



PARKS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

SPRING CONFERENCE

MARCH 23-26, 2026

SIOUX CITY, IOWA



PARKS AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

*IPRA Spring Conference - Sioux City
March 23-26, 2026*



★ BEST IN THE WEST ★

CONFERENCE INFO

Event/Hotel Information

Sioux City Convention Center

801 4th Street, Sioux City, IA 51101



Courtyard by Marriott

901 4th Street, Sioux City, IA 51101

\$129 per night + taxes/fees

Reservation Link: Click [HERE](#)

Room Block Deadline: February 21

**Rooms are limited and not guaranteed*



COURTYARD[®]
BY MARRIOTT

Off-Site Tours sponsored
by Crouch Recreation



Secure Wi-Fi network
courtesy of
Pilot Rock



Thank you to Outdoor
Recreation Products for
sponsoring give aways for all
registered delegates!



Outdoor Recreation Products

Event Parking

Parking

A variety of free and paid parking spots are located near the Sioux City Convention Center.

Download the Parking Diagram

You may also use the link below for an interactive parking map for the Sioux City area.
[Interactive Parking Map](#)

SHOUT OUT TO THE TIGER TEAM MEMBERS FOR THIS EVENT:

Justin Atlas, City of Sioux City
Kari Allen, City of Johnston
Molly Moore, City of Johnston
Katie Klus, City of Bondurant
Laura Albert, City of Sumner

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Registration Deadline:

Friday, March 6th at noon

	IPRA Member Rate	Non Member Rate
Full Package:	\$275	\$325
Tuesday Only:	\$190	\$240
Wednesday Only:	\$190	\$240

Student Full Package: \$50

Student One Day: \$20

Late Registration:

Begins Friday, March 6th at 12:01 PM

	IPRA Member Rate	Non Member Rate
Full Package:	\$325	\$375
Tuesday Only:	\$215	\$260
Wednesday Only:	\$215	\$260

Student Full Package: \$55

Student One Day: \$20

Aquatic CEU Workshop - \$50 (Must be a paid conference delegate. In-person only.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & REGISTRATION

CONTACT INFORMATION

Kelly M. Johnson Rose, CPRP
President & CEO
kelly@iapra.org
641-325-2164



Mallory Iverson
Vice President
mallory@iapra.org
641-990-3887



MONDAY EVENING SOCIAL

SIoux CITY DISTILLING CO.

313 Perry Street,
Sioux City, IA 51103

6:00-8:00 PM

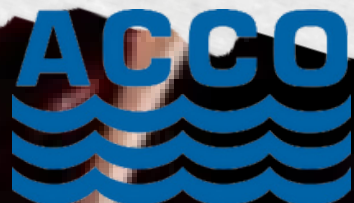
Kick off your conference week with us at the IPRA Monday Evening Social! We'll gather at the brand-new Sioux City Distilling Co. with live music from Jason Walsmith, plus plenty of food & beverages and good conversation!



**BOLTON
& MENK**

Real People. Real Solutions.

Monday evening social is presented by:
ACCO Unlimited & Bolton & Menk



EDDIE SLOWIKOWSKI

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Eddie Slowikowski combines music, sound effects, and storytelling to create a cinematic motivational experience that will ignite passion and purpose within your team, and create inspired performance.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT
EDDIE HERE**

SPRING CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

*Conference registration required to attend

REGISTER



We are honored to receive the Landscape Structures Speaker Scholarship, enabling us to bring Eddie Slowikowski to our community.

Thank you @playlsi for your unwavering support of parks and recreation professionals!

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

7:30 AM Registration Table Opens

Presented by:
Boland Recreation



8:30 - 9:30 AM Educational Sessions

Session #1 - Basketball to Board Rooms: Leadership Lessons from a Professional Basketball Player, WNBA Referee, and Park & Rec Director

