

# THE ALABAMIAN

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION • SUMMER 2019



## Parks Build Community

Connecting Communities Through Farmers Markets





# WIN WITHOUT LOSSES



## Coach Safety Act Is Law

### About the Law:

Proposed in conjunction with the CoachSafely Foundation, the law is the first of its kind to address public concerns about sports injuries for a youth athlete population that is estimated to be **seven times larger than all athletes above 14 years of age**. The implementing, enforcing and administering of the Coach Safety Act is the responsibility of the Alabama Department of Public Health.



- The 2017-18 Alabama Legislative session enacted HB9, called the Coach Safety Act.
- The law brings coaching standards to all the 14 and under aged athletes in Alabama.
- All community or association athletic personnel will now be required to take an annual injury prevention course.
- The law is expected to go into effect November 4, 2018.

### Advocated by:

The Coach Safety Act was advocated by Coach Bill Clark of UAB, Coach Nick Saban at the University of Alabama, Coach Willie Slater at Tuskegee University and Dr. Mike Goodlet, team physician to Auburn University.

### About the Coach Safely Course:

#### Led by:

The CoachSafely Foundation in partnership with Children's of Alabama, Encore Rehabilitation and ThreatAdvice.

#### Developed by:

The course was developed by the Andrews Research and Education Foundation, led by renowned sports medicine pioneer and surgeon Dr. James R. Andrews.

As per the law, the Coach Safely course covers prevention and injury recognition of:



- **Concussions**
- **Heat and Exertion Illnesses**
- **Trauma and Overuse**
- **Sudden Cardiac Arrest**
- **Emergency Action Plan**
- **Physical Conditioning**
- **Equipment Usage**

The course will also cover the physical and emotional characteristics of the youth athlete, information regarding physical and mental abuse awareness, and age appropriate training and tips for communicating with children and parents.



✉ [info@coachsafely.org](mailto:info@coachsafely.org)

www [coachsafely.org](http://coachsafely.org)





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*From the*  
**President**  
Billy Powell

**L**et's get our "Game On" for National Parks and Recreation Month! July is set aside each year to celebrate the benefits that parks and recreation programs offer communities throughout the nation. So ... let's remember the vital role local parks and recreation programs play in the towns and cities represented in this organization.

As recreation professionals, we know that parks and recreation programs have a powerful effect on our lives. Perhaps this year's celebration could be a time for us to reflect on and understand just what an impact they have, and consequently, just what a responsibility WE have to make our programs the best they can be.

This year's proclamation explains that P&R programs help to ensure the health of citizens by building healthy, active communities that aid in disease prevention, provide therapeutic services for mentally or physically challenged individuals and improve the mental and emotional health of all people.

P&R programs contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of the community through increased property values, tourism, crime reduction, business attraction, and expanding the local tax base.

P&R is fundamental to the environmental well-being of the community by improving water quality, protecting groundwater, prevention of flooding, providing vegetative buffers to development and producing wildlife habitats.

And certainly, P&R ensures the ecological beauty of our communities, providing places for children and adults to recreate outdoors and connect with nature.

This year, the national focus is also on the fun and games that bring a "happiness factor" into the P&R benefits column. Fun is important. Exciting team sports that get the spectators cheering, and the amusing developmental programs like t-ball that make parents smile, the summer camps that educate and entertain youngsters ... these are all part of that network of benefits that we offer our communities.

Think of P&R programs as somewhat like a football, soccer ball or basketball, which is used by the players (citizens) on the court/field (your city or community). The players use the ball and it weaves its way all over the field and eventually advances to the goal for a score. Indeed, the P&R programs weave throughout a community, touching the lives of citizens and making an impact on the various elements that are important in their lives. When all these positive influences come together for a common goal - improving and maintaining a good quality of life - the community scores big time.

Just think - you do that! Our member P&R programs and our recreation staff and employees make that happen. You score every day in one way or another, and without you, the citizens we serve and those who could be served would be much less fortunate.

I hope as we celebrate this month that you will reflect on how important you are. No matter what your role is, it's vital in the overall game plan.

I challenge you to follow the P&R Month theme and get your "Game On." Put your best foot forward. Make improvements where you can. Find ways to encourage people to visit the parks and participate in programs, whether a state park or city playground, a Dixie Youth team or an adult exercise class.

