

Outstanding Nature of Agency

What makes your agency “outstanding”? Please cite 3 specific examples to support why your agency is “outstanding”.



Boulevards and Parkways

Known as a “city within a park”, KCPR manages over 135 miles of boulevards and parkways. The George Kessler designed system balances the need to move traffic while maintaining our reputation as “Paris of the Plains”. Ward Parkway, the crown jewel, was named one of the 10 Great Streets of America in 2012 by the American Planning Association.

Liberty Memorial

At the end of WWI, KC leaders formed the Liberty Memorial Association, raising \$2.5 million to create the first WWI monument in America. In 2014, Liberty Memorial, located in Penn Valley Park, was designated as the National WWI Museum and Memorial, making it the only national war memorial outside of Washington, D.C. Liberty Memorial is conducting our nation’s only WWI centennial commemoration in the U.S. from 2014-2019.



Fountains

Kansas City is known as the “City of Fountains” and said to have more fountains than Rome. The unique water sculptures and statuary celebrate generations of Kansas Citians. Over \$2 million was raised to renovate fountains by the City of Fountains Foundation’s 2014 “Wish Upon a Fountain” campaign.

* Questions 1 and 2 are statistical data.

Kansas City Parks and Recreation
NRPA Gold Medal
Application

Impact Upon Community

Tell us your story about how your agency impacts the community you serve. Share with us 5 actions or activities your agency has been involved with or undertaken in the past three years .

Swope Soccer

Swope Soccer Village, a \$15,000,000 partnership between KCPR and MLS team Sporting KC, is one of the nation's only urban soccer complexes. An estimated 200,000 participants in 170 leagues will have the opportunity to play on SSV's nine professional-grade fields this year. SSV hosted the 2014 NCAA Division III Soccer Championships.



Mayor's Nights

Following incidents by youth in the City's entertainment districts, the City implemented a curfew. KCPR responded by developing Mayor's Nights to provide free, fun, and safe weekend activities to 17,000+ youth each summer.



State Parks Youth Corp.

Through SPYC we employed 110 youth ages 17-23 in our parks and community centers. During this partnership, youth worked over 24,000 hours from July 2014 to January 2015.



Ronald McDonald House

We provided land in Longfellow Park near Children's Mercy Hospital for the construction of a Ronald McDonald House. The house provides a "home away from home" while children receive medical care and annually houses 4,500 families.



Ethnic Festival

For 36 years the Ethnic Festival has highlighted KC's rich diversity in a three-day celebration of the culture, food, and heritage of 60 countries. The festival has a positive social impact on 40,000+ attendees and a significant economic impact.



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Uses of Valuable Resources

There are few resources more critical than public support, citizen involvement, and staff engagement. Please identify one outstanding or innovative way in which your agency addresses these three (3) components.

Public Support

In the rich 123 year history of KCPR the voters of Kansas City have overwhelmingly supported a variety of tax levies, general obligation bonds and property assessments to support the department. This support culminated with the passing of the Parks' Sales Tax.

Citizen Involvement

Recognizing the importance of citizen involvement the department conducted 27 focus groups and 9 public forums in an effort to gather as much information as possible for a KCPR recreation assessment in 2013. The information was compiled with staff input into a Recreation Assessment Implementation Plan.



Staff Engagement

Following a year-long process of community and staff engagement the Recreation Assessment Implementation Plan was adopted in December 2013. From this, staff created an "Agents of Change" cross functional team to develop systems' thinking frameworks in customer service, community outreach, facility maintenance and staff development through which the 90+ recommended actions will be implemented in the next two years.



Demonstration of Results

Public entities have been increasingly called upon to demonstrate the results of their services and practices to decision makers and the general public. Please share with us 3 results, impacts, or outcomes you have measured and brief background about the benefit and how the results were secured.

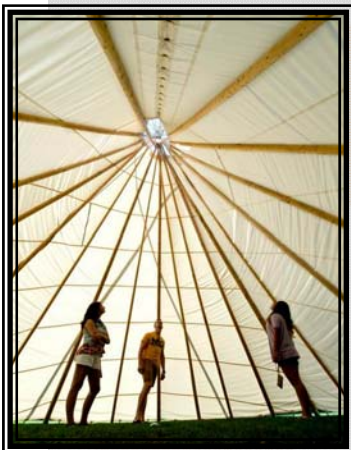
Safe Healthy Attractive Public Environments Program

S.H.A.P.E. is an internal third party audit that generates frequent and detailed inspections of our parks and facilities. Since the program's reinstatement the overall condition rating has risen from 90% acceptable in 2011 to 98% acceptable currently. Inspection data helps identify trends in specific parks and helps make well-informed decisions on efficient ways to deploy personnel and distribute resources.



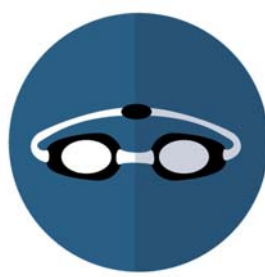
311 Action Center

The 311 Action Center is a non-emergency department directory and self-service city request line. With 311 data our agency has been able to track requests all the way to resolution, enabling us to take corrective action before problems become major issues. Prior to using 311 data the park maintenance department averaged 15 days from report to resolution in 2012. In 2015 we now average 6 days to resolve park issues.



Citizen Surveys

Citizen surveys are how we “keep our finger on the pulse” of the community with two very distinct instruments: One city-wide survey pertaining to parks issues and the other department-specific. Over the last 3 years overall satisfaction in parks has increased a total of 10%. The surveys address issues of strategic importance in evaluating current parks, facilities, and services to effectively outline future programming.