Jan Herke / City of Urbandale

In this session, Jan Herke, Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Urbandale, Iowa, will share insights and lessons from a very unique 35-year journey that has taken her from the exhilarating courts of college and professional basketball to the nuanced world of Division I and WNBA refereeing and eventually to the fulfilling role of a parks and recreation director. Through these varied experiences, she has gleaned invaluable leadership lessons that transcend the boundaries of sports and permeate the boardrooms of various organizations. In this session, we will discuss and examine leadership, communication, team building and decision-making strategies that are relatable to all. We will learn that leadership is not a one-size-fits-all concept, and the best leaders understand when to be decisive and when to be empathetic. We also will learn how strong leadership skills can help build community partnerships and encourage discussions on equality and provide welcoming spaces for everyone, regardless of age, identity, income or ability.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #2 - Projects Made Simple

Jason Schillig / MUSCO Sports Lighting

High quality LED sports lighting can revolutionize the player and fan experience for venues of all sports and sizes But not LED is created equal. Join experts from Musco Sports Lighting, LLC, the world leader in sports lighting, as they discuss top trends in lighting and advancements in technology. Viewers will walk away with the latest tips for optimizing safety, visibility and fan experience with LED sports lighting; guidance on common misconceptions and project pitfalls; and forecasts for what is next in the industry.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #3 - The Inclusive Visitor Journey: Accessibility from Online to Outdoors

Angela Drent / Siouxland District Health Department

Molly Wuebker / Uncurbed & Great Plains ADA Center

Through real examples from Iowa parks, we will examine four foundational touchpoints that can be assessed quickly and effectively: information and technology, transportation and arrival, park amenities and trails, and recreation programming. Participants will learn how each touchpoint influences independence, safety, and equitable participation—and how small, strategic improvements can significantly enhance accessibility.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

9:30-9:45 AM Break

Presented by:

SynLawn



9:45 - 10:45 AM Educational Sessions

Session #4 - Your Facility is a Business - Are You Running It Like One?

John Byrnes / City of Bettendorf

Eric Griffith / City of Moline, IL

This session explores how parks and recreation facilities can operate with the same strategic mindset as successful businesses while still staying true to their public service mission. Participants will learn practical ways to improve efficiency, strengthen customer experience, and enhance financial performance through data informed decisions and consistent operational practices. The session provides tools and insights that help staff at all levels elevate their facility's professionalism and long-term sustainability.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #5 - Mechanical Room Updates

Andy Smith / Carrico Aquatic Resources

This session will outline key procedures for planning and implementing mechanical room upgrades. Participants will learn about upgrade timetables and how to prioritize system improvements. Best practices for safety, compliance, and efficiency will be covered.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #6 - ELN: Managing Up & Managing Yourself

Mallory Iverson, Colby Vlieger, Ashley Bjork, Paxton Peterson

**For ELN only, learn more [here](#)*

This roundtable session explores how managing up and managing yourself work together to strengthen your leadership. Participants will discuss practical ways to communicate clearly with supervisors, clarify expectations, and advocate for what they need. We'll also examine strategies for protecting your time, energy, and boundaries while supporting organizational goals. Because this is a roundtable format, you'll hear real examples and insights directly from fellow parks and recreation professionals. Together, we'll surface shared challenges, compare approaches, and learn from one another's experiences. By the end, emerging leaders will walk away with tools to navigate demands, build trust, and lead confidently from any seat.

Room: C-3

A decorative horizontal border consisting of a thick, brown rope with a twisted texture, featuring circular knots at each end.

Located in the exhibit hall

Food and beverage stations will be located throughout the exhibit hall—grab a plate and spend some time meeting our commercial vendors!



A decorative border consisting of a horizontal line with small stars interspersed along it, spanning the width of the page.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

2:15 - 3:15 PM Educational Sessions continued

Session #8 - Living a Life of Creativity

Jason Walsmith

Sometimes people think creativity is a luxury reserved for artists or a gift only bestowed on a select few. I will talk about how everyone has the ability to use creativity as a tool to build a more satisfying and fulfilling life.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #9 - The Best Camera is the One You Have: Cell Phone Photography for Marketing and Storytelling

Jan Herke / City of Urbandale

Derek Zarn / City of Urbandale

Everyone has a cell phone—and that means everyone has the ability to capture compelling, high-quality photos for marketing, promotions, and storytelling. In parks and recreation, photos are often taken on the fly at programs, events, and in the field, leaving little time for professional equipment or editing. In this interactive session, Parks and Recreation Director and the Marketing & Communications Director for the City of Urbandale will share practical tips and tricks for taking better photos using only a cell phone. Participants will learn simple techniques for composition, lighting, framing, and editing that can immediately elevate photos used for social media, brochures, websites, and presentations. Attendees will leave with confidence for capturing images that authentically tell their community's story.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