Our business is the game of life, and when our P&R programs have a good game plan, everybody wins.

Sincerely,  
Billy Powell, 2019 ARPA President

*From the*  
**Executive Director**  
Natalie Norman



**H**ello ARPA Members,  
I know this will find everyone in the middle of a busy summer! Thank you for all that you do!

It is a fact that parks do indeed build communities, and we as professionals are charged with the privilege of providing them.

Our parks encourage communities to be active and engaged in exercise, activity, play or sport. They are necessary in building and sustaining vibrant, thriving communities. While providing health and wellness opportunities for all populations, ranging from chronic illness management to improving the mental health and quality of life for our citizens to getting our kids outdoors and healthier, parks are an essential foundation.

We are certainly thankful to have such wonderful community parks in the State of Alabama! Thank you for building parks and building your communities.

As Summer moves into Fall, please remember our Fall Workshop in Orange Beach September 10-12 and the COPP Golf Tournament in October. A special thanks to Montgomery for hosting State Softball and Opelika for hosting State Swimming and Diving. We look forward to Archery, Flag Football, Volleyball and Soccer!

Also coming up in September will be the start of annual membership renewals and conference registration.

Thanks to all of our members for making ARPA active and engaged! It is a privilege to serve!

Sincerely,  
Natalie Norman, CPRP  
ARPA Executive Director

# Parks Build Community



# Winfield - Summer Concert Series



Winfield Park and Rec hosts “Singing in the Park” on Sunday nights during the summer months. Gospel music fills the air and people gather from far and near to be a part of the experience. This outreach brings all those involved together and creates a community bond.

# Winfield - Flag Disposal Dropbox

The Winfield Park and Rec restored an old mailbox to create a flag drop box for the community to dispose of old and worn flags to be disposed of properly. The City Administrative Assistant, Debbie Loftis, is shown with the Mayor of Winfield, Mr. Randy Price at the dedication ceremony. Ms. Loftis was so pleased that

the dropbox was placed to honor her late husband, Danny Loftis, who was a retired navy veteran that always raised and lowered the city flags when needed. The community will now have a location to place flags with honor and respect. God Bless the U.S.A.!



# Boaz - Grand Opening of Old Mill Park

On September 28, 2018 the City of Boaz proudly broke ground on an area of land located in downtown Boaz to establish a park for the entire community to enjoy. The park boasts a playground, splash pad, walking track, two pavilions, and an amphitheater.

perfect venue for similar events in the future as well as everyday enjoyment for the community.

The grand opening of Old Mill Park on Friday, August 9, 2019 has created an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation for the city. This free event includes vendors and live music with Muscadine Bloodline as the headliners. The stage also welcomes the Boaz Intermediate School Choir, The Pickers from Guntersville, the Soul Survivor Band, and The Clay Jones Band. This park is the



# Fort Payne - Positive Power of Fort Payne Parks

Not only do parks have a great impact on our communities, but they can also have a positive impact on your staff.

On June 20th, we had our inaugural Chalk Art in the Park Day at our Alabama Walking Park. While the day turned out a bit dreary, the park was lit up by the smiles and laughter of children and staff. We even had a two VIP's stop by- Mayor Larry Chesser added his Daffy Duck and the Chic Fila Cow (on a stick) came by while enjoying a staycation in Fort Payne.

Now, please keep in mind our #recfam is not used to some of the crazy ideas I throw at them. They were a little apprehensive, yet excited to be able to get out and spend some time in the park. The staff enjoyed it just as much or more than the participants! Our staff and volunteers were all smiles and laughs as they helped hand out the chalk and interacted with the artists.

Mrs. Tracy really enjoyed seeing the artistic skills in others and how much fun people of all ages were having.

Mr. Carlos said "Chalk Art in the Park released the inner artist in A.J and me"

Mr. A.J. said "It made me happy. Working with the kids and seeing them have fun and play re-enforced my decision to become a p.e. teacher." Mr. A.J. went above and beyond, not only showing his imagination in play and chalk art, he also went into the Splash Pad when some of the children were apprehensive about the water. After seeing him have fun, they jumped right in and were all smiles.

George Bernard Shaw says it best – "We don't stop playing because we get old, we grow old because we stop playing."



