

The Alabamian

A PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION



USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN
PARKS AND RECREATION



Natalie Norman, CPRP

Executive Director
Alabama Recreation and
Parks Association

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Therapeutic Recreation – Staci Wells

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Hello ARPA friends!

As we enter a new year, I'm reflecting on the progress we have made this past year.

- Through our Membership Restructure, Dan Smith and the Membership Committee (with invaluable help from State Office staff- Natalie, Kay and Suzan) made it easier for our members to join ARPA and created an opportunity to increase our association's voice.
- Through their minimum bid proposal, Tommie Agee and our Recreational Sports Committee ensured that we will continue to host successful state tournaments that support ARPA and its endeavors for years to come.
- Through our partnership with RCX Sports, several communities around the State are bringing low cost and low barrier-to-entry programs like NHL Street to their communities.
- Through our partnership with Braves Country Baseball, ARPA members have the opportunity to increase their baseball programs through accessible and affordable programs.

None of this would have been possible without our Board's vision and commitment to excellence. It has been an honor to serve alongside such competent and enthusiastic parks and recreation professionals.

As we reflect back on the progress we have made, it is important to also look ahead to the future and chart a course for continued growth and innovation. One area that has significantly evolved in recent years is the integration of technology into the field of parks and recreation. Those tools have allowed us to improve accessibility, engage diverse audiences and create more inclusive recreational opportunities. Through social media, interactive apps, online registration systems and smart park infrastructure, technology will continue to be a powerful tool in shaping the future of parks and recreation.

I look forward to reading about all of the ways our members are using technology to better serve their citizens and communities.

Thank you for continuing to support ARPA. It has been an honor to serve you throughout this past year. I'm looking forward to continuing to serve you under the leadership of our esteemed incoming President Todd Hughes.

See you at conference!



from the

President

Laura Leigh Chesser

2023 ARPA President

Greetings ARPA!

From the State Office, we thank you for all that you do each day to make our Alabama communities thrive and connect.

Once again, it has been a super-fast year. We have experienced outstanding professional development through events including Conference, Directors Retreat, Fall Workshop, and LEAD.

We saw our largest team counts to date in Flag Football and Volleyball State tournaments, adding to an excellent Recreational Sports year. Fall Camporee at Camp ASCCA was tremendous. Our membership continues to strengthen the foundation of ARPA, as it grows year after year.

It has been a privilege to work with President Chesser, the Board of Directors, and the State Committee Chairs in 2023. Thank you for your commitment and vision, enabling ARPA to thrive, grow, and connect as well.

We look forward to a great State Conference and Trade Show in February, and hope all can join.

It has been an awesome 80th year celebration for ARPA in 2023! From those that laid the foundation in 1943, to those that will be celebrating in another 80 years, and everyone in between – ARPA is making a difference!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