Tour #1 - STF Expo Center

2:15-3:15 PM

**limited space, pre-register at registration table*



3:15-3:30 AM Break

Presented by:

Shive-Hattery

SHIVE-HATTERY
ARCHITECTURE+ENGINEERING

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

3:30 - 4:30 PM Educational Sessions

Session #10 - Leadership and Management for All Levels

Justin Atlas / City of Sioux City

This session equips supervisors, coordinators, and emerging leaders with practical tools to strengthen communication, motivation, and team performance. Participants will explore adaptable management strategies that fit a variety of roles and organizational structures. With a focus on building healthy workplace culture, the session offers actionable steps to support staff development and enhance service delivery. As many professionals step into leadership without formal training, this session provides the essential foundation needed to lead confidently and navigate the growing demands of the field.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #11 - Evolving Your Recreation Programs: A Case Study in Programmer Involved, Data-Driven Planning

Jay Lotthammer / ISG

This session presents findings from a recent case study on how a growing community is reshaping its recreation programming. We'll explore how analyzing demographic shifts, participation trends, and community feedback can guide the transformation of public recreation offerings to better serve a growing and changing population.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #12 - How Social Media Reignited Community Pride in Sioux City

Kelly Ramirez / Social Media Content Creator

Anne Westra / City of Sioux City

Social media is a powerful tool for parks and recreation professionals, and it has become essential to use to connect with your community. This session shows how Sioux City approached its social strategy by adding a dedicated social media content creator who uses video that resonates with residents. Attendees will see real examples and leave with practical ideas they can use to strengthen their engagement.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

JOIN US FOR THE TUESDAY EVENING SOCIAL!

*SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS



TUESDAY EVENING SOCIAL

TYSON EVENTS CENTER

401 Gordon Drive
Sioux City, IA 51103



March 24 – Championship Game
Game Start Time
TBD

Attendees will receive ticket with \$10 food voucher.
Must indicate intent to attend in conference final
event details (will be sent out 1-2 weeks prior to
conference start date) to receive a ticket.
*Registered conference delegates only.

Know Before You Go

Clear bags only! Cashless facility!



Tuesday evening social is presented by:
Carrico Aquatic Resources

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

7:30 AM Registration Table Opens

Presented by:
Sentry Aquatics



8:30 - 9:30 AM Educational Sessions

Session #13 - Tailoring Aquatics to Your Community

Shannon Gapp / MSA Professional Services

Shawn O'Shea / MSA Professional Services

Every community is unique, and your aquatic facilities should be too. This session dives into how to assess community demographics, interests, and feedback to shape aquatic spaces that truly serve local needs. Learn practical tools for engagement, programming, and design that ensure your facility is inclusive, accessible, and well-utilized by all ages and abilities. Walk away with strategies to align your aquatic offerings with what your community values most.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #14 - Harvesting Opportunities in Bondurant's Grain District: Public Spaces, Trails, and Silo Commons

Danielle Propst / ISG

Kyle Hannigan / ISG

Bondurant's Grain District Downtown Redevelopment Plan and Silo Commons Concept Plan demonstrates how a fast-growing community can transform a 24-acre former agricultural cooperative into a vibrant, multi-use downtown district that honors its agricultural heritage while planning for future generations. This session will showcase the collaborative vision and execution behind the Grain District, with a special focus on the Chichaqua Valley Trail extension and the innovative Silo Commons area. Attendees will learn how this public-private partnership led to the adaptive reuse of historic grain silos—now envisioned as playgrounds, amphitheaters, and accessible public amenities—while surrounding these anchors with commercial, residential, and recreational spaces. The session will highlight design strategies for plazas and commons that foster community connectivity, walkability, and economic growth, and will include insights from those involved in the planning, design, and construction processes.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #15 - Iowa Legislative Update

Brian Pauly / City of Mason City

We will walk through some of the major issues coming out of Des Moines, what we're seeing across the state, and how our members can stay engaged heading into session.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25



9:30-9:45 AM Break

Presented by:

MSA Professional Services



9:45 - 10:45 AM Educational Sessions

Session #16 - The Art and Science of Splash Pad Design

Paul Nelson / ISG

Alex Miller / City of Grimes

Splash pads are a safe, accessible, and cost-effective alternative to pools, helping communities boost quality of life and attract families. This session will provide a case study of Waterworks Park, including the parks in Grimes, Glen Park, Winthrop City Park, and O'Toole Park. We will provide splash pad benefits—enhanced safety, inclusive design, and ease of maintenance—along with considerations for design, permitting, programming, and long-term operational costs. Attendees will gain practical insights into how splash pads can promote active play, wellness, and economic growth, all while reducing staffing and safety concerns.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #17 - Facility Rentals: The Good, The Bad, and the Policies

Molly Moore / City of Johnston

Katie Klus / City of Bondurant

Facility rentals are multifaceted, layered, and unique to every community. What are the current trends, and how can we work together to find greater consistency within rental policies across Iowa? Are there growing pains in your community, or challenges you wish to talk through with others who have faced similar situations? Join Molly Moore and Katie Klus in exploring what communities across the state are offering, then break out into small and large community groups for guided, in-depth discussions. Come with your frustrations and leave with a game plan.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #18 - Designing for All Ages: Emerging Trends in Inclusive & Intergenerational Play and Recreation

Bruce Thompson / GameTime

Intergenerational play is gaining momentum as a transformative approach to community design—where every space becomes an opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to connect, move, and grow together. This session will explore the latest trends and emerging practices in designing for intergenerational recreation, including inclusive design principles, nature-based integration, personalized play features, and data-driven planning. Through real-world case studies and evidence-based strategies, participants will discover how intentional design can bridge generations, foster community belonging, and enhance public health outcomes. Learn how to translate trend insights into action and create vibrant, equitable spaces that serve the whole community—today and for generations to come.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

Tour #2 - Chris Larsen Park (Riverfront)

9:45-10:45 AM

**limited space, pre-register at registration table*



10:45-11:00 AM Break

Presented by:

Boland Recreation



11:00 - 12:00 PM Educational Sessions

Session #19 - Smart Asset Management: Leveraging Technology for Longevity & Efficiency

Jay Lotthammer / ISG

Danielle Propst / ISG

Effective asset management is the backbone of sustainable parks and recreation operations. This session explores a comprehensive approach to managing assets—from inventorying and condition assessment to predicting lifespan and implementing preventative maintenance strategies and proactively planning capital improvements. Learn how technology can transform traditional practices by providing data-driven insights that improve predictability and optimize resource allocation.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #20 - Diving In: A Practical Guide to Aquatics

Katie McGrane / City of Ankeny

Brian Ruffles / City of Cedar Rapids

If your city has a pool, this is the session for you. This session will provide new aquatic professionals and non-aquatic professionals with the basic knowledge needed to successfully operate your aquatic center before, during, and after your pool season. This is a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of your aquatic centers and be prepared to help out if needed. Whether your title is Director, Supervisor, Coordinator, etc., you should always be prepared to “jump” into aquatics!

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

11:00 - 12:00 PM Educational Sessions continued

Session #21 - Building Prairie Rock: How a Mountain Bike Park Became a Community and Tourism Driver

Brian Pauly / City of Mason City

This session will explore the development of the Prairie Rock Trail and Mountain Bike Park, including why the project was pursued, how it was planned and implemented, and how it is performing in its early stages. The presentation will focus on how the project was designed to serve local residents while also attracting visitors, creating a destination that builds community pride and drives tourism dollars. Participants will hear lessons learned from the first two years of planning, construction, and operations, including early successes, challenges, and adjustments made along the way. The session will also discuss how bike tourism extends beyond trail construction and includes branding, partnerships, maintenance planning, and long-term community buy-in.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

Tour #3 - Miracle League Park

11:00 - 12:00 PM

**limited space, pre-register at registration table*



Lunch & Keynote

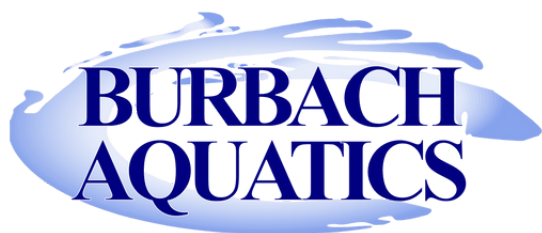
12:00 - 2:00 PM

Located in Gallery A

Join us for an energizing lunch keynote with Eddie Slowikowski, former world-class runner, USA Track & Field Gold Medalist, and one of only 169 Americans to break the four-minute mile. A 3-time NCAA All-American and National Cross Country Champion, Eddie brings elite performance lessons from the track to the workplace.