# Huntsville - 5th Annual City-Wide Fun Fest

This year was the 5th Annual City-Wide Fun Fest held by Huntsville Parks & Recreation. As the name implies, this event was open to the public and everything offered was FREE—even the food and drinks! The Milton Frank Stadium at Brahan Spring Park was a great location to host over 600 children and caretakers that participated in the event.

The City-Wide Fun Fest is spearheaded by Max Luther Drive Community Center Programmer, Barbara Cole. Ms. Cole wanted to have an event that provided all sorts of activities for children, including bounce houses, water slides, live music, face painting, STEM projects, clowns, haircuts, recycling projects and more! For this idea to come to fruition Ms. Cole worked year-round to secure everything by donation. The event (which has no budget) could not be possible without amazing community partners, which range from Huntsville City Schools to private businesses such as Coca-Cola and local organizations like Huntsville Christian Motorcycle Association.

Barbara Cole worked with the other recreation center programmers and superintendent, Ray Greene to brainstorm games, logistics, volunteers and staffing for the event. This year Partnership for a Drug Free Community stepped up to help with some funding and volunteers, as well as provide a 501c3 that could accept donations on behalf of the event.

This event brings kids from all over Huntsville, with different socio-economic backgrounds to one place where they can all have fun together. “I wanted to have an event that would make a positive impact on all different facets of the community,” said organizer Barbara Cole. “An event that money wouldn’t restrict if a child could have a slice of pizza or if they could try rock-climbing. This event served hundreds of kids from different summer camps, group homes and individuals that came with their parents. Watching them all play together, smiling and laughing is what the whole event was about.”



# Huntsville - 5th Annual City-Wide Fun Fest

## Special thanks to all our partners:

Huntsville City Schools  
 Partnership for a Drug-free Community  
 Huntsville Police Department  
 Huntsville Emergency Medical Services  
 Huntsville Police Department  
 Operation Green Team  
 Share-On Tutoring  
 SAFY of Alabama  
 Advance America  
 Redi-to-Serve  
 Huntsville Christian Motorcycle Association  
 MC Rare Breed Rocket City  
 Miles of Smiles  
 State Farm-John Gunn  
 Goodway Lodge #222  
 KFC #G135437, #G135438 & #G135457  
 Chick-fila on University Drive  
 Lowe's on Memorial N Pkwy  
 NASA  
 Twilight OES #788

Huntsville Utilities  
 The Orthopedic Center  
 McDonald's (2704 Memorial S Pkwy)  
 Target on Carl T. Jones  
 Domino's (Triana Blvd #5870)  
 Costco  
 Home Depot (#0804 Memorial N.Pkwy)  
 Huntsville Coca-Cola  
 Publix  
 Panera  
 SportsMed  
 Par Excellence Youth Development  
 Carolina Soul Band



# Tuscaloosa - PARA Hosted Tennis & Tech Day and Open House Weekend

Tuscaloosa County Park & Recreation Authority's Center Court Tuscaloosa and The Gateway hosted the Boys & Girls Clubs for a Tennis & Tech Day on June 14. CCT also hosted an Open House on June 15 and 16. CCT is located at 715 21st Avenue East.

PARA reports the idea for the neighborhood event came together with the completion of Alberta Parkway. The parkway acts as a "main street" and provides ease of access with lighting and landscaping which are important assets to the Alberta neighbors. A schedule of events on June 14, for Tennis and Tech Day included youth from the Boys & Girls Clubs visiting Center Court Tuscaloosa and The Gateway.

Events were free and open to the public at Center Court Tuscaloosa:

June 14	10:30 am	Tennis & Tech Ceremony
June 14	11 am- noon	Tours of the Center Court Tuscaloosa
June 15	7 am-6 pm	Tours and free play, court reservations required 205-331-0211
June 16	10 am-6 pm	Tours and free play, court reservations required 205-331-0211



# Tuscaloosa - PARA Hosted Tennis & Tech Day and Open House Weekend

“We want to know our neighbors and be a good neighbor,” said Mike Goldammer, Director of Tennis. “We couldn’t be more excited about the direction tennis is going here at Center Court Tuscaloosa. Our entire team has worked tirelessly to create an environment that encourages exceptional customer service, best-in-class tennis instruction and a place where our members and patrons feel at home. Of course let’s not forget a place where people walk in excited and walk out satisfied and eager to return. We look forward to celebrating all we’ve collectively accomplished and sharing the ways in which we plan to create an even more vibrant, exciting, inclusive and robust environment down the road!”

