



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Itasca Park District was announced as Finalist for the 2015 National Gold Medal Awards in Parks and Recreation

*Itasca Park District to compete for prestigious honor in the park and recreation industry*

Itasca, IL., May 21, 2015 – The [American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration](#) (AAPRA), in partnership with the [National Recreation and Park Association](#) (NRPA), is pleased to announce Itasca Park District as a finalist for the 2015 National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management. This year's proud sponsor of the Gold Medal Awards program is Musco Lighting LLC.

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with NRPA and founded in 1965, the Gold Medal Awards program honors communities in the U.S. that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning, resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development and agency recognition. Applications are separated into seven classes, with five classes based on population, one class for armed forces recreation and one class for state park systems awarded on odd numbered years.

Itasca Park District is a finalist in the Class V Category, Population 30,000 and Under. This is the first year the Itasca Park District was eligible to re-apply after winning the Gold in 2009 and again in 2003. Itasca Park District is a 9,200 resident district, west of Chicago. The District is governed by a 5 member, elected Board of Commissioners. It employs 13 FT Staff, over 200 PT Staff with a \$4.5M Budget, and boasts management of 144 acres of parks, playgrounds, nature center, bird sanctuary, waterpark museum and 40,000 sq. ft. Recreation & Fitness Center. Annually, 75,000 participate in programs and events; 300,000 visit parks; and 365,000 visit the Recreation Center. Per capita, \$509.69 was spent in 2014 on operating expenses, and over \$2,250,100 in Alternative Funding (grants, sponsors, etc) was secured in the last 3 years. The District is committed to the future by being innovative, proactive and evolving; while remaining inspired by the communities past. It is a leader among the taxing bodies, businesses and community groups; looked to for creative ways to work together for the benefit of the community. These valued relationships have provided community cost and energy savings, improved quality of life and wellness, and improved access to all.

Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those they serve through the collective energies of citizens, staff and elected officials. Itasca Park District joins three other finalists in their class that will compete for grand honors this year.

A panel of five park and recreation professionals reviews and judges all application materials. Judges are chosen for their considerable experience and knowledge in parks and recreation on both the local and national levels.

This year's finalists will compete for Grand Plaque Award honors this summer, and the seven Grand Plaque recipients will be announced live during the Opening General Session at the 2015 NRPA Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NV, Sept. 15-17.

For more information on the Gold Medal Awards, visit [www.nrpa.org/goldmedal](http://www.nrpa.org/goldmedal) or [www.aapra.org](http://www.aapra.org).

**The American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration** is a non-profit organization founded to advance knowledge related to the administration of recreation and parks; to encourage scholarly efforts by both practitioners and educators that would enhance the practice of park and recreation administration; to promote broader public understanding of the importance of parks and recreation to the public good; and, to conduct research, publish scholarly papers and sponsor seminars related to the advancement of park and recreation administration. For more information, visit [www.aapra.org](http://www.aapra.org).

**The National Recreation and Park Association** is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing park, recreation and conservation efforts that enhance quality of life for all people. Through its network of more than 47,000 recreation and park professionals and citizens, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org). For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit [www.parksandrecreation.org](http://www.parksandrecreation.org).

**Musco Lighting, LLC** is a company that has specialized in lighting systems for sports and large areas for more than 30 years. Musco has pioneered dramatic improvements in energy efficiency and affordable ways to control wasted spill light and glare. Permanent and temporary lighting services range from neighborhood fields to NASCAR super speedways. For more information, visit [www.musco.com](http://www.musco.com).

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