




Recreation, Parks & Active Living: Building Communities

**Steve Card
&
Eddie Canon**





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Georgia Recreation & Park Association

Caring for Georgia's People and Parks

GRPA is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation and advocacy of the Parks, Recreation and Leisure Services Profession. Association membership is made up of public agencies, private businesses, educational institutions, clinical settings and citizen advocates



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Statewide Association Initiatives

Promote Quality of Life and Community Value
Legislative Advocacy
Environmental Stewardship
Promote Health and Wellness
Collaborate for Crime Prevention
Enhance Economic Vitality and Tourism
Host Athletic Participation and Competition



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Member Benefits

Nationally Recognized Certification Opportunities
*Educational Opportunities via Conferences,
Workshops & Webinars*
Resources including Website, Magazine,
Newsletters
Funding Source Through Grants and Scholarships
Networking Opportunities
Information on Best Practices and Latest Trends





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Member Benefits

- Funding for Members/Agencies:
 - \$1.5- Million in playground grants (past grant)
 - \$100K (per year)- for basketball/Esports grants (Hawks)
 - \$40K- for Archery grants (past grant)
 - \$10K- members to attend educational opportunities
 - \$7K- Agencies to start New Initiative Programs
 - \$5K (\$75K total) "Boys to Men" funding with DPH
 - \$100K- USTA grant for programs & Facilities
 - \$4,050,000 for Afterschool/Summer programming
 - Outdoor Stewardship Act- opportunity






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Recreation Programming As Economic Development

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2022 GMA Annual Convention
Recreation Programming as Economic Development

- **Recreation's Role in Economic Dev.**
 - Attracting Tourists
 - Attracting Business
 - Attracting Retirees
 - Enhancing Real Estate Values




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Attracting Tourists

- Tourism \$69 Billion industry in GA
- Dollars follow tourists, tourist follow attractions
- Sports Tournaments
 - Know Your Parameters
 - Track the Impact
 - Tell the Story




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Festivals/Special Events

- Partnering
- What Are You Known For?
- Will They Come?

Park Facilities

- Natural Areas
- Beaches
- Historical Sites





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Attracting Business

- Highly Competitive Task
- Available Park Facilities
- Programs For The Family
- Corporate CEO's – Quality of Life – **3rd**
- Small Business – Quality of Life – **1st**





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Attracting Retirees


- **Affluent & Active**
- **Climate**
- **Recreational Opportunities**
- **Tax Friendly**








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Enhancing Real Estate Values

- **Attractive to Potential Home Buyers**
- **Results in Higher Property Taxes**
 - Values 5 – 10% Higher
- **If Aggregated, Could Help Retire Debt on Bonds**



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Economic Impact of Local Park and Recreation Spending in Georgia

Economic Activity

\$2,392,788,372- in economic activity (transactions) was generated by local parks and recreation in 2015

Employment

20,018- Jobs were supported by parks and recreation in 2015

Labor Income

\$859,047,956- in salaries, wages, and benefits were generated due to parks and recreation in 2015

View more at: www.NRPA.org

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A Few “Real-World” Examples

- **Bainbridge**
 - 7 Fishing Tournaments - \$1.89 Million
 - 1 Softball Tournament - \$106,000
 - 1 Tennis Tournament - \$150,000
 - 1 Gymnastics Meet - \$274,000
- **Tift County**
 - Recreation Programs - \$1.1 Million
 - GRPA District Swim Meet - \$890,000
 - GRPA State Swim Meet - \$3.4 Million



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- **Warner Robins**
 - Little League USA Tournaments - \$1.1 Million
 - Special Olympics Masters Bowling - \$250,000
 - Georgia Golden Olympics - \$650,000
- **Dublin-Laurens County**
 - 22 Softball Tournaments - \$3.1 Million
- **Kennesaw**
 - Big Shanty Festival - \$3 Million
 - Taste of Kennesaw - \$745,000
 - Pigs & Peaches BBQ Festival - \$1.9 Million

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- **City of Lafayette (7,000 people)-Honey Bee Festival**
 - Year 1- 25K visitors; Year 2- 45K visitors; Year 3- 58K visitors
 - 150 vendors; 225 bike riders (from over 7 different states)
 - \$3 million Economic Impact
- **Cobb County**
 - 36 Events - \$79 Million
 - (Soccer, Cheer, Marathons, Boxing, Tennis, Taekwondo, Basketball, Bowling, Football, etc.)
 - Perfect Game Championships Alone - \$68 Million
 - Contracted Room Nights – 60,012

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What Now?

- **Partnering**
 - Recreation Departments
 - Chamber of Commerce's
 - CVB's
 - Non-Profits
 - Businesses
- **Adjoining communities (based on size)**





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What Now?

