



Human Resources Department Memorandum

TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director
FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources
DATE: April 8, 2025
RE: March 2025 Report

Employee Relations, Recruiting and Benefits:

- The District accepted resignations from two full-time staff in March in the positions of Restoration Technician and Procurement Administrator. The Restoration Technician received a higher paying offer for a comparable position with a reduced commute and more flexible scheduling. The Procurement Administrator retired from the District and is seeking remote work. The department also separated employment with two part-time staff for medical related reasons. Recent improvements to the District's compensation plan and benefits program have kept turnover low in recent months, however, reasons for separation and exit interviews indicate continued opportunities for enhancement. Prior to this period of stability, the District was experiencing regular and high turnover at all position levels. The turnover rate for regular, full-time positions in the first quarter of 2025 was 2.44%.
- Two part-time employees in the positions of Police Officer and Events Assistant were onboarded in the month of March. Additionally, the District's seasonal employment opportunities are open for recruitment, and the HR department is training and providing resources to hiring managers to support their selection and orientation processes. More than 20 new temporary staff are at various stages of the hiring process, with this figure anticipated to double as the season progresses. This nearly 35% swell in staffing taxes the Department's resources for activities such as orientation, payroll data entry, and safety training and often requires advanced assistance for performance management.
- The HR Director received one-on-one training from the McGrath Consulting Group to learn the custom point factor method used to place positions on the District's new classification system. This knowledge transfer was critical as the FY25-26 annual budget contemplates requests for new staff positions as an outcome of the successful referendum. Using this objective and quantitative approach, going forward, District staff will be able to accurately grade newly created or reimagined positions accounting for both market conditions and internal equitability.
- The Department continues to work diligently on evaluating 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. To move these initiatives forward, staff met with HR leadership at the County to learn more about its Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan



Battle of the Brush pile at Gunnar on March 15th brought out over 100 volunteers from local schools!



Congrats to Stewardship Liaison Rachel on her first burn at Dick Young!



Maple Sugaring Volunteers & Visitors



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(MERP) and hosted an interdepartmental ad-hoc committee which gathered for its first formal meeting to re-write the District's uniform policy addressing its datedness, inconsistencies and other early identified issues. Most recommendations surrounding these program enhancements will be fully vetted and prepared for consideration for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026.

- Human Resources is deep into Open Enrollment preparations for the benefit year beginning July 1, 2025. A complete consideration of employee self-service options available through PlanSource, IBPC's benefits platform, remained unfavorable, resulting in the Department maintaining the complete enrollment process on behalf of District employees. The adoption of the draft FY25-26 annual budget has the potential to modify employer/employee premium splits and increase the life insurance caps for all regular full-time employees; waiting for its approval will limit the time employees have to make benefits elections and reduce the Department's window for data entry so all preparations are being made in advance to alleviate these concerns.
- Significant projects in the works for the Department include a comprehensive review of the employee handbook, a reimagining of the District's performance evaluation program, the development of a work capacity test pilot program for prescribed burning, and the evaluation of employee engagement surveys.
- Department staff participated in fourteen prescribed burns over three days, an HR Source Membership Meeting, and an IPRA HR Committee Roundtable. The Director attended the IPELRA Employment Law Seminar and the IPBC Annual All Members Meeting. The team partnered to interview three candidates for the Department's summer internship and met for a quarterly teambuilding lunch break.

Safety and Wellness:

There were no general liability or worker's compensation claims in March.

- The 2025 safety training plan has been developed and communicated to all employees. The Department will take advantage of the Spring all staff meeting to bring at least one of these requirements offline so that employees have the opportunity to learn together and in a setting that is more conducive for questions. The 2025 plan includes enhanced collaboration with the Kane County IT Department, which coordinates the District's cyber security training.
- The Department completed a kickoff meeting with PDRMA in early March to develop the 2025 risk management review process and update safety goals. PDRMA will assist with funding and coordinating an OSHA facility audit of the Trades Shop in 2025. Also, the agency agreed to progress the 2024/2025 SMART goal for an employee Work Capacity Test for Natural Resources staff that conduct prescribed burns. This pilot project will be implemented in August.
- Staff represented the District at the annual PDRMA Education & Training Committee meeting. Highlights are: 1) PDRMA will be updating



Sweet treats and smiles everywhere at Creek Bend for Maple Sugaring Days.



Someone had to park all those Maple Sugaring folks, kudos to our Mounted Rangers who were on it!



Volunteers Karen and Meredith were the face of the District working the welcome table at Maple Sugaring.



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10-minute micro-video training modules. 2) PDRMA is also developing a master list of required and recommended training topics. Many modules are required by OSHA regulation. Once completed, the list will link to PDRMA online resources.

- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator attended the South Operations staff meeting and presented updates to the CDL process for new CDL holders, coordinated the annual OSHA hearing testing and training for field staff, taught Red Cross CPR/1st Aid to 12 field employees, and also trained 10 employees on Bleeding Control for high-risk activities such as chain sawing.
- Support was provided to Natural Resources providing feedback on safety improvements including radio communications and situational awareness for prescribed burning as well as to the Environmental Education by coordinating and reviewing certificates of Insurance, fire safety requirements, and general liability coverage for the Fly-Fishing exhibit at Creek Bend.

Volunteer Resources:

In March, 1455.25 volunteer hours at 48 events were given to the District!

- Some cold temperatures resulted in a number of volunteer event cancellations. However, snow coverage allowed for the continued ability to burn down accumulated brush piles.
- The Volunteer Office tabled the Maple Sugaring event, hosted the Annual Stewards Meeting at Brewster, led two clean-ups with Friends of the Fox at the Carpentersville Dam, co-taught with Environmental Education on nature and service at the Batavia Public Library, and invited the Chicago Botanic Garden for the District's annual Plants of Concern meeting in partnership with Natural Resources.
- The Department supplied Stewards with refreshed first aid kits and supply restock needs in time for the change in seasons. Additionally, it introduced Google Forms for ease of tracking Steward supply levels.
- Staff attended the Wild Things Conference, the Elgin Technical Steering Committee meeting for Climate Action, the Earth Day staff planning meeting, participated in a number of work days, and hiked with Stewards.