Now a renowned speaker, consultant, and author, Eddie shares his acclaimed “Four Minute Formula,” blending powerful storytelling, music, and audience engagement to inspire individuals and teams to break barriers, raise standards, and perform at their best.

Lunch Presented by:
Burbach Aquatics



[Learn More about Eddie](#)

Key Note Speaker Presented by:
Landscape Structures



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

2:15 - 3:15 PM Educational Sessions

Session #22 - The Future of Outdoor Lighting: Solar Solutions for Parks

Jonathan Holsworth / GenPro

Doug Stumpf / GenPro

This session will explore how solar street and area lighting is transforming outdoor environments by providing cost-effective, sustainable, and maintenance-free solutions for parks, trails, pathways, recreational complexes, and public gathering spaces. Attendees will learn how solar lighting can improve safety, enhance user experience, reduce long-term operational costs, and support community sustainability goals. The session will cover key considerations including photometric design, environmental durability, integration with existing park amenities, and real-world case studies, while offering valuable insights into how parks and recreation departments can effectively incorporate solar lighting into their long-term planning and facility management strategies.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #23 - ADA Compliance for Parks & Recreation: Accessible Documents and Easy-to-Read Graphics

Janet Wilwerding / City of Johnston

For parks and recreation departments, ADA compliance often comes down to how information is shared online. Program guides, flyers, registration forms, schedules, and policies posted on the website need to be accessible to everyone, including people who use screen readers or other assistive technology. That means documents should be properly formatted, readable, and not just scanned PDFs. Graphics and flyers also matter, using strong color contrast helps people with low vision or color blindness easily read dates, times, and key details. When documents and graphics are accessible, residents can find programs, sign up, and participate independently. Focusing on clear documents and high-contrast designs helps parks and recreation staff reach more people, reduce frustration, and make sure no one is unintentionally left out.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #24 - Transform Your Dog Parks into Self-Funding Community Hubs

Brian Hatfield / BarkPass

Steve Zeidman / BarkPass

Discover how modern dog park management can transform a community amenity into a measurable, revenue-generating asset. This session provides Parks and Recreation leaders with a practical roadmap to implement a permitted dog park system that simultaneously addresses public safety, compliance, and fiscal responsibility. Learn how integrating pet licensing with dog park access dramatically improves compliance rates, providing critical funding for animal welfare. We'll explore the operational challenges from managing liability and resident concerns to maintaining park quality.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

Tour #4 - Cone Park

2:15 - 3:15 PM

**limited space, pre-register at registration table*



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25

3:15-3:30 PM Break

Presented by:

3:30 - 4:30 PM Educational Sessions

Session #25 - Colby Park: From Community Vision to Destination

Casey Byers / Bolton & Menk

Lauren Campbell / City of Windsor Heights

Recipient of awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Iowa Chapter of the American Public Works Association, the 2024 Colby Park Reconstruction Project in Windsor Heights is a standout example of how a system-wide park master plan can result in a dynamic, inclusive space that supports both community connections and local economic impact. Through public engagement and strategic funding, the city transformed its landmark community park into a flexible destination featuring an iconic playground, splashpad, food truck plaza, and event-ready gathering spaces. Hear from members of the design team and city council about how Windsor Heights aligned design with community priorities, leveraged diverse funding sources, and created infrastructure that supports festivals, small businesses, and spontaneous social activity.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #26 - Making Waves: Creating Regional Destinations for Aquatics

Hank Moyers / Confluence

PJ Novick / Confluence

Making Waves gives participants the key information necessary to start developing RFP/Qs to bring destination facilities to their communities for aquatics. Participants will learn about public engagement processes, looking at critical design and theming considerations as well as procurement options. Three key case studies will outline the processes and outcomes for participants to model their design and construction processes from.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

Session #27 - AI In Parks & Recreation: Practical Applications for Everyday Work

Katie Klus / City of Bondurant

This session introduces parks and recreation professionals to practical ways chat-based AI tools can assist with everyday tasks. Attendees will learn how AI can help summarize survey data, identify themes in public feedback, generate program ideas, and quickly draft program descriptions and communications. With a focus on real-world examples and appropriate use, this session shows how AI can save time, support better decision-making, and allow staff to focus more on serving their communities.