- **Positioning**
 - From the Eyes of Elected Officials
 - Who Benefits?
 - Alignment
 - From the Eyes of the General Public
 - Small Percentages Actually Participate
 - What's in it for Them?



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2022 GMA Annual Convention Recreation Programming as Economic Development

What Now?

- **Repositioning**
 - **Real Repositioning** – changing to a more entrepreneurial approach
 - **Competitive Repositioning** – educating stakeholders on who does what
 - **Psychological Repositioning** – documenting, demonstrating, and informing

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Close to home facts regarding the economic impact of the **Roswell Recreation, Parks, Historic & Cultural Affairs Department**.

- In 2011, 1454 participants registered for baseball through our Department.
- It cost, on average, \$230 to outfit a baseball player with a baseball glove, cleats, batting helmet, and batting glove.

ECONOMIC IMPACT = \$334,420.00



- In 2011, 1695 participants registered for a lacrosse tournament.
- 1695 participants X 2 spectators/participant X \$65/day* = \$220,370/day X 2.5 days = \$550,875.00

ECONOMIC IMPACT = \$550,875.00

- In 2011, 810 participants registered for the 5th Soccer Tournament.
- 810 participants X 2 spectators/participants X \$65/day* = \$105,300/day X 2 days = \$210,600.00

ECONOMIC IMPACT = \$210,600.00



- In 2011, the Department hosted its (6) gymnastics meets with 2000 participants and 6000 spectators.
- 8000 people X \$65/day* = \$520,000.00



ECONOMIC IMPACT = \$520,000.00

*The Roswell Convention and Visitors Bureau estimated that each person that comes to Roswell for the day will spend approximately \$65.00/day on food, gas, and various items.

The most current determinant for quality of life is community cohesion. In 2011, the following special events were hosted by the Department in Roswell:


- July 4th Extravaganza
- Fall of Summer Celebration
- Youth Day Parade and Festival
- Riverside Sounds Concert
- Outdoor Movies at Riverside
- Halloween Fun House
- Lighting of Town Square
- Annual Egg Hunt
- Roots Festival

Total Participation for the 9 events above 90,000. That equals bringing every person that lives in Roswell together.


Talk about your Community Cohesion.

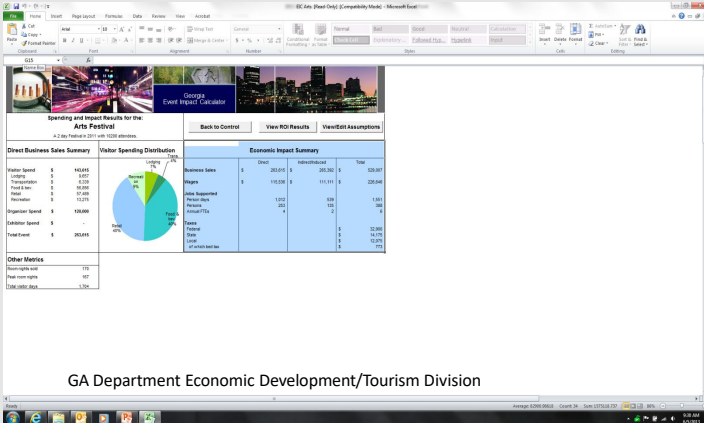


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GA Department Economic Development/Tourism Division

Spending and Impact Results for the Event

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Public Benefits

- **Economic Development**
 - We have covered this one today
- **Alleviating Social Problems**
 - Preventing Youth Crime
 - Healthy Lifestyles
 - Environmental Stress
 - Mental stability
 - Equity
 - Community Welcome Wagon
 - Unemployment & Underemployment
 - Instill Loyalty and Passion






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Environmental Stewardship

- Historic Preservation
- The Natural Environment






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Questions & Comments



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Recreation and Parks MUST have's!!

Regardless of Community size, Recreation Agencies across Georgia should be equipped with and have various levels of support **AND** be held accountable to achieve success citizens desire


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&
Steve Card



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Leadership!



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Leadership- City & Agency Level

• Vision

County "X" strives to provide for an exceptional residential community with ease of movement throughout, an active atmosphere, and a vibrant business community.

• Mission

To be an exceptional county



Your community doesn't care who provides their County services...they only care that _ _ _ _ _



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Difference makers of your Agency!



❖ NEVER more important!

Who is your Customer?

