

WPRA Young Professionals Network

Conference Call Minutes

Monday, January 30, 2017

Roll Call:

- By Region- Name and Dept.

WPRA YPN Overview:

- To serve as a networking and resource forum for emerging leaders and distinguished professionals with in WPRA.
- To connect members to programs, initiatives, and individuals making an impact on their community via the NRPA YPN.
- YPN is a network for EVERYONE, it is a resource tool to help share information and set-up mentoring opportunities.

Q&A with a Distinguished Professional:

- The distinguished professional of the month is: Steve Thompson- CEO Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association
- Tell us a little bit about yourself:
 - Steve has been the WPRA Executive Director for the past 23 years. Prior to that he worked for the Milwaukee County Parks, was an officer in the state association, and served as President of WPRA. Steve was on the NRPA Board for 11 years, he was involved in creating the NRPA YPN.
- Did you go to school for recreation?
 - Went to UW-L for “recreation leadership”
- What made you transition from MKE CTY to working with WPRA?
 - 1994 he was content with Milwaukee County Parks, Steve was going to be on the panel to interview the candidates for the executive position. Was then talked into considering himself. Difficult decision, but it was a great opportunity, hasn't looked back.
- What do you think some of the biggest challenges or topics will be facing WI in years to come?
 - Continued “fight” Convincing elected officials to get on board 100% that park and rec services are very essential services
 - Many officials that are on board and do support but it is still too easy to cut money from parks and recreation.
 - A big change in WPRA is that departments are moving away from the complete reliance on Tax dollars from towns/villages and moving to more of a business model. Departments rely more on user subsidies, partnerships, than tax dollars.

Round Table Discussion:

- Goals and Professional Resolutions- where do you want to go in 2017? What big ideas do you have for the year in terms of programming or other areas?
 - Sparta, WI
 - Extended budget plan to replace all playground equipment
 - Acquired building and reformatting into multipurpose building (fitness, lounge, kitchen) working with local Lions club, going to build pavilion
 - New irrigation system
 - McFarland, WI
 - School district passed a \$55,000,000 referendum, hope for great facilities in 2019
 - Little Chute, WI

- New municipal service garage building
 - Preliminary studies on multimodal board walk to cross Fox River, about 1500 feet
 - Local service club looking to build a batting cage/rec center on park property, looking to lease land.
 - New 5 acre park they are going to be starting to develop
- Are you CPRP Certified?
 - If yes- how has it helped your career?
 - Test challenging
 - Only professional certification, other than the CPRE
 - Over 80% of jobs require the CPRP or CPRE at time of application
 - Helps justify the education component in your budget. Need CEU's to keep your certification from lapsing, conferences provide CEUs

Ask the Network:

- Questions/ current challenges you are facing.
 - John McDonald with Sparta, WI asked if any other rec departments, with outdoor aquatics facilities, accept debit and credit cards for daily admittance fees and concessions? If so, what program do you use?
 - Derek Donlevy with Milwaukee Recreation is looking to increase special events and was wondering what other rec departments offer for Spring and Summer special events?
- Please contact them if you have any suggestions

NRPA Connect:

- Scholarships and awards for 2017.
 - <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-tips-for-an-awesome-award-application/>
- Free CPRP Prep Test course if you register before Feb 28th
 - <http://www.nrpa.org/certification/CPRP>

Be sure to follow us on Social Media!

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/WPRAYPN/>
- Twitter: @WPRA_YPN