“The Gateway is excited to participate in this great community event bringing Tennis and Technology together on the Alberta Parkway. We hope to see you there,” said Tim Lewis, Chief Experience Officer.

“We are very excited about partnering with PARA, Center Court Tuscaloosa, and The Gateway to provide a great day of activities for the children at Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama as well as celebrate the beautiful upgrades to Alberta Parkway. We

appreciate the hard work of everyone involved. These partnerships in our area of Tuscaloosa are vitally important to help BGCWA with our mission to provide opportunities to help our members reach their full potential while introducing them to new activities that will help them lead healthy lifestyles and become academically successful,” said Kim Turner, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama.

For more information about Center Court Tuscaloosa visit <http://www.tcpa.org/tennis>

For more information about The Gateway visit <http://tuscaloosagateway.com/>

For more information about the Boys & Girls Clubs of West Alabama visit <https://www.bgcwestal.org/>

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*Enriching our community through exciting recreational and cultural opportunities*



# Gadsden - Natural Disaster Assistance

Many Parks and Recreation departments step up to the plate when natural disasters hit cities. The City of Gadsden Parks and Recreation Department serves as warming and cooling stations year-round. They store

donated supplies, help FEMA collect items, prepare cleaning bucket kits, and cook and serve meals at their community centers.

## STATE SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT WINNERS



8U Champions: Gurley



8U Runner-Up: Winfield



10U Champions: Russellville



10U Runner-Ups: Winfield



12U Champions: Centre



12U Runner-Ups: Piedmont

# Auburn - Developing Inclusive and Accessible Parks and Playgrounds

Auburn Parks and Recreation continues to serve all members of our community through development of inclusive and accessible parks and playgrounds. Most recently, Parks and Recreation completed construction on accessible bocce ball courts at Martin Luther King Park, which will now serve as another sport for our Special Olympics athletes to compete in. The addition of this court qualifies the City of Auburn as a location to host a Special Olympics state tournament in the future.

Playgrounds exist as a place for families and children to create positive memories and experiences. The City of Auburn prioritizes inclusivity in our community, and therefore, in our parks. We are proud that so many of our playgrounds have been improved to be ADA accessible. Among these are the Softball Complex playground, Sam Harris Park, Old and New Duck Samford Parks and Martin Luther King Park. The enhancements to these playgrounds allow residents that use a wheelchair, walker or cane to freely enjoy the parks, along with their family and friends.

As part of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan, the City of Auburn will begin construction on an inclusive playground at Town Creek Park. This \$1.4 million project will be a destination for families wanting to enjoy a completely ADA accessible playground experience.

The parks and facilities in our community are a lifeline to bringing individuals of all backgrounds together, placing an importance on their health and wellness. These places are more than just plots of land or infrastructure, they represent the importance we place on how our community cares for one another.



# Opelika - Builds Pickleball Facility

Have you heard of pickleball? According to the USA Pickleball Association it is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States with more than 2.9 million players nationally. The game combines elements of tennis, badminton and table tennis, creating a sport that is easy for beginners to learn. Pickleball can develop into a quick, fast-paced, competitive game for experienced players.

Pickleball is a prime example of how sports interests are ever changing and evolving, with the aging of one generation and the emergence of new athletes in another. Gone are the days of playing marbles and horse shoes at the local rec center. Soccer has become one the largest leagues among youth, disc golf courses are popping up nationwide and pickleball is pushing its way onto the scene.

With this in mind, the Opelika SportsPlex and Aquatics Center has constructed twelve regulation size pickleball courts. Each court is individually fenced, offering the capability to bring in large tournaments, and the entire facility is covered ensuring the players and spectators alike will be protected from the elements.

The courts will be free and open to the public, allowing local citizens to try their hand at the game. Because pickleball takes place on a smaller court and uses a slower moving ball, children and adults of all ages are able to play together.



## Call for Articles!

If you would like to be published in a future issue of The Alabamian Magazine, please send your article and any graphics to the State Office at [norman@arpaonline.org](mailto:norman@arpaonline.org).