Innovations

Parks and recreation agencies have long been known for the creative and innovative ways they, manage policies, services and entire agency. One of the desirable outcomes of the Gold Medal Program is to identify these valuable efforts and approaches to be shared with others. Please identify and briefly explain three innovations implemented or used by your agency within the last 3 years.

MAPIT: Mural Arts Program Inspiring Transformation

Graffiti has a negative impact on youth, businesses, and society. Mural Arts Program Inspiring Transformation (MAPIT) is an innovative program that believes art has the power to serve as an agent of social change. KCPR deters graffiti/tagging by providing facilities for youth to develop murals and explore artistic outlets. KCPR also cut the time required to address these issues in half. In turn, this rapid removal reduced the overall number of graffiti incidents by 46% in 2013. This reduction in incidents has saved KCPR approximately \$72,000 annually.



Dig Day

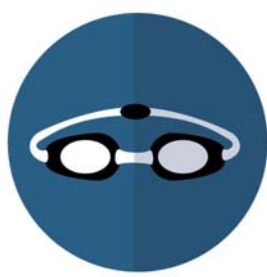
Through a partnership with Boy Scouts of America and the Heart of America Council we will organize over 600 volunteers to beautify the city for spring. More than 40 teams of both youth and adults will deploy and plant flowers in 83 of the City's community flower beds in a single Saturday morning, May 9. This date was intentionally selected as a gift to all of Kansas City for Mothers' Day, May 10.



Kansas City's Big Picnic

The KCPR teamed up with the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art to host the biggest picnic the region has ever seen. The Picnic takes place in Theis Park to create a giant space for Kansas Citians to enjoy an evening of music and outdoor fun. This event is also the kickoff celebration for the National Parks and Recreation month.





Social Equity

In what ways has your agency in the last three years addressed the NRPA identified issue of social equity?



Park Acre/Population:

We're committed to social equity by providing and maintaining 30.08 acres of parks and green spaces per 1,000 residents throughout two economically-challenged city council districts in the urban core. Our park acreage per population is triple the 9.9 acres/1,000 resident national median.



Summer Camp/Scholarships:

This summer KCPR had 400 youth participate in summer camp. We offered camps for ages 7-13 with 55 youth receiving a scholarship rate (50%) or hardship rate (0) for demonstrated financial need.



Recreation Council:

Understanding the need we created the council in partnership with the Recreation Council of Greater KC, to provide recreation for the disabled. The Recreation Council provides all facets of collaborations for serving person with disabilities throughout Kansas City.



Health and Wellness

In what ways has your agency in the last three years addressed the issue of health and wellness?

Healthy Concessions

We entered into a partnership with our Health Department to provide healthier concession options. The vending machines have been removed from all community centers and we currently offer healthier concessions.



Community Gardens

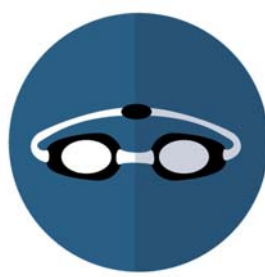
We partner with KC Community Gardens in Swope Park, our largest park, to assist more than 1,000 low income families grow their own produce. In 2012, flower beds, located within our parks, were transformed into sweet potato patches providing low income neighborhoods a source of fresh food.



Trails

Our system has 151 miles of long trail segments with an additional eight trail miles planned for completion in 2015. It's no wonder Missouri was named the "Best Trails State" by the national American Trails organization!





Conservation

In what ways has your agency in the last three years addressed the issue of conservation?



Emerald Ash Borer

Confirmed in 2012, Emerald Ash Borer threatens over 400,000 KC trees, including 20,000 publicly owned trees. Parks staff has developed a \$15-million integrated management plan to reduce EAB's devastation on KC's urban forest.

Deer Management

Partnering with Missouri's Conservation Department, KCPR manages archery deer hunting in seven parks to reduce over-populated deer herds and mitigate negative effects on sensitive ecosystems. Unique to KC, park areas remain open to public activities during hunting season.



Native Planting

The Conservation Corps is a Parks division dedicated to managing natural areas and partnering with local environmental organizations. Activities include managing native prairies, conservation education, maintaining rain gardens, planting pollinator patches to support honeybee populations, and eradicating invasive plant species.





Challenges

What challenges has your community and or agency experienced over the past three years and what steps of action have you taken to resolve these challenges? Include agency role with the challenge, types of actions/steps taken, and effectiveness of approach.

In 2011, our KC Zoo successfully passed a 1/8 cent sales tax increase, resulting in a 10-year, \$100 million master plan which includes key conservation measures. The plan and its scheduled improvements have attracted nearly 100,000 new visitors annually.



One year later during an economic recession, times of uncertainty and constant budget cuts reduced hours of operation, programs, mowing of parks and boulevards, park maintenance and layoffs. The department's budget had been reduced every year over the past four years and once again, funding for the Parks System was in jeopardy of being reduced. Facing budget uncertainty we then went to the voters and got an approval for a ½ cent sales tax. The voters voted "YES" by 63% generating \$35 million annually. This tax structure would provide a consistent, guaranteed, long-term source of revenue to maintain parks and community centers with no sunset, and also eliminate the current need for the annual contribution from the City's General Fund. KCPR attracts more than 4 million visitors each year and Community Center programs have 500,000 citizens participate. With these measures Community Centers hours of operation increased 29% as detailed in our annual "Year End Review".

