

Parks & Recreation

JULY 2011
WWW.NRPA.ORG

YOUTH CORPS

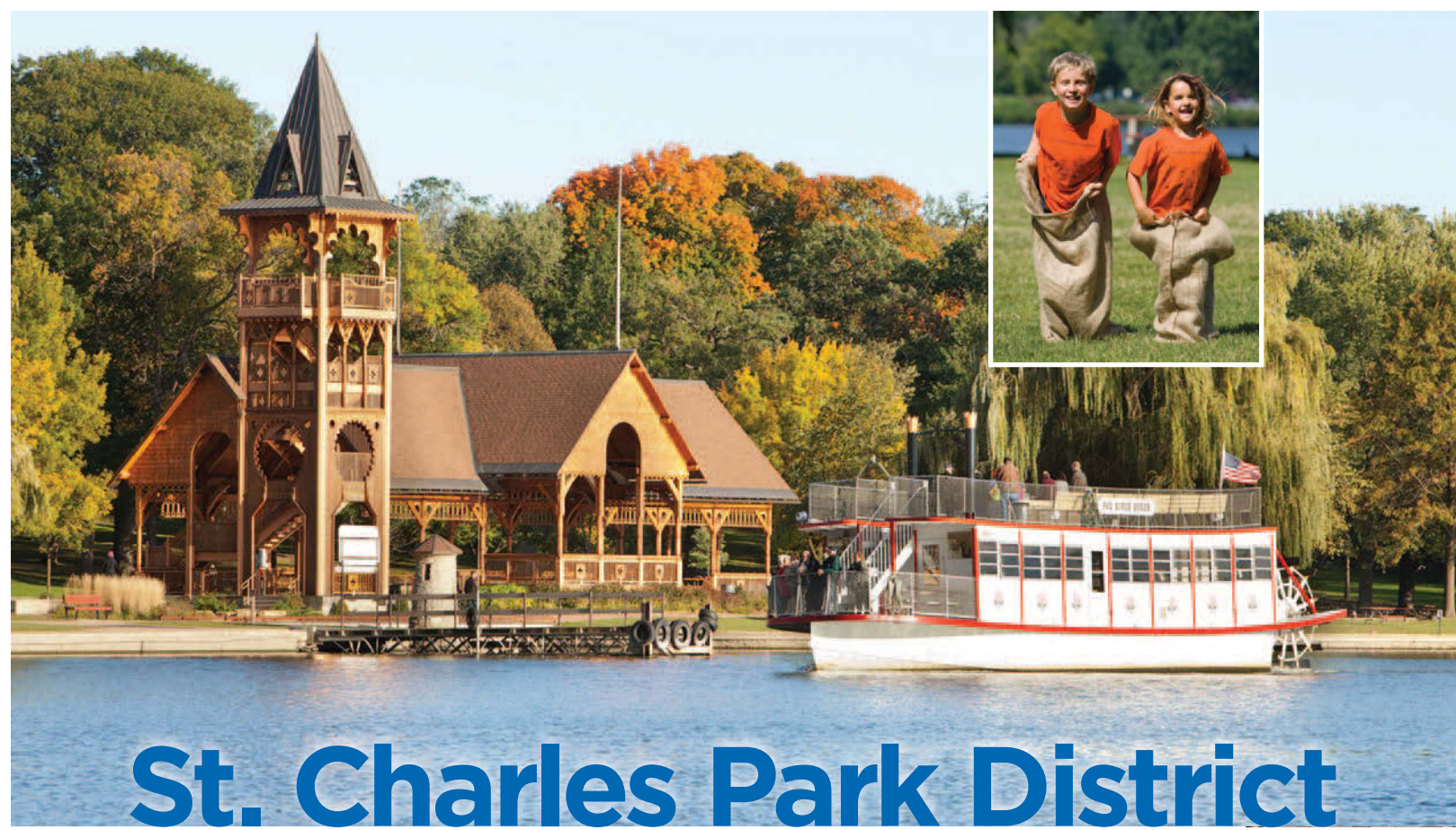
A New Generation
of Park Volunteers

Tapping Celebrities
America's Backyard
Mastering PRORAGIS

ROCK
YOUR
PARK

JULY IS PARK AND
RECREATION MONTH

Missouri State Parks
Youth Conservation Corps
members greet original
CCC Veterans.



St. Charles Park District

Facilities: St. Charles residents enjoy 1,400-plus acres of park land, two community centers, three outdoor water parks, three skate parks, three dog parks, 65 playgrounds, 50 athletic fields, 20 tennis courts, two state nature preserves, 11 natural areas, 480 garden plots, two paddlewheel riverboats, eight pedal boats, three boat launches, a teen center, senior center, LEED certified discovery center, historic working farm, nine-hole golf course, mini-golf, disc golf, and 25 miles of biking and hiking trails.

Programs: People of all ages and abilities enjoy a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities. Most recently, 15,385 participants registered in 1,753 classes—most popular are preschool, dance, camps, and after-school care. Annual events with 8,000-plus attendees: July 4th Celebration, Concerts in the Park, and the nationally recognized Sculpture in the Park exhibit. The district hosts 10-plus summer baseball/softball tournaments, 108 softball league teams, a regional soccer tournament with 214 teams and 20,000 spectators, and Scarecrow Fest, rated one of the top 100 events in the country by the American Bus Association. 5,000-plus grade-school students participate in a cooperative park district and school district nature program.

Mission/Vision Statement: To enrich the quality of life of park district residents through excellence in programs, parks, facilities, and services.

Awards & Citations:

- Residents in 2008 overwhelmingly approved a \$25 million referendum for land acquisition, construction of aquatic facilities and an environmental education center, and improvement of

neighborhood parks and athletic facilities.

- In a district-wide survey, respondents reported a 95 percent satisfaction rating amongst program users while the satisfaction levels for district owned/operated facilities exceeded 85 percent.
- Pottawatomie Golf Course ranked 15th best nine-hole course in America by *Golf World* magazine.
- National Gold Medal Award Finalist, two NRPA Great Lakes Regional Partnership Awards, the National Park Service's Exemplary Award for the Innovative Use of Grant Funds, three Illinois Park & Recreation Conservation Program Awards, two Illinois





Park and Recreation Association Outstanding Parks & Facility Awards, an Illinois Governor's Hometown Award, the Conservation Foundation's Environmental Design & Sustainability Award, and 13 St. Charles Chamber Civic Image Awards.

Challenges & Issues: Rapid population growth of families with young children has necessitated an ambitious land acquisition program and the development of new neighborhood parks, athletic complexes, and indoor recreation facilities, while preserving the last remnants of high quality natural

Municipality: St. Charles, Illinois
Population: Approximately 48,000
Year Agency Founded: 1911—
Celebrating 100 Years!
Annual Budget: \$20 million
Agency Head: Ray Ochromowicz, CPRP,
Director of Parks & Recreation

areas within the district. Upgrading technology is essential in making doing business with the district easier and more convenient for stakeholders.

Keys to Success: Exploring funding opportunities from local, state, and national grants and other resources. Partnering with 140 area organizations and businesses to benefit residents. Listening to users—successfully implemented a Red Hat Chapter, camera club, and pickleball league. Using 15,000-plus volunteer hours at the farm, in the natural areas and for assistance with recreation programs. Investing in the local community. For every child who participates in dance, almost \$20 is contributed to the local economy for shoes, tights, lumber for set design, etc.

Future Plans: Plans will be developed for construction of a community center to accommodate indoor sports, cultural programs, and social activities. Updating and improving the comprehensive technology and financial plans are a priority to continue offering high quality services to the public. 🌟

