



## Value and Benefits for Residents

By Tim Dimke, Executive Director



What **value** does a great park and recreation system bring to the Rockford community?

- People will want to live here (attract new and retain residents)
- Businesses want to invest and locate here (attract and retain business and industry)
- Visitors will come and enjoy our attractions (attract tourists)
- Property values will be enhanced (economic prosperity)
- People will be healthier (facilitate healthy lifestyles)
- Greater community pride is evident (volunteers, tidiness)
- People will enjoy their lives (find personal fulfillment in their leisure pursuits)

Parks and recreation are **essential** services – they are not discretionary. Parks and recreation are an essential part of a healthy community.

Our community has wisely invested in having an excellent park system beginning in 1909, when five newly elected Park Commissioners secured the land that is now known as Sinnissippi Park by pledging their personal assets as collateral for the purchase.

The community again invested in 1956 when passing the tax-supported recreation fund for public programs and services. Some of these recreation activities are supported by those using them by paying fees, while others are provided free for the health, wellness, and entertainment of all citizens.

**Recreation is vital to people's health and well-being, and plays an important role in a balanced, healthy lifestyle.**

You may use the golf courses, the ice rinks, or have a child enrolled in summer camps or swim lessons. Perhaps you stroll through the rose garden, use a recreation path for exercise, or sit quietly on a park bench beside the Rock River. You might visit our museums, volunteer as a coach, or attend summer concerts in the park.

It's possible you don't personally use any Park District services, but you are still benefiting from having a strong park and recreation system in your community for the benefits mentioned above and these others:

- Park and recreation services can contribute to alleviating deviant behavior among youth (we provide positive outlets for their energy and offer structure for good use of their leisure time)
- Preserve culture and history (through the museums, Camp Grant at Atwood Park, Beattie Park's mysterious mounds)
- Provide natural habitat for wildlife and plants to thrive (trees reduce pollution and produce oxygen, something we all need in order to live!)

The Rockford Park District **helps people enjoy life** by providing an excellent park and recreation system that contributes to the health, wellness, and entertainment of its citizens.

### **Economic Prosperity**

As we look forward to creating our shared future, what kind of people do we want to attract to live and work here? Rebecca Ryan of Next Generation Consulting said, "Rockford's best days are to come – teeming with young professionals, their families, and the energy and vibrancy they bring to a community." She believes the Park District plays a critical role in that effort.

Young families are finding our area housing is very affordable and the amenities very pleasant. There are many new developments attracting active retirees to live and play in our community. Rockford's parks and recreation amenities are often cited as major reasons for locating here.

The Rockford Area Economic Development Council, Rockford Area Chamber of Commerce, and area realtors report that the District's parks, recreation paths, gardens and facilities are a major "draw" for recruiting new businesses and residents.