



Human Resources Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources
DATE: December 10, 2024
RE: November 2024 Report

Employee Relations, Recruiting and Benefits:

- There is currently only one full-time open position available with the District. This Restoration Technician opportunity is scheduled for interviews in early December and is anticipated to be placed shortly after. The department also continues a concentrated effort to deepen the District's part-time police officer pool.
- Interviews were held for the positions of Ranger Assistant, Police Officer and Stewardship Specialist; as a result, employment offers and onboarding activities are ongoing for two full-time Ranger Assistants, one full-time and one part-time police officer, and a Stewardship Specialist.
- The department expects the District to be fully staffed near the first of the year, positioning it well to tackle other strategic human resources projects that have been delayed or postponed due to regular, active recruitment as well as begin preparing for possible growth in the District's staffing model.
- Fall open enrollment activities were completed in November. With this window closed, the Department has begun to shift its focus to prospective benefits planning, including possible insurance opt-out options, certification pay, uniform allowances, and other opportunities that stem from compensation and classification study recommendations and the competitive employment landscape. Any fully vetted recommendations will be presented for FY25-26 budget consideration.
- Early in the next calendar year, HR expects to present its annual review of the employee handbook to the Board for consideration. A comprehensive review has begun. Staff also continues to collaborate with Administration and legal counsel to revise the District's Organizational Ordinance to clarify language to align with current practice.
- Human Resources is in the process of converting its 457k plan with Equitable to a new platform, which is intended to better serve participants and reduce administration time and fees. Plan documents were executed in November with a TBD date for training and roll-out.
- The Department has begun to review and revise the District's performance management process and tool, and anticipates to pilot a new program in 2025.
- Department staff participated in the District's election watch, the IAPD annual legal symposium, the IPRA HR Roundtable, the IPBC board meeting, PDRMA's annual Risk Management Institute, and a team birthday celebration.

Wellness, Training and Safety:

- There was **one injury** in the month of November and **two property claims**.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator completed focused departmental staff training at North Operations for High-Risk Equipment, Chainsaw Personal Protective Equipment, and Illinois Department of Labor inspections. In addition, staff presented Blue Cross/Blue Shield online wellness program options to North Operations, South Operations and Naturalist staff.
- The department assisted with property appraisals for PDRMA's insurance vendor, a multi-week project intended to accurately value all District properties and improvements for rate and replacement purposes.
- Staff updated and added new CDL drivers to the Federal Database for safety compliance.



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- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator attended the PDRMA's annual Risk Management Institute with all day training sessions on emotional intelligence, safety relationship and behavior management and wellness options and participated in the Safety Coordinator Update for the Risk Management Review process.
- The quarterly Safety & Wellness Team meeting was held in the month of November. A new trailer safety program is being developed by fleet management and the Safety Coordinator to improve trailer safety training for all employees. Additionally, the 2025 safety training plan was drafted with input from the team.
- Updates were made to the annual online training course completion tracking for all employees. All employees must complete remaining courses by December 31st.
- The annual fire safety inspection and recertification for the Creek Bend Nature Center elevator was coordinated and completed.
- Finally, the Safety and Wellness Coordinator participated in the monthly IDPH Ambassador meeting. Updated were given on vaccines, respiratory illness data for the season and response strategies.

Volunteer Resources:

- In November, **429.5 volunteer hours at 26 events** were given to the District!
- The District's winter NRM training series continued in November with two chainsaw training courses featuring 18 volunteers getting trained to safely operate saws at workdays.
- The Mounted Rangers held their annual election meeting at District headquarters, which was attended by public safety and human resources staff.
- The Volunteer Coordinator attended the Chicago Wilderness Congress conference in Hammond, IN for learning and networking opportunities .
- The Snowmobile Safety Patrol season kicked off on November 21st , which was also the first day of snow in northern Illinois!
- Finally, the Volunteer Coordinator broke bread with GiantSteps at their annual Thanks giving event in Sugar Grove.

