

WAUKEGAN PARK DISTRICT

PRESS RELEASE

Waukegan Park District Releases New “Waukegan History Museum Companion” Feature on Mobile App, in Partnership with Waukegan Historical Society

Waukegan, Illinois (July 10, 2020) – The Waukegan Park District is excited to partner with the Waukegan Historical Society to release a new feature on the Waukegan Park District Mobile App known as the “Waukegan History Museum Companion.” The Waukegan History Museum is operated by the Waukegan Park District and Waukegan Historical Society and is the repository for all of Waukegan’s rich history.

The Waukegan History Museum Companion will give app users the chance to participate in self-guided history tours of different locations in Waukegan, including parks, statues, and historic landmarks. Users will also be able to read short histories and see photographs of individuals and places with important significance in Waukegan’s history.

The Waukegan History Museum Companion can be found under “Activities” on the mobile app. Historical content is compiled from the Waukegan Historical Society’s John L. Raymond Research Library in Lilac Cottage at Bowen Park and will be translated into Spanish. Coming later this summer, sites and information related to Ray Bradbury will be featured around the centennial of his birth. Additional features related to nature will also be added.

Designed with Links Technology Solutions, Inc., the Waukegan Park District’s interactive mobile app features easy access to park district information, locations and amenities of parks and facilities, an interactive game, and updates on event and program cancellations or changers. The app encourages community members to explore our parks and facilities using interactive games and content. The app is free and is available on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

Waukegan Park District President Jeremiah Johnson stated, “We’re excited to use innovative technology to share historic information and photos, in partnership with the Waukegan Historical Society. The new Waukegan History Museum Companion will encourage the community to visit our parks and learn more about our city’s history.”

Waukegan Park District Executive Director Jay Lerner stated, “Our mobile app has transformed how the community interacts with the Waukegan Park District. Now, the Waukegan History Museum Companion on our mobile app will allow individuals to learn local history on-the-go. We’re proud to partner with the Waukegan Historical Society to provide this unique digital feature to our community.”

Waukegan Park District Arts and History Specialist Bryan Escobar stated, “We work closely with teachers in Waukegan Public Schools offering history programs in the classroom and walking tours at the end of the academic year. Due to the coronavirus, we had to think of a new way to reach them, and the idea of a virtual tour was started. After testing it with a few classes, we decided to expand it into something all interested history-goers could utilize. In the last year

we reached over 9,303 participants through various history programs, and we hope to engage more individuals through the Waukegan History Museum Companion.”

Waukegan Historical Society President Josh Bill stated, “We are happy to partner with the Waukegan Park District to offer a platform for community members to interact with historical sites using the District's highly-successful app. In the past, we have offered programs and walking tours, and we still intend to have those in the future, but this feature provides an opportunity to provide more access to Waukegan's history.”

The Waukegan History Museum Companion will also be available on the Waukegan Park District's website at waukeganparks.org/historycompanion. For questions, contact Bryan Escobar at bescobar@waukeganparks.org.

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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