed sculpture will be posted on the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation website ([fortwayneparks.org/programs/winterval](http://fortwayneparks.org/programs/winterval)) and Facebook page
- Your company name and logo will be included on event posters
- Your company name and logo will be included in the Winterval program brochure

In addition to ice sculptures, general event sponsorships are available.

For more information or to discuss your potential sponsorship, please contact Patti Davis at 260-427-6465 or [patti.davis@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:patti.davis@cityoffortwayne.org)

Sponsorship deadline is January 3, 2025.

