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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**LOMBARD PARK DISTRICT RECEIVES
ILLINOIS DISTINGUISHED ACCREDITED AGENCY AWARD**

Lombard, IL - - The Lombard Park District has been recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA).

The two statewide associations administer the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program to improve the delivery of park and recreation services to Illinois residents. "Illinois is widely regarded as home to the nation's leading park districts, forest preserves, conservation districts, recreation, and special recreation agencies," said Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO. "The Distinguished Accreditation program allows agencies to undergo a voluntary, comprehensive evaluation to demonstrate that they meet established standards and criteria for delivering exceptional park and recreation services."

"This program gives recognition to park and recreation agencies, and forest preserve districts that demonstrate a strong commitment to providing exceptional programs, services, and facilities that enrich the lives of their communities and residents," said Suzi Wirtz, IPRA Executive Director. "Achieving Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation is a testament to the dedication of the agency, its staff, board, and community. This accomplishment strengthens quality of life and contributes to making Illinois one of the best places to live, work, and recreate."

A park district or recreation agency interested in applying for Distinguished Accredited Agency recognition undergoes a detailed, lengthy application and evaluation process. A Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Committee (JDPRAC), comprised of members from IAPD and IPRA, coordinates the process. "Agencies submit a self-evaluation and a formal letter requesting admission into the process," said Jan Arnold, IPRA Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. "If the committee determines the agency is eligible to continue the process, the agency is assigned a mentor to assist them with their preparation toward an evaluation date."

According to Arnold, on the day of the evaluation, the agency presents documented information and gives a tour of pertinent facilities and parks for the evaluation team's review.

The team reviews general management procedures, finance and business operations, facilities and parks, personnel, recreation services, legal documentation, and other materials, including mission statements, goals, and safety manuals.

Upon completion of the evaluation, the agency is notified in writing of the official results within ten days. Agencies that have achieved Distinguished Accredited status are recognized during the IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference in January.

“There are tremendous benefits for an agency that achieves Distinguished Accredited status,” said Jay Moffat, IAPD Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. “The agency’s application and review process is an excellent self-evaluation, and agencies that apply realize increased operational efficiency and effectiveness. Communities can have confidence that their park district, forest preserve district, or recreation agency employs qualified professionals and has met professional standards.”

The Lombard Park District began the process for the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program in August 2024, with the formal review in May 2025. “Our team worked incredibly hard throughout this process,” said Joe McCann, Executive Director of the Lombard Park District. “This process helped us evaluate how we operate and ensured we met professional standards for our community.”

The JDPRAC approved the Lombard Park District for Distinguished Accredited status in November 2025 and highlighted comprehensive manuals, fiscal administration, cooperative agreements, and comprehensive year-round programs and services.

In compliance with the program, the Lombard Park District will be reevaluated in six years to verify that they have continued to demonstrate sound management practices in providing quality park and recreation services to the community.

IAPD is a non-profit service, research, and education organization that serves park districts, forest preserves, conservation districts, recreation departments, and special recreation associations. The association advances these agencies, their citizen board members, and professional staff in their ability to provide outstanding park and recreation opportunities, preserve natural resources and improve the quality of life for all people in Illinois.

IPRA’s mission is to provide and promote exceptional standards of education, networking, and resources for all professionals in the Illinois park, recreation, and conservation communities. The association advances professional knowledge and business excellence and enhances networking and growth for all professionals in the state of Illinois.

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