from the
Executive Director

Natalie Norman
Executive Director

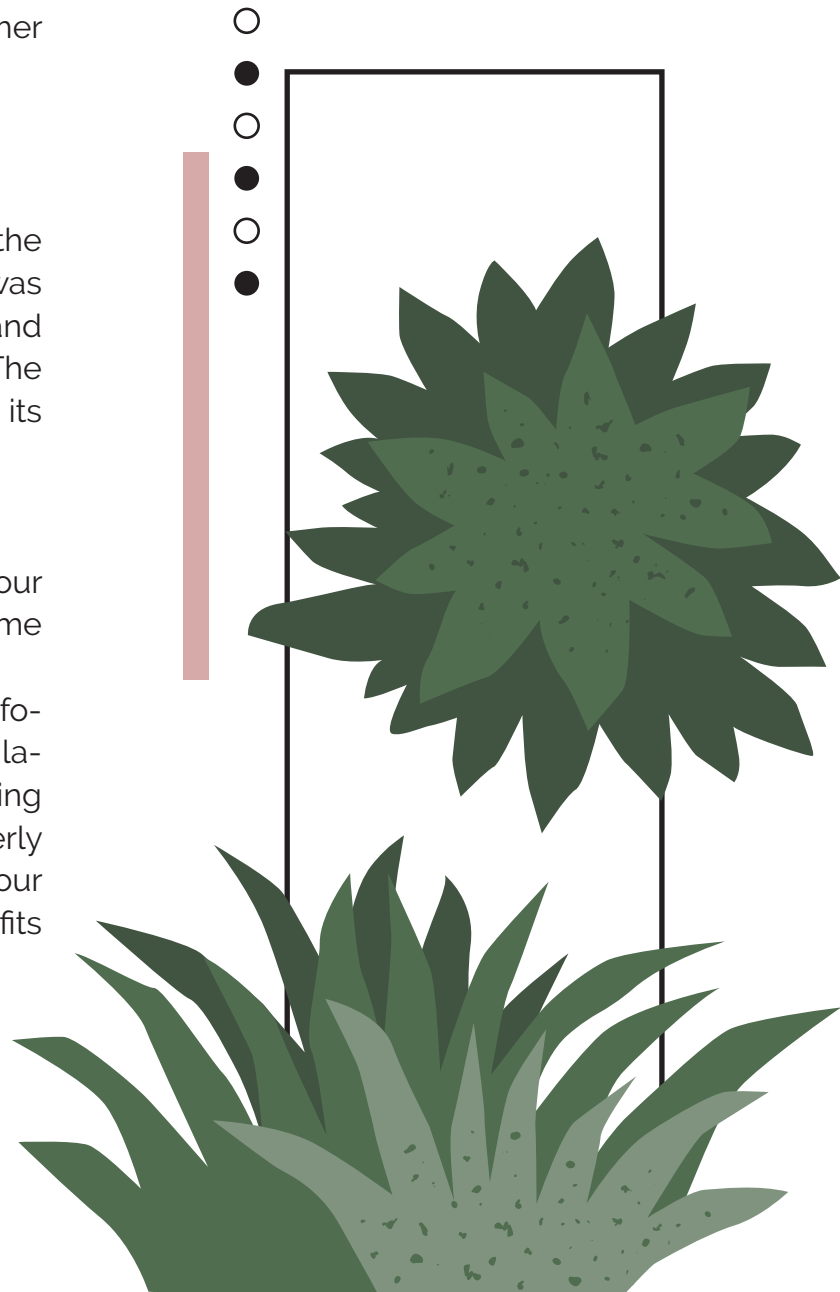
Tuscaloosa

The Pros of Turf Tank

When PARA embarked on the quest to acquire a field painter, our approach was highly discerning, involving careful consideration and observation of numerous on-site demonstrations. In the end, our choice gravitated towards the Turf Tank. The experience, from the initial purchase to the subsequent installation and setup, has been exceptional in customer service.

Throughout the process, the representative was present on-site alongside our staff for two days, ensuring the intricate layout of our multi-use field was seamlessly programmed into the tablet and that the painter operated with precision. The flexibility of the paint flow, coupled with its adjustability to accommodate budget constraints, further impressed us.

Within the inaugural week of utilization, our staff was astounded by the substantial time savings afforded by the Turf Tank. This newfound efficiency means we can focus on enhancing turf quality instead of laboring over traditional methods like pulling strings and marking fields. As we eagerly anticipate the upcoming spring season, our team is excited about the continued benefits and performance of our Turf Tank.



Our Rec: RecDesk

At the City of Enterprise Parks and Recreation department, we take advantage of the RecDesk software. We use RecDesk daily. With this program we are able to allow the community to sign up for our youth and adult programs online.

It also allows us to export information into an excel spreadsheet, keep track of payments, keep a calendar of youth sports, and we are able to utilize it to send out mass emails for registration information and our monthly newsletters.

Technology has also played a huge part in knowing the number of attendees at our events. This year, we reached out to a company to get visitor demographics from mobile mapping for two of our largest free community events which allowed us to get an estimated number of attendees. We held Festival in the Park in May, and the number of attendees were over 10,000 people. Furthermore, we held Spooky in the Park in October which had over 5,000 attendees, and it was only a three hour event.

