

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Designates Juneteenth a Holiday

Waukegan, Illinois (July 14, 2020) – The Waukegan Park District Board of Commissioners approved the designation of Juneteenth, commemorated on June 19, as an official holiday.

Juneteenth, also known as Emancipation Day, Freedom Day, or Juneteenth Independence Day, commemorates the official end of slavery in the United States on June 19, 1865. On that day, Union troops communicated with enslaved African Americans in Galveston, Texas that the Civil War had ended, and they were now free.

The Waukegan Park District has been a supporter of the Lake County Juneteenth Celebration held at Bowen Park and will continue to support organizers of the local event.

Waukegan Park District President Jeremiah Johnson stated, “Juneteenth has been an overlooked holiday for far too long. Honoring Juneteenth as a holiday will allow us all to enjoy the day and celebrate African American history as America’s history.”

Waukegan Park District Executive Director Jay Lerner stated, “Juneteenth is American history. We’re proud to recognize Juneteenth as an official holiday giving our staff time to celebrate and reflect on the significance of such a historic day.”

About the Waukegan Park District

Established on December 26, 1916, the district has 50 properties and more than 737 acres of land, including the 18-hole Bonnie Brook and 9-hole Greenshire Golf Courses. Properties are managed to the highest environmental and conservation standards. Facilities operated by the district include the Field House Sports, Fitness and Aquatics Center, the Jack Benny Center for the Arts, the Waukegan’s Greg Petry SportsPark, the Waukegan Skate Park, the Waukegan BMX Track, recreational centers, disc golf course, dog exercise area and agility course, outdoor sports fields, picnic areas, playgrounds, splash pads, and sports courts including basketball, tennis and pickleball. A full range of programs and services are offered year-round for all ages, from infants to seniors as well as special needs populations. Healthy lifestyles, wellness initiatives, and a connection with the outdoors and nature are integrated throughout programs, services, and special events. Cultural events are provided by the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra and Concert Chorus, and the Waukegan History Museum. There is something for everyone! The award-winning District employs 63 full-time and over 230 part-time, seasonal, and temporary employees. The District is a member of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD), and Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA). The district maintains national accreditation from the NRPA Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA), Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) Distinguished Agency accreditation and Park District Risk Management Agency (PDRMA) accreditation and maintains a Level A Loss Control Program. The District has received Government Finance Officer Association awards for Distinguished Budget Presentation

and Certificate for Excellence in Financial Reporting for eight consecutive years. The district was awarded the NRPA National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management in 2013 and named a NRPA Gold Medal Finalist in 2012, 2013, and 2019.

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