**The theme for the next issue is “Healthy Activities for the Community.”**

What kind of activities do you provide to encourage a healthy lifestyle?

The deadline for consideration in the Fall 2019 issue is October 4th.

Please call 334-279-9160 with any questions.

# Phenix City - Meadowlane Park Splash Pad

Summer time is the best time of the year! While school is out, we have many free activities for kids going on in our parks. Our newest addition is to Meadowlane Park. The splash pad was completed in the spring and getting great use this summer. The kids in the summer camp program and the neighborhood kids are taking a break from the heat in our new splash pad. It has over 10 water features and runs through a 3-minute cycle.



# Phenix City - Fishing Rodeo

This year has been an exciting year for Phenix City Parks and Recreation. We hosted our first annual Fishing Rodeo at Moonlake at Idle Hour Park. We had 75 kids come and participant in this great event. With over 1,000 pounds of catfish stocked in the lake and great support from our community partners, this event was lots of fun for our citizens. There was no limit on the number of fish per participant. There were door prizes given out and BW Capps donated worms for all of the participants.



# Enterprise - Positive Impacts

Some aspect of the Enterprise Parks and Recreation Department has a positive impact on lives every day.

EPRD Director Billy Powell said some of those are obvious; others, not as obvious, and still others, simply overlooked or taken for granted.

A common scene at Johnny Henderson Park sets a good example.

Almost every day, the flickering reflections from the summer sun dance on gentle ripples made by the 10-acre lake's popular centerpiece. The aerating fountain produces a soothing, steady sound as the lighted streams are forced above the crest and then splash crisply back into the lake. As the daylight wanes, encroaching shadows help to create a calming pattern of light and dark, and the sun eventually sets in the distance with a yellow glow.

The beauty in this setting, a common scene at Johnny Henderson Park in Enterprise, is one of the most fulfilling rewards of a parks and recreation program that takes what is given by nature and helps to make it visible and accessible to those who appreciate it. Natural beauty is showcased at all eight of the city parks and is enhanced by attentive upkeep and landscaping.

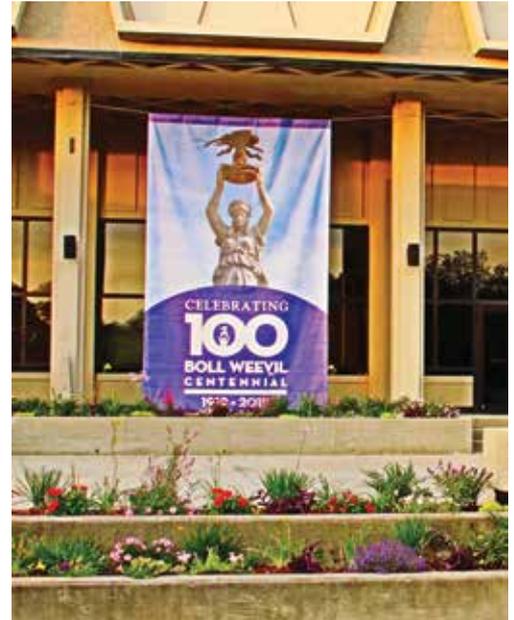
For many park users, the appreciation of beauty makes a daily walk or run along a rustic trail or concrete path much more satisfying. For others, a relaxing hour on a park bench or swing under the shade of an oak tree can make the worries of the world go away for a while.

Numerous research articles concur, and local park users here and the world over seem to agree, that exposure to nature's beauty has a definite positive impact on emotional and physical well-being. It's a benefit of Parks and Recreation programs that can't be overlooked and is certainly not overlooked in Enterprise, where a population of 30,000 inside the city limits and thousands more who visit the city each year can enjoy the beauty of the well-kept parks.

“Our horticulturist and staff members work very hard to make sure that our parks are not only functional for the various activities that take place all year long, but they make sure our parks look good,” said Powell.

The EPRD horticulturist and staff work year-round to choose landscape designs, plant colors and other details that maintain the beauty of the parks as well as the building facilities.

“We don't take for granted the importance of beauty in our parks and recreation program because we know that influences when they use the parks, and even when they drive by our parks and facilities,” Powell



# Enterprise - Positive Impacts

said, adding that another great example of how beauty and nature affects the community is a recent change in the flower scheme in the courtyard at city hall, and a streetscape project downtown.

This year, the EPRD added hanging flower baskets to the vintage street lamps downtown. In honor of the Alabama Bicentennial and the celebration for the 100th Anniversary of the famous Boll Weevil Monument, colorful banners were also added to the street lamps.

“Downtown has really come alive with the addition of the flowers and the banners,” said Tourism Director Tammy Doerer. “We appreciate the EPRD staff for all the hard work it took to do that massive project.”

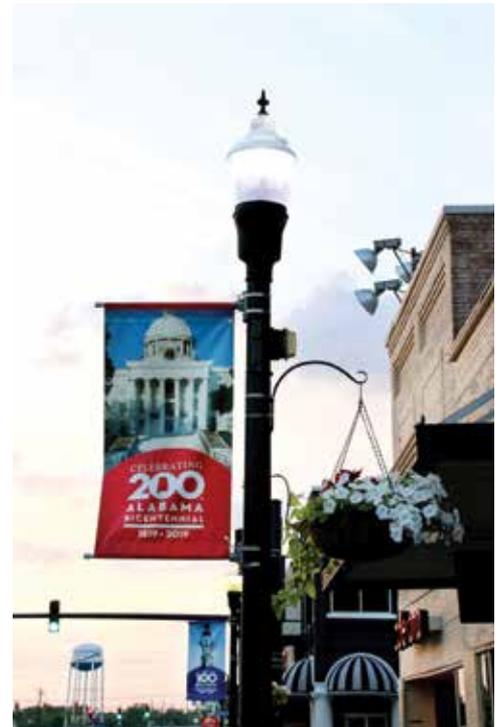
The city has received numerous compliments in recent weeks about the changes and the choice of flowers. In fact, city personnel and visitors alike have indicated that the variety and color of flowers planted make them smile and put them in a brighter mood from the moment they drive into the city hall parking lot or travel along through downtown.

“When you think about it, it was a small change, but it’s made a big difference to many people,” Powell said with a smile. It proves true much of the research through the years that exposure to nature’s beauty, even when it gets some help from a parks and recreation program, does have a positive impact.

Powell believes parks and recreation programs are in many ways in the business of “making memories happen,” by providing the avenues and venues for the memorable life experiences to take place. “The joy that comes with appreciating the beauty of our surroundings has a lasting effect, maybe as much as the family experiences that we strive to provide for our park users and program participants.”

But Powell and the Parks and Recreation staff also realize that beauty isn’t everything. Like human beauty, a parks and recreation program must be beautiful both outside, and inside. The programs within the EPRD has substance and meaning to help build the community and improve the quality of life for Enterprise residents.

The department was pleased with the success of the new Advantage Enterprise program started a few months ago. It is an adaptive tennis program for individuals with special needs. Powell said he was inspired by Advantage Enterprise and expects the EPRD will continue to be involved in the program to reach a segment of the citizenry the department recognizes can be better served.



Young park users and their parents have also been happy in recent months to have an improved and upgraded playground at Donaldson Park. New equipment and landscape improvements were made possible by the Enterprise Rotary Club, which took on the playground as a club project.

“We are grateful to the Rotary Club, and we are reminded of Rotarians’ generosity every time we see kids smiling and laughing as they play on the swings and slides and other playground features,” Powell said.

Mayor William E. Cooper said the renovations have given children a safer place to play. Donaldson Park is one of the oldest city parks and was in need of the safety upgrades.

Providing a safe environment for children to be active and have fun is another primary objective in the department.

# Enterprise - Positive Impacts (continued)

This summer, 110 children are learning, having fun, experiencing special outings and getting exercise as they participate in the annual Summer Camp. Powell said the campers have been excited and busy as they also learn leadership skills and build self-confidence through the summer activities.



Thousands of youngsters, teens and adults were impacted in a positive way by the annual Children's Festival in the Park, which continues to be one of the premiere events in the state. Inflatables, mini-train rides and vendors of all kinds "brought families together for a fun and relaxing day in the park."

Though most people don't realize it, even those who do not visit a park or attend an EPRD program or class do benefit from EPRD activities on a regular basis. Like the Children's Festival that draws many out-of-town visitors who buy gas, food and other items in the city, other EPRD activities contribute to the city tax base, which in turn, helps provide city services that all citizens use.

