



## Human Resources Department Memorandum

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TO: Benjamin Haberthur, Executive Director

FROM: Jennifer Clough, Director of Human Resources

DATE: November 10, 2025

RE: October 2025 Report

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### **Human Resources:**

- The District separated employment with two employees in the month of October, creating vacancies in an Operations Crew Leader and a Horticulturist position. The department supported the Public Safety department in the selection of its new Administrative Specialist and recruited for its own new Human Resources Manager. Orientation activities for temporary support staff in the Finance and HR departments were completed. The majority of the District's seasonal positions have moved into the offboarding phase.
- The Commission's October consideration and approval of a contract to outsource payroll processes to ADP and enhance HR programs through the implementation of additional ADP technologies led the Department into a series of kickoff calls, data and information collection, and strategic planning conversations as the Finance and HR teams' partner to play key roles in the development, implementation and ongoing management of new programs and processes related to the software migration.
- 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 has been prepared and will be opened for staff following the Commission's anticipated approval of the revised Section 125 Cafeteria Plan at its November meeting. This enrollment period offers 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 District continues its formal negotiations with the District's full-time police officers' collective bargaining unit with the Metropolitan Alliance of Police. It's second bargaining session is planned for the first week of November, with future dates calendared in December and January, as needed.
- The membership of the District's insurance cooperative, IPBC, elected to establish four additional and separate benefit plan options for Retirees over the age of 55, which required department staff to communicate one on one with affected retirees in order to support their selection and enrollment processes. In addition, the department has had to modify its billing reconciliation steps and IMRF retiree insurance deductions.
- Significant projects that continue to progress in the Department include a comprehensive review of the employee handbook, a reimagining of the District's performance evaluation program, and the evaluation of employee engagement surveys. These initiatives will be remarkably affected by the implementation of ADP platforms, and have been slowed in order to ensure the processes and policies can be adapted to the new technology solutions.
- In October, department staff participated in the IPELRA annual conference in Galena, Ask IPBC - Open Enrollment Webinar; IPBC Virtual Benefit Consulting Taskforce Meeting; ADP Data Review; Ask IPBC - Medicare Continuation Program Overview; ADP Kickoff Call; IPBC Retiree Meeting for Benistar Options Overview, and coordinated and hiked three separate Work Capacity Tests with Natural Resources Management.
- Finally, two department staff celebrated noteworthy anniversaries with the District – Robb Cleave, Volunteer Coordinator marked 15 years of service and Chuck Misner, Safety and Wellness Coordinator marked 10 years of service to the Forest Preserve.



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### Safety and Wellness:

**There was one employee injury in October. The employee strained their back while disconnecting a piece of equipment from a tractor. There were no new property or liability claims during the month.**

- The Department completed the prescribed burn Work Capacity Test training and testing for the Natural Resources Team. It also conducted one-on-one debriefs with all team members for feedback. 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 results of this pilot program will be reviewed and used for to inform implementation of the program in 2026. The District will lead its peers with a successful implementation of this initiative.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator participated in the quarterly PDRMA Safety Coordinator update webinar. The main topic was completing the PDRMA Essentials in Risk Management review for 2025. In addition, staff attended the annual IPRA Safety Workshop. Topics reviewed were near miss processes for safety, individual goals and actions for safety team members, accident investigations, and developing a safety culture.
- The Safety and Wellness Coordinator collaborated with a multi-disciplinary District team to receive the All-terrain wheelchair delivery and vendor demonstration at Creek Bend Nature Center. Included for discussion was safety and risk management processes for the rollout to the public. Items added were air tag tracking, one page safety guideline sheet, public signed waiver requirements, and trail use and condition protocols.
- PDRMA online employee training completion records for 2025 were updated with the District's carrier. All employees must have their coursework done by December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- CPR/1<sup>st</sup> aid training was provided to District volunteers and the biennial state required boiler inspection at Creek Bend was coordinated and completed.

### Volunteer Resources:

**In October, 863 volunteer hours at 54 events were given to the District!**

- October was action packed month and the warm and dry weather meant much more comfortable outdoor events. Seed team featured five different harvests in October and additional special harvests were hosted with the Dundee Crown HS Eco Club and Mill Creek Elementary School.
- The Volunteer Coordinator attended the Mounted Rangers regular meeting, a virtual volunteer administration with colleague coordinators from other agencies including DuPage, Lake, Will, and Cook Counties, and the IPRA Best of the Best Gala in celebration of the District's Best Friend of Illinois Parks – Small Business winner, Fisters Quarries Group.
- The District was represented at a recruitment event at Elgin Community College, sharing volunteer opportunities with its large network of students.
- Staff hosted the annual Stewards meeting. The meeting celebrated the last year's program accomplishments, allowed stewards a formal opportunity to provide feedback to the District, and set expectations for best practices as we enter peak brush clearing season.
- The Stewardship Specialist formalized currently approved power-tools and hand tools that are allowed in stewardship work into an easy to share document format as well as configured Volgistics, the District's volunteer information software system, to track volunteer certifications and automate reminder emails for certifications requiring renewal (such as first aid and chainsaw training).
- Staff met with the Deputy Executive Director to discuss Environmental Sustainability Team (EST) goals and the carbon footprint work the committee will begin to undertake.
- The Stewardship Specialist attended four work days in the month of October, a site walkthrough at Dick Young, and met with five volunteer stewards to continue to build mutually beneficial working relationships. In addition, a successful chainsaw training class resulted in 8 new certified volunteers.



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- The team fill a total of 17 tool requests, with the electric saw being a highly sought-after resource for work days and 4 herbicide requests.



Left: Dundee Crown joins District staff for a seed harvest at Burnidge FP on Oct. 7.



Right: The Fox River Helpers hosts the final river clean up of 2025 at Fabyan West on Oct. 11.



Left: Mill Creek Elem. Student Council harvesting at Dick Young on Oct. 14.



Right: Geneva Garden Club, Ops Staff and NR volunteers make quick work of a large garden project on Oct. 21.