



Human Resources Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources
DATE: October 14, 2025
RE: September 2025 Report

Human Resources:

- The District experienced no turnover in staff during the month of September, marking four consecutive months without attrition. The department supported the onboarding of the District's first Deputy Director as well as the orientation for one part-time police officer.
- The recruitment process for the Human Resources Manager is ongoing, with interviews having been scheduled with qualified candidates. The position is dependent upon the Commission's October consideration of a contract to outsource payroll processes to ADP. This position would play a key role in the development, implementation and ongoing management of new programs and processes related to the software migration.
- The Department is also supporting the recruitment process for a part-time Administrative Specialist with the Police Department. This niche position is challenging to place in today's market; however, in its second advertisement period, experienced applicants have submitted interest.
- The majority of the District's seasonal positions have moved into the offboarding phase (with open opportunities for Ranger Technicians still available); and recruitment activities for temporary assistance in the Finance and HR departments to provide added resources as current staff participate in demanding payroll and HRIS system conversions, have been successful.
- The District has elected to participate in a cost savings opportunity for its major medical insurance plans. A one percent (1%) reduction in medical premiums will be effective January 1, 2026. The Encircle program modifies access to GLP-1 drugs for weight loss, implementing programmatic requirements that are associated with better patient outcomes. The Department is in the process of updating IPBC/PlanSource and New World records, and made employees aware of the shared savings at the recent All Staff meeting.
- Fall Open Enrollment preparation has begun. In addition to offering opportunities for District staff to contribute to pre-tax savings accounts for healthcare, dependent care, and public transportation benefits, or elect voluntary life insurance coverage, the Department is updating its Section 125 Cafeteria Plan and will present it to the Commission for review and approval once IRS maximum thresholds for these and other benefits are confirmed.
- The District continues its formal negotiations with the District's full-time police officers' collective bargaining unit with the Metropolitan Alliance of Police.
- In September, department staff participated in the PDRMA legal update and discussion and Certificates of Insurance training, several ADP discovery calls, the IPBC Member Update meeting, and completed the IPRA salary benchmarking survey. In addition, they volunteered at the Kane Forest Foundation annual golf outing, hosted the annual Volunteer Appreciation Event, joined the Harvest Festival at Oakhurst, attended the Fall All Staff meeting, and coordinated and hiked weekly Work Capacity Test trainings.

Safety and Wellness:

There was one worker's compensation claim in September; while stepping down from a trailer, an employee slipped on wet pavement and fell to the ground sustaining a head contusion. Six employees have been injured this year. The 10-year rolling average is 7.6 employee injuries per year. There were no new property or liability claims during the month.



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- The Department continued its Work Capacity Test pilot project with Natural Resources Management hosting weekly training opportunities for participating staff. The program is a risk management and employee wellness initiative to ensure that District staff responsible for prescribed burning are appropriately fit for the physically demanding and dangerous task. The District will lead its peers with a successful implementation of this initiative.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator attended the quarterly PDRMA Safety Coordinator Group meeting, sharing the District's vehicle backing policy with the members as a template for their use. Additionally, the group reviewed special event risk management processes and a recommended checklist and discussed electric bike use ordinances among members.
- Numerous safety inspections and maintenance activities occur during the summer months. In September, annual fire alarm/suppression system testing at Brewster Creek Lodge and Creek Bend Nature Center took place.
- CPR/First aid training was provided to District employees and state required spill prevention and countermeasure annual training was presented to Natural Resources employees at Mill Creek.
- An FY2025-2026 budget request provides funding for the replacement of six AED units that have reached the end of their usable life. The new units were put into service in the field in September, completing the third of a four-year replacement program for the District's complete set of countywide District owned AED units.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator completed refresher training online for claims reporting as well as training on effective communication strategies for employee interactions to satisfy PDRMA Risk Management Review requirements for 2025. Staff also participated in the monthly IDPH ambassador meeting during which immunization recommendations were released for the 2025-2026 respiratory virus season.
- The Department submitted a PDRMA risk management grant for six portable lightning detectors for field employees. Chosen grant winners will be notified in November.

Volunteer Resources:

In September, 1,045 volunteer hours at 75 events were given to the District!

- September was a whirlwind of activity, events, and appreciation, with weather that didn't limit volunteerism!
- Staff hosted the 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner on Wednesday, September 10th at The Wilds in North Aurora with over 100 volunteers, elected officials, and staff gathered together to recognize and reward the volunteer program's individual and collective successes.
- The Volunteer Coordinator represented the District and spread the word about our work and opportunities to serve at the Waubensee Community College involvement fair and the Aurora University fair in September.
- Successful events the District hosted across the county in September included seed harvests (joined by Batavia High School's Eco Club and Science National Honors group); It's Our Fox River Day (IOFRD) at three locations Glenwood, Fabyan, and Tekakwitha; and National Public Lands Day at LeRoy Oakes, where Toyota celebrated their 22nd year of participation. Finally, our friends at Awesome Life Academy helped at the Durant Peterson House. These events and more were again made possible by donations for snacks and drinks through the District's partnership with Fresh Thyme Market in Geneva.
- Staff met with the Executive Director to discuss Environmental Sustainability Team (EST) goals and the carbon footprint work the committee will begin to undertake.
- The Stewardship Specialist attended the AMS retreat with Natural Resources Management staff to understand past and present volunteer projects and brainstorm in the creation of a steward AMS with objectives that combine preexisting volunteer projects with new staff identified areas of focus.
- In coordination with staff, site visits are being conducted to help guide stewards towards projects that supplement staff work instead of volunteers working in areas that are less ideal. Staff met with the co-stewards of Les Arends to provide clarification on projects and best practices at their site.
- The team was able to meet five stewards in the month of September and fill a total of 11 tool and herbicide requests.



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Left: Batavia HS Eco Club / Science National Honor Society joined us for a harvest at Dick Young FP Sept. 25th
Right: Executive Director Ben Haberthur addresses the crowd of volunteers at The Wilds on Sept 10th



Left: Stress Lab presentation at the District All Staff event at Brewster Creek September 16th
Right: Awesome Life Academy stacking wood and doing good at LeRoy Oakes and Durant House Sept 3rd



Left: Mounted Rangers Donna and Connie horsing around at Fall Harvest at Oakhurst Sept 28th
Right: Staff, volunteers and partner agencies enjoying a beautiful morning at Hannaford Woods Sept 24th