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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CHANNAHON PARK DISTRICT ACHIEVES ILLINOIS DISTINGUISHED AGENCY ACCREDITATION**

(CHANNAHON, IL) --The Channahon Park District has been recognized as an Illinois Distinguished Accredited Agency by the Illinois Association of Park Districts (IAPD) and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA).

The two statewide associations administer the Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program with the goal of improving the delivery of park and recreation services to Illinois residents. "Illinois has a reputation for the best public park recreation agencies in the nation," said Peter Murphy, IAPD President and CEO. "The Illinois Distinguished Accreditation program provides an opportunity for these agencies to undergo a comprehensive evaluation process to demonstrate that they have met state guidelines to provide exceptional park and recreation services to their community. The end result is to improve the quality of life for their residents."

"This program gives recognition to park and recreation agencies that go above and beyond in dedicating themselves to offering quality programs and services designed to fulfill their community's needs," said Debbie Trueblood, IPRA Executive Director.

An agency interested in applying for Distinguished Accredited Agency recognition undergoes a detailed process of application and evaluation. A Joint Distinguished Park and Recreation Accreditation Committee (JDPRAC) comprised of members from IAPD and IPRA coordinates the process. "Agencies submit a self-evaluation and a formal letter requesting admission into the process," said Wally Frasier, IAPD Co-Chair of the JDPRAC. "We then determine if the agency is eligible to continue."

A JDPRAC Team then visits the agency and the agency presents documented information and gives a tour of facilities and parks for the evaluation team's review.

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*Distinguished Accredited Agency/2*

The Team reviews 175 separate practices and policies for administration and management, finance, facilities and parks, personnel, recreation services, legal compliance and other materials including mission statements, goals and risk management practices.

Mike Clark, IPRA Co-Chair of the JDPRAC said "the agency's application and review process is an excellent self-evaluation and agencies that apply realize increased operational efficiency and effectiveness. Communities can know that their park agency employs qualified professionals and has met professional standards."

Following the review process, The JDPRAC unanimously approved the Channahon Park District for Distinguished Accredited status. The District is one of less than 50 currently accredited park and recreation agencies in Illinois, and the only one primarily located in Will County. The JDPRAC particularly noted the District's strengths in their overall system of parks and facilities for an agency of 18,000 residents, and internal communication for goal planning and policy development and follow-through.

"The accreditation process is a comprehensive means to conduct a self-evaluation of our entire operation", said Channahon Park District President Tom Lesniak. "It is a risky business to look so close in such a broad manner. To achieve the highest level of recognition is something that our entire staff should be proud of. I must say however, it is no surprise to me. I have always felt that our Park District is 'top shelf'."

In compliance with the program, the Channahon Park District will be periodically reevaluated to verify that they continue to demonstrate sound management practices in providing quality park and recreation services to the community.

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