Room: C-3 CEU 0.1

Best of the Best BANQUET

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 26
6:00PM - 8:00PM

Located in Gallery A

EVENING MASTERS OF CEREMONY
AUSTIN TASLER & JOHN BYRNES



Presented By:

Boland Recreation



6:00-6:30 SOCIAL

6:30-8:00 DINNER & AWARDS

AWARDS PRESENTED

Administrative Assistant
Permanent Part-Time Team Member
Claude Ahrens Community Service
T. Ray Frame Parks Maintenance
Dr. Carole Hanson New Professional
Slattery / Trueblood Outstanding Professional

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

7:30 AM Registration Table Opens

Presented by:

Central Iowa Farm Store



Aquatic CEU Workshop

8:30 - 11:30 AM

David Peters / Carrico Aquatic Resources

Room: C-3 CEU 0.25

*Pre-registration and additional fee required

Register as an add-on at time of conference registration to receive discounted price

8:30 - 9:30 AM Educational Sessions

Session #28 - Using GIS for Cemetery Management

Scott Kiley / MSA Professional Services

At first glance, cemetery management would appear to be a very straightforward process with minimal requirements. Manage plot sales and maintain the cemetery with routine landscaping efforts—pretty simple, right? In actuality, the management of burial and grave information can be quite complex. Unlike real estate records that are recorded and tracked formally at the county level through documented procedures, the rules managing burials have evolved without the benefit of quality documentation—creating many challenges for modern-day cemetery managers. GIS can provide the tool for cities that manage cemeteries. It provides the tool to track site maintenance and the status of burial locations. Staff can easily interact with mapped burial locations to see detailed records or search the entire cemetery database to easily identify places that are available to purchase. As well, all information can be made available to residents through a publicly accessible app. This presentation will show examples of these GIS tools for cemetery management. Demonstrating how communities of all sizes can easily take advantage of these capabilities for their own cemeteries.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #29 - Coffee with the Director

Matt Salvatore / City of Sioux City

Seth Staashelm / City of Marion

Connect directly with parks and recreation directors in an open, informal setting. Bring your questions, challenges, and ideas for a candid conversation about the issues shaping our field. This is your chance to gain insight, share experiences, and build relationships over a cup of coffee.

Room: C-2

THURSDAY, MARCH 26

9:30-9:45 AM Break

Presented by:
Shade Creations



9:45 - 10:45 AM Educational Sessions

Session #30 - Achieving Big Outcomes for Smaller Cities: The Falls Park Vision Plan Update

Jon Jacobson / Confluence

Mike Patten / City of Sioux Falls

The City of Sioux Falls needed a plan to guide the future of Falls Park, the popular 120-acre park that gives the city its name. Given its prominence in the community, they wanted to think outside the box. So they launched their first design competition and wound up attracting the attention of both local and national firms. Hear insight on the development of the new master plan from city parks and recreation staff leadership in Sioux Falls and members of the design team as they describe the planning process and current proposed plan.

Room: C-1 CEU 0.1

Session #31 - Concrete Solutions for Parks that Last

Dylan Schultz / Concrete PolyFix

This presentation is designed to empower parks and recreation professionals with practical, long-lasting solutions for concrete repair and preservation. This session will go over the benefits of concrete lifting and coatings, identify common challenges in common spaces, and will highlight real-world solutions to park infrastructure maintenance.