"Anyone whose actions affect your business results" ...internally and externally



GET OUT OF THE BOX

- If it ain't broke BREAK IT !!
- Change is good when thought out and it fits Vision/Mission of agency
- Show links to success, increase YOUR marketability

Things to think about:

- Make up of your Agency
- What staff should "look" like
- How to find quality staff
- What should be expected
- Tying them into the community
- GET INVOLVED! PLUG YOURSELF IN SOME WHERE !!
- Train correctly and OFTEN!
- Find out how "it" works rather than complain when you're not included
- Be willing to be empowered
- Be part of the solution not the problem
- You control two things: ATTITUDE & EFFORT!

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Partnerships

County Departments, Community organizations, School Systems, etc.

3 "C'S" Through

With Cooperation Effective Communication

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Citizen Engagement

- There is an "expert" in every community
- Utilize them to help meet vision/mission YOU set
- The more you can get on YOUR side the better

Citizen Participation in Parks

- Directly involves the constituencies in the design, planning, and management of parks
- Creates informed and engaged residents
- While sometimes contentious, often productive and rewarding

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What do YOU need/want?

Lessons Learned from COVID?

- ✓ Many recreation employees AND facilities were/are multifunctional to communities
- ✓ Employee multi-tasking various jobs in various departments
- ✓ Facilities critical for testing, shots, and central hubs for community
- ✓ Parks 200% increase use- many first timers
- ✓ Ability to offer outlets “release” for citizens in safe environment



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What do YOU need/want?



Challenges or Opportunities?

- ✓ Demands are ever increasing
- ✓ Less Resources
- ✓ More People & Programs
- ✓ Normal Play declining
- ✓ “Take my Ball and Go Home” Attitude
- ✓ Facilitator or Programmer?
- ✓ Old Way Not Best Way
- ✓ Keeping up with change



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Innovations in Recreation & Recreation Programming

Steve Card
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Innovations are Paramount

Why the need to be innovative?

- So many forces - economy, politics, and social trends - are out of control of Parks and Recreation professionals .

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Innovation

It's **NOT** doing more with less, but doing the **MOST** with what you are afforded!

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Today we will
discuss
innovations
in:



Recreation Facilities



Recreation Programming



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Recreation Planning



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Recreation Planning

- Are Georgia's demographic changes reflected in your community's program offerings, citizen board members, parkland acquisition priorities, and facility design procedures of your organization?
- By working together, we can create social capital, support local communities, and conserve natural and cultural resources.



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5 Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today






U.S. Population continues to grow


Baby boomers are America's driving force

Growing racial and ethnic diversity


The proportion of youth

The distribution of population

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Recreation Planning

Health Concerns

- 1st time in history the obese outnumber the malnourished
- Medical cost fall \$3.27 for every \$1.00 spent on Wellness Programs
 - Park Prescriptions
 - "Walk with Doc"



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Recreation Planning


Place

- Give “place” to the community
 - Open Spaces
 - It’s important to instill **LOYALTY** and **PASSION** within the community
- Bring the community together by creating Social Equity
- Identity
- School cost to community- Return on investment?







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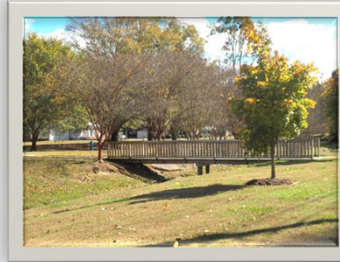
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Recreation Planning

Economics

- Economic Benefits of Open Spaces
 - \$1,214 – increase sale price of homes within 1500' of urban park
 - \$5,657 – increase sale price of homes within 1500' of specialty parks
 - \$0.29 – cost required for services for open space land per \$1.00 revenue generated



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Recreation Planning

Ways to promote Parks and Recreation:

- Social media/Website
- E-newsletters
- YouTube postings
- Flyers
- Videos
- Catalogs
- Partners (organizations, media outlets, etc.)
- Real estate Agents



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Recreation Facilities



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Recreation Facilities

- Innovations with facility planning, building, and programming is a MUST for long term success and sustainability
- Don't build without M&O
- Technology
- Funding, partnerships, collaborations
 - Grants, trust funds, foundations, bonding, SPLOST, general fund



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Recreation Facilities

Partnerships

- **Community Center**
 - Separate entity from the Recreation Center
- Incorporate partnerships and agreements before selling to the public
 - Broader offerings – easier to sell
- Computer labs, exercise rooms, multipurpose gym space, track, work out equipment, meeting space
- Partnerships – WIC, Health Clinic, library, creative arts, clubs
- Community garden, Splash Pad, Playground
- Varied user groups- increase sustainability