The EPRD hosts several sports tournaments annually that provide revenue from taxes on gasoline, food, merchandise purchasing, lodging, etc. Last year, the city hosted 18 different tournaments in baseball and softball. The tourneys brought in 417 teams, which translates to 6,672 players and coaches, and another 20,000 family members and friends.

Some tourism leaders estimate out-of-towners spend \$50 to \$70 per day, which can result in up to a conservative figure of \$1.3 million for 26,000 people visiting the city for at least one day. Enterprise has a combined total sales tax of 9 percent. However, only 4 cents of that is collected for the city. Another 4 cents on the dollar goes to the state of Alabama and the other 1 cent goes to Coffee County.

Still, the conservative calculations show the potential for about \$52,000 a day in collected taxes for Enterprise.

"That's a big monetary impact, and it's one that helps every resident who receives a city service, whether it's garbage pickup, driving on a paved street, police protection or otherwise," Powell said.

Collected taxes from tourism dollars is one way that the daily impact of the Parks and Recreation program can be somewhat measured. Powell reminded that in most ways, it cannot.

For the man or woman who sat on the grass around the lake and soaked in the wonder of white geese floating elegantly to the other side against a background of green trees and a setting sun; or the 12-year-old boy who will always remember his dad's face in the bleachers when he drove the ball down the court and made that jump shot; or the 30-year-old dad who proudly cheered on his 5-year-old daughter when she hit the ball off the tee for the first time...

... some things are priceless.

# ARPF FALL WORKSHOP

ALABAMA RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION

## FALL WORKSHOP SEPTEMBER 10-12, 2019

Sponsored by:

### Alabama Recreation and Parks Foundation

The registration fee is \$125 per person and due no later than Friday, September 2. Please make checks payable to **ARPF (Foundation)** and mail to: Alabama Recreation and Parks Foundation/PO Box 230579/Montgomery, Alabama 36123. If you have any questions, please contact Natalie Norman, 334.279.9160, [nnorman@arpaonline.org](mailto:nnorman@arpaonline.org); or Tiffany Wade, [twade@arpaonline.org](mailto:twade@arpaonline.org).

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Group code **ARP**

### FALL WORKSHOP SESSION INFORMATION

Tue 9-10: 2-4 committee meetings, 4:30-6:30 ARPA Coach Safely Initiative/Government Affairs/Issues

Wed 9-11: 9A-11A Education, 11-Noon BOD meeting, 1P-4P Committees, 5P-7P Dinner/Social with vendors

Thu 9-12: 9A-Noon:Education



### FALL WORKSHOP HOTEL INFORMATION

A room block has been set up for your convenience with the Hampton Inn & Suites.

The room rates are as follows:  
Inland view: \$129  
Sideview: \$139  
Beachfront: \$159

Reservations must be made no

later than August 16. Call direct @ 1-800-426-7866 using Group Code: **ARP** or online:

<https://hamptoninn.hilton.com/en/hp/groups/personalized/M/MOBOBH-X-ARP-20190909/index.jhtml?>

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# Connecting Communities Through Farmers Markets

Kevin Roth, Ph.D.

## Where healthy food, education, entertainment and community engagement all meet.

Over the past four years, NRPA Research has focused its energies on two goals: developing data and benchmarks that help agencies make optimal decisions on operations, programming and spending and identifying insights that make the case for greater, more stable funding. One way we deliver on the latter is conducting studies that highlight the diverse offerings of local park and recreation agencies. Our most recent such study, *Farmers Markets: Parks and Recreation Connecting Communities to Healthy Foods*, released this month, looks at the role of farmers markets hosted by park and recreation agencies in local communities.

From centrally located markets in urban communities to main streets in small rural towns, Americans are visiting farmers markets more than ever before. For many people, farmers markets are a fun, family weekend tradition. For others who lack access to healthy food options, they are a critical source of fresh fruit, vegetables and healthy protein. In all communities,

farmers markets are a place to bring family, friends and neighbors together through education, entertainment and community engagement.

Local park and recreation agencies play a significant role in bringing this service to many communities. They are well-suited to leverage their role as both trusted providers of health and wellness opportunities and partners in efforts to expand local agriculture initiatives in all communities. One in 5 park and recreation agencies in the country manages a farmers market, according to the 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review.

