

February 10, 2016

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Lisa Sprinkle, Marketing Coordinator
Re: February Staff Report

Executive Director (Dan Olson)

- We have nominated four individuals to receive IAPD/IPRA Community Service Awards over the next few months. Two of them were joint nominations with the Forest Preserve Friends Foundation and the Vermilion County Conservation District. One of those nominees will be presented the award in April at the VCCD Board of Trustees meeting.
- I have greatly enjoyed seeing the woody invasive species removal that has been taking place in many areas. Although it appears dramatic in winter because leaves are absent from the trees that remain, the benefits to the environment are many.
- Staff has been examining several aspects of the Kickapoo Rail Trail phase one construction in Champaign County to present various options over the next few weeks.
- Additional meetings/phone conferences at: Accuracy website meeting, village of Mahomet planning, legal counsel, risk management, Citizens Advisory Committee, projects, KRT landowners, local directors meeting, IPRA/IAPD Conference, Forest Preserve Friends Foundation, Illinois Association of Conservation and Forest Preserve Districts.

Deputy Director/Grants (Mary Ellen Wuellner)

- A proposal was submitted, at the Board of Commissioners' request, to the Community Foundation of East Central Illinois in the amount of \$4,000 to cover the installation of an accessible sidewalk at the Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden. ADA walks have been installed on an incremental basis as funds allow. This portion, if approved by the CFECI, would take visitors from the east entrance of the garden to the enabling garden.
- An application was submitted to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy for a Doppelt Family Foundation grant in the amount of \$50,000 for the Kickapoo Rail Trail. If the CCFPD is fortunate to be one of just eight grant awardees, the funds would help meet the recent need for additional Phase 1 funding.
- The Forest Preserve Friends Foundation received a grant of \$1,200 from the Chicago Community Trust to offset a portion of its annual DonorPath subscription. DonorPath provides expert guidance on donor solicitation and stewardship, as well as online fundraising education to staff and the Foundation board.
- I have been researching possible new grant funding sources to help fill the Kickapoo Rail Trail funding gap. Exelon Corporation, Regions Bank, and FedEx are a few of the possibilities that may merit a grant application.

Administration (John Baker)

- Received notification that the Consumer Price Index for calculating the 2015 pay 2016 tax levy is 0.7%. This CPI increase is the lowest applied to the District since tax caps went into effect in 1996. Existing property tax rates for 2015 pay 2016 are capped at no more than a 0.7% increase more than 2015 property taxes paid in 2016, thereby capping the District's revenue increase for its current tax base to approximately \$22,000. Property taxes for new construction in 2016 will be added later and hopefully will compensate for the small increase in the tax cap. Should the Carle and Presence properties in Champaign County be included in the EAV calculation for taxes paid this year, they will be counted as new construction.
- Finalized the available debt service funds and bond interest rate for 2016-2017 so that Chapman Cutler could prepare the District bond ordinance.

- Filed updated financial information to retain account access and transfer services with the Illinois Funds.
- Vendor 1099s are in process and will be mailed in late February.
- Verified accuracy of District tax exempt properties. We also received property assessment notices for the Kickapoo Rail Trail parcels. These parcels are pending tax-exemption from the Illinois Department of Revenue.
- Provided financial account codes for ActiveNet's solution for District rentals, programs, and Museum store transactions. The new system will create two back office efficiencies for administration: 1) eliminating duplicate data entry into the reservations database and then into the financial system, and 2) automating reporting of all transactions on a modified accrual basis, instead of the present cash based procedure. ActiveNet will provide financial "flat files" that will upload all needed financial data into our financial system.
- Purchased certificates of deposits at competitive rates with Prospect Bank (six months at .59%), Central Illinois Bank (1 year at 1%) and Industrial and Commercial Bank (through the Illinois Investor's Trust for nine months at .85%). Several CDs mature in the past two months, allowing for these reinvestments.