Room: C-2 CEU 0.1

10:45-11:00 AM Break

Presented by:
BarkPass



THURSDAY, MARCH 26

11:00 - 12:00 PM Educational Sessions

Session #32 - Marketing/Social Media/Content Creation

Baily Sitzmann / Powell Broadcasting

Kelli Erickson / Powell Broadcasting

This session provides a practical walkthrough of how and when to market effectively to increase visibility and engagement. Participants will learn how to plan, create, and manage content with intention, including best practices for posting across social media platforms. We'll explore tools and resources that make content creation and scheduling more efficient. The session will also highlight proven marketing and social media strategies that help your organization or business stand out. Attendees will leave with actionable tips to ensure their message is seen, heard, and remembered.

Room: C-1 CEU pending

Session #33 - Accreditation Made Achievable: Tools, Tips, and Takeaways

Jackie Nelson / City of Sioux Falls

Accreditation can feel overwhelming-but it doesn't have to be. This session, provided by 16-year accreditation leader, Sioux Falls Parks and Recreation, breaks down the NRPA accreditation path into clear, manageable steps designed for parks and recreation professionals at any stage of the process. Participants will gain practical tools, proven tips, and real-world takeaways to help assess readiness, organize documentation, engage staff, and maintain momentum from start to finish. Whether you're just beginning to explore accreditation or looking to strengthen and sustain your status, this session will help you turn standards into action and make accreditation an achievable goal for your agency.

Room: C-2 CEU pending

At-A-Glance Brochure

View a more concise brochure, great for printing and referencing during conference! Print copies will not be available, but we will have a QR code to scan to be able to view the at-a-glance brochure during conference. If you prefer paper copy, please plan to bring one along with you!

Conference Tracks

Listed on page 7 of the at-a-glance brochure.

Elevate your conference experience and make the most out of your time here by finding sessions specifically for YOU! We have tracks designed for those interested in recreation programming, parks, aquatics, and also the administrative side! Mix and match sessions to create a conference experience especially tailored to you!

FAQ

Listed on page 6 of the at-a-glance brochure.

Read over some frequently asked questions that will help you prepare for conference. If you have any questions that are not listed here, please reach out to Kelly or Mallory and we will help you out. We encourage you to read the final event details that will be sent leading up to the event, as everything (or the majority) you need to know will be listed there!



SPEAKER BIOS



Eddie Slowikowski - KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Eddie is a former world class runner and Gold Medal winner for the USA Track & Field Team. Eddie is the 169th American to run a mile in under 4 minutes with a time of 3:58! Eddie was 3-time Division 1 NCAA All-American and National cross country champion out of Loyola University in Chicago. Eddie was a former reporter in training at CNN before launching his own business.. Today Eddie is a highly sought after Speaker, Consultant & Author.

Eddie is known throughout the industry as an Inspired Performance Expert. His widely acclaimed “Four Minute Formula” has been utilized by people from all walks of life. Through years of training as an athlete and running his own

successful speaking & consulting business, he knows what it takes to be elite. Eddie has always had the can-do spirit of an entrepreneur, in all walks of life. Best of all, Eddie can channel that sense of accomplishment through interactive storytelling and raw emotion to audiences everywhere. He can make you laugh, cry, dance and learn... all in one presentation. It's a rollercoaster journey like no other, and Eddie's been doing it for close to 3 decades.

Throughout all his many accomplishments, Eddie sought to enrich his life through service. He has volunteered extensively throughout Central America on month-long service trips, spent 4 years as a tutor for students from the Cabrini Green projects within the inner city of Chicago and has worked tirelessly for the homeless. Eddie widened his world-view beyond the life of sports and now as a husband and Father of 4, he proves that a successful balance of life and business can be attained.

Eddie speaks to tens of thousands of people year in and year out, utilizing a vast array of programs that are always customized to fit the needs of each audience. Whether it's for Fortune 500 companies, associations, Healthcare, Professional Athletes & Teams, Law Enforcement or Educational institutions all across the country, Eddie's personally devised programs are ever changing, keeping his message on the cutting edge for audiences everywhere. His extraordinary rate of repeat business is a testament to his versatile talent.

The one constant through it all remains his high-energy message and interactive style. Eddie uses music, sound effects, dancing and audience interaction to bring his memorable presentations to life.