Farmers markets are often held on local park and recreation agency property, but that does not mean the agency operates the market. In fact, only half of park and recreation agencies that host farmers markets on their property manage these markets. For the other half of agencies, a separate entity, such as a local nonprofit, a private company or another local government department, manages markets hosted on their property.

But, even if park and recreation agencies host and manage farmers markets, most work closely with third

parties on these events. Specifically, 4 in 5 agencies partner with third parties to ensure these markets are a success. Nonprofits are a frequent partner, working with 44 percent of park and recreation agencies that host farmers markets. A third of park and recreation agencies cooperate with each of the following partners:

- Farmers/rancher organizations (36 percent)
- Other departments/agencies of the local government (35 percent)
- Community development organizations (34 percent)
- Local extension offices (32 percent)

## Farmers Markets Offerings

Farmers markets bring a wide variety of fresh and nutritious food to their communities. Not surprisingly, virtually all farmers markets feature fresh fruits and vegetables. Other typical farmers markets offerings include baked goods (88 percent), organic foods (85 percent) and artisanal products (77 percent). Farmers markets also bring a variety of protein products to local communities, including:

- Nuts and other non-meat protein (73 percent)
- Meat (66 percent)
- Dairy products (61 percent)

Since farmers markets are often the only source of fresh, healthy food options in underserved communities, it is critical that they accept all payment options, including those used by residents who receive government assistance. Two-thirds of farmers markets hosted by park and recreation agencies accept some form of supplemental nutrition benefit. Vendors at 56 percent of park and recreation agency-led farmers markets can accept Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, while a third of farmers markets accept WIC (Women, Infants and Children). Less common are agencies that are able to process benefits from the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (21 percent).

Park and recreation agencies face a few challenges that prevent them from more widely accepting supplemental nutrition benefits from their residents. These include vendors at the farmers markets being unable or unwilling to do so (43 percent), a lack of equipment needed to process these payments at the point-of-sale (26 percent) and a lack of knowledge about how to accept the benefits (26 percent).

## Beyond Healthy Food

While fresh produce, baked goods and protein are primary attractions at farmers markets, the selling of food is by no means the only draw that brings attendees to the markets. Farmers markets can also be a place to entertain and educate residents, while building a broader sense of community.

For example, 62 percent of the farmers markets park and recreation agencies host support arts and cultural events, while 37 percent of agencies provide intergenerational/family activities at their markets. Just over half of these farmers markets offer educational opportunities, such as library services and health screenings. Similarly, 38 percent of agency-hosted farmers markets teach residents about healthy eating through nutrition education and cooking demos. Forty-three percent of farmers markets assist in enrolling patrons in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and/or WIC benefits programs.

## Conclusions

Farmers markets are a staple in many communities throughout the United States. These markets afford thousands of people with the ability to access fresh, local produce, among many other healthy foods. They support the local economy, bring the community together and help families build and reinforce traditions based on healthy living in the heart of their cities, towns or counties.

I encourage you to read the Farmers Markets: Parks and Recreation Connecting Communities to Healthy Foods to gain a better understanding of parks and recreation's role in bringing farmers markets to their communities. The report concludes with a series of tips, including government grant opportunities, to help agencies that are considering starting or expanding farmers markets. This is good news, as there is no better partner than parks and recreation to bring the many benefits of farmers markets to your town.

Kevin Roth, Ph.D., is *NRPA's Vice President of Professional Development, Research and Technology*.

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# 2019

## Calendar of Events

### August

**10** ARPA State Archery Tournament  
Dothan, AL

### September

**10-12** 2019 ARPF Fall Workshop  
Hampton Inn & Suites, Orange Beach, AL

**11** Board of Directors Meeting  
Orange Beach, AL

### October

**12-13** Adult Flag Football Tournament  
Trussville, AL

### November

**2-3** Youth Flag Football State Tournament  
Trussville, AL

**5-7** LEAD  
Mentone, AL

**23-24** ARPA State Soccer Tournament  
Dothan, AL

### December

**4** ARPA Board Directors Meeting  
ARPA State Office, Montgomery, AL

### January 2020

**26-28** 2020 ARPA State Conference  
Mobile, AL