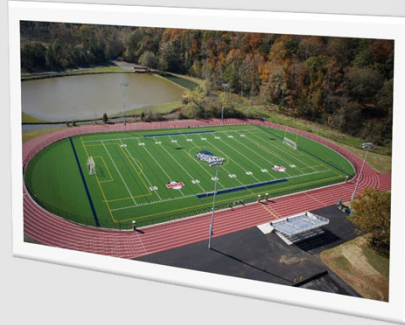


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Recreation Facilities

Turf

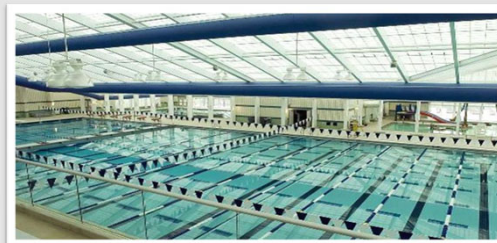
- Natural or Synthetic Turf?
 - Cost concern
 - 700 hour use natural turf VS 3000 hours use synthetic turf
 - Usage time = revenue
 - 1/5 maintenance cost over 8-10 your life span
 - Water conservation = Environmental stewardship
- Field allocation of playtime is important
- Happy campers don't complain.



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Money Pit or Aquatic Treasure?

- Review, revamp, recognize benefits of a Community Natatorium
- Programming must precede design
- Today's aquatics must keep pace with the business model
- Creative, innovative, activities to sell the community on
- Splashpad considerations



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Recreation Facilities


- Realizing economic impact
- Understanding recruitment, retaining opportunities
- Embrace environmental stewardship



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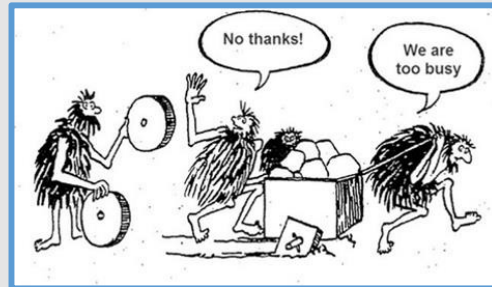
Recreation Programming



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Recreation Programming

- From birth to death and everything in between
- “Church” mindset
 - Get the kids and the parents will follow
- Don’t re-invent the wheel
 - There is a “specialist” in every community

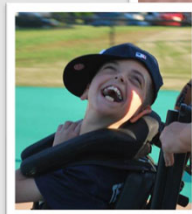
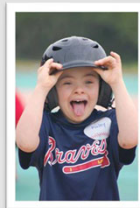


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Recreation Programming

Therapeutic Division

- Special Needs Population
 - Miracle League
 - Great if you can afford it, but it should not stop programming
- Utilize school system personnel and parents
 - Year round activities
- Keep this group in front of the public



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Recreation Programming

Senior Active Programming

- Know your clientele
 - Travel, active programming a MUST
- Teenage/Senior Activities
 - art, ceramic, card, game integration
- Life lessons – manners, etiquette, goal settings



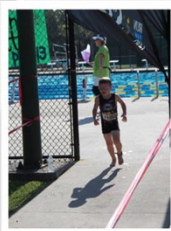
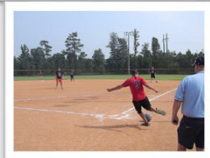
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Recreation Programming Activities

X – Games?

- Nontraditional activities and events
- MOB Races (mud runs, obstacle courses, costume races)
- Kids triathlons
- Kickball, dodge ball
- Inner tube water polo
- Birdie golf; disc golf
- Exercise opportunities – Fit camps, MMA, Boot camps
 - There is an expert in every community



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Recreation Programming Alternatives

- Outdoor Passive Opportunities
 - Garden Club – utilize current spaces and expertise
 - Fruit orchard – show to grow
 - Fort Building
 - Grocery Store Partnerships
 - Utilizing existing natural resources
 - State Parks
 - Local outdoor attractions
 - Some may start as camps/clinics and turn into regular programming opportunities

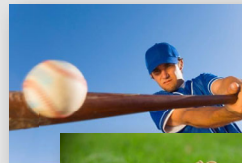


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Recreation Programming Lastly...

We forget anything? Oh yeah, the ole bat and ball.

- Travel ball versus Rec. ball – don't make it a competition level in a partnership
- Of the 500 five year olds only four will be on a high school team (.8%)
- Make it fun for the 99.2%
- Who has participated
- Set up program to suit factory workers, sales people, future politicians



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Change...

- Change is inevitable. How we deal with the change will ultimately determine the success of our individual communities.



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Change...

"When it comes to a city's health, including environmental, physical, mental, social and economic health, there exists no other public asset that can positively affect change with the same magnitude as parks and recreation programs."

-Jeff Pruitt,
Roswell Recreation and Parks Dept.

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Innovations in Recreation & Recreation Programming

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