Technology will only continue to advance and we look forward to utilizing it even more as it progresses.



In the News

Dothan Leisure Services recently renovated the computer lab at the Andrew Belle Community Center to provide enrichment through technology to the participants of the Summer Camp/Afterschool Program, access to technology to the citizens of Dothan, and an opportunity to pursue education opportunities through our partnership with Wallace Community College. The computer lab was furnished with 15 brand new computers with accompanying desks and chairs, a flat screen tv that serves as a SmartBoard, white board, and a teacher's desk station. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on September 6, 2023, with representatives from our City Commission, Dothan Chamber of Commerce, and Wallace Community College.

Currently, the computer lab serves participants involved in the Afterschool Programs and participants enrolled in the Adult Education Classes. Adult Education Classes are held each Tuesday and Thursday night from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. Services for the Adult Education Classes are provided through a Certified Instructor of Wallace Community College. Participants work at their own pace with the help of the instructor to complete the coursework to earn their G.E.D. certificate. We are thrilled to launch the Open Computer Lab program in January 2024. The program will offer access to the computer lab to the citizens of Dothan, free of charge, for their personal, professional, and/or recreational use.

Dothan Leisure Services is excited and committed to implementing the use of technology through all our parks and recreation centers. Patrons now have access to view and register for any program, class, sport, and event through CivicRec. Our online system also allows patrons to rent our facilities and multi-use fields right at their fingertips.





Digiquatics Makes a Big Splash

We use Digiquatics daily in many aspects of Dothan Aquatics. Our staff utilizes this platform to log their water chemistry reports every 2 hours. It allows them to put in all the information, but also notes to management of anything we might need to know. We also utilize it to put in any maintenance requests and their level of urgency to our maintenance staff. Our lifeguard instructors utilize it to log our in-services with our lifeguard staff. Digiquatics gives access to chemical records, in-services, and maintenance work orders to all of our management staff in the palm of our hand at any time. It helps us keep accurate records and easily pull reports when needed.



ARPA State Soccer Tournament

The City of Dothan Leisure Services was proud to host this year's ARPA State Soccer Tournament at Westgate's Soccer Fields from Saturday, November 18 - Sunday, November 19.

A total of 29 teams from across Alabama visited Dothan to battle it out for the title of State Champion.

Champions included:

8 & Under Girls: Athens

8 & Under Boys: Alexander City

10 & Under Girls: Dothan

10 & Under Boys: Dothan

12 & Under Girls: Troy

12 & Under Boys: Troy

14 & Under: Troy

19 & Under: Dothan



Congratulations to the Dothan 8U Red Football Team! They are the Wiregrass Youth Football Association Super Bowl Champions! Dothan Red finished the regular season and playoffs undefeated and defeated Luverne 23-6 in the Super Bowl to claim the title!

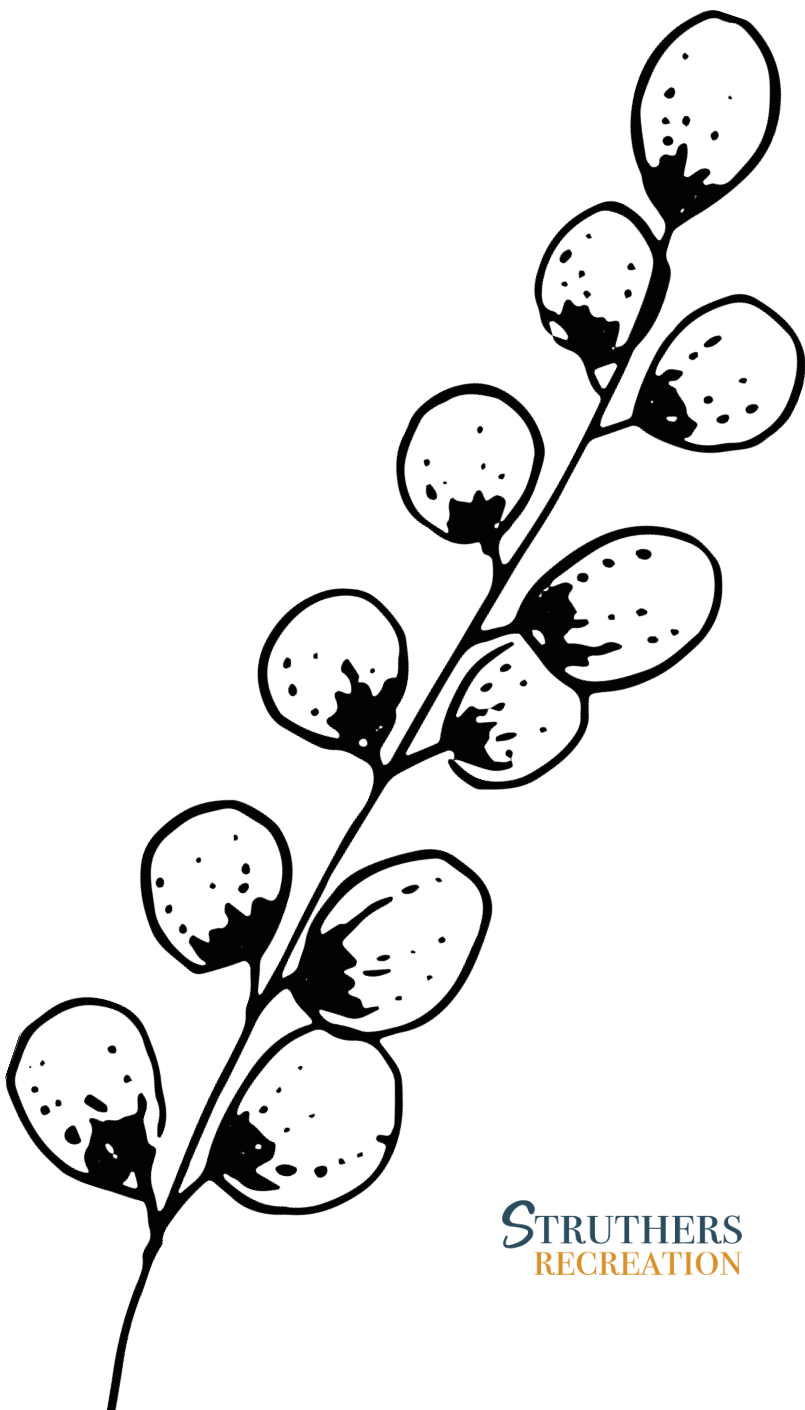
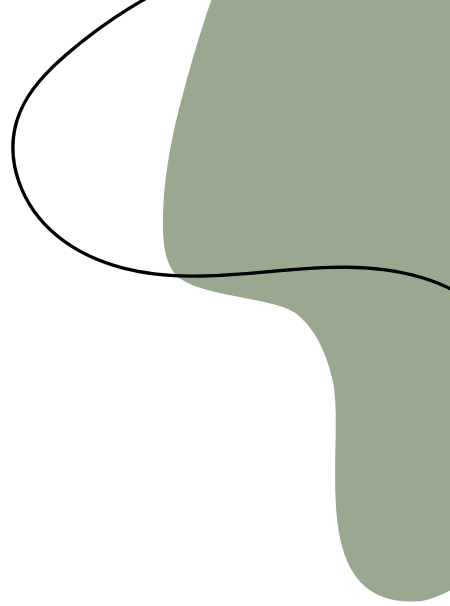


The Charles Henderson Trojans beat the Florala Wildcats 78-53 to take the win at the 2023 Turkey Classic and punch their ticket to the Annual Downtown Dothan Hoops Classic, which will be held Dec. 26 - Dec. 30 at the Dothan Civic Center. Since the start of the event, the Hoops Classic has given back \$661,820 to area high school basketball programs.

Alabama Recreation & Parks Association

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