SPEAKER BIOS



Alex Miller, Sports Facilities Operations Manager, City of Grimes

Alex has been with the City of Grimes Parks and Recreation for the past 4 years. He was hired as the Sports Facility Manager but close to the opening of the Splash Pad in Grimes, he obtained his AFO (Aquatic Facility Operator) certification, and he now oversees the maintenance and day-to-day operations of the new splash pad. Alex graduated from Iowa State with a Horticulture Degree and has held various sports field management positions, including with the Boston Redsox, Iowa Cubs, Mississippi State University and Waukee Schools.



Andy Smith, Director of Iowa Operations, Carrico Aquatic Resources

Andrew has been in the pool industry for 25 years and is the head of Carrico Aquatics for the State of Iowa. Andrew has been involved with every aspect of the pool business from operation, installation, education, renovation, sales, and as a service Technician.



Angela Drent, Health Promotion Specialist, Siouxland District Health Department

Angela Drent is a Health Promotion Specialist at Siouxland District Health Department, located in Sioux City. She strives to improve physical activity and nutrition opportunities for Woodbury County residents via policy, systems, and environmental changes. This is done through the implementation of many community wellness initiatives, such as the All Abilities Coalition and Complete Streets initiatives. She serves as chair of the City of Sioux City Active Transportation Advisory Committee and serves on the board for Sioux City Transit, the Miracle League of Sioux City, and Mid-Steps Services. She has her Master of Science degree in Health Education from the University of Nebraska-Omaha and lives right here in Sioux City.



Anne Westra, Communications & Public Engagement Specialist, City of Sioux City

Anne Westra is the Communications and Public Engagement Specialist for the City of Sioux City, where she oversees the City's brand, social media channels, website, news releases, and special projects, and serves as the primary media contact. A Sioux City native, Anne grew up here, moved away, and returned, deepening her commitment to sharing positive news and building community pride. She holds a degree in Natural Resources Recreation and Tourism from Colorado State University and has spent 26 years with the City in roles spanning tourism, economic development, and now citywide communications. Anne loves to travel and is excited to celebrate 25 years of marriage to her husband this summer with a trip to Switzerland.



Baily Sitzmann, Digital Specialist/Promotions Director, Powell Broadcasting

Baily grew up in Sioux City, Iowa, and went to school here through college, where she graduated from Briar Cliff University in 2020 with a degree in Mass Communication, Photography, and Graphic Design. She has been with Powell Broadcasting for 10 years and is now the Promotions Director, Account Executive, and Digital Specialist.

SPEAKER BIOS



Brian Hatfield, Partner, BarkPass

Brian Hatfield is a partner at BarkPass, a modern software platform helping municipalities simplify pet licensing and manage permitted dog parks. He focuses on working directly with parks, animal services, and administrative teams to replace outdated processes with tools that improve compliance, reduce staff workload, and create better experiences for residents. With a background spanning operations, client service, and technology, Brian brings a practical, government-friendly perspective on how cities can modernize pet programs without adding complexity.

Brian Pauly, Superintendent of Recreation, City of Mason City

Brian Pauly is the Superintendent of Recreation for the City of Mason City, where he oversees all recreation programs, the Mason City Family Aquatic Center, MacNider Campgrounds, Highland Park Golf Course, the Mason City Arena, park development projects, and both adult and youth sports complexes. Prior to Mason City, he served as the Child and Youth Program Administrator at Naval Air Station Key West. Brian has more than 26 years of experience leading community and youth recreation programs in Iowa and Florida, as well as internationally in Europe and Asia. He is a recipient of the John “Pat” Harden Award from the Armed Forces Recreation Society and the National Recreation and Park Association, recognizing outstanding leadership early in his management career.



Brian Ruffles, Aquatics Program Supervisor, City of Cedar Rapids

Brian has been the Aquatics Program Supervisor for the City of Cedar Rapids since the spring of 2022. Prior to that, he was the Aquatics Director at Coe College and has been working in Aquatics since 2001.



Bruce Thompson, Southwest Region Manager, GameTime

As a Region Manager, Bruce works with GameTime Agencies and communities throughout the Midwest/Southwest to develop health and wellness solutions that enhance community engagement and long-term well-being through play and recreation. In his spare time, he is on the Executive Board of the North Texas Disability Chamber.



Casey Byers, Parks Practice Area Leader, Bolton & Menk

Casey Byers is the Parks Practice Area Leader at Bolton & Menk and has been practicing landscape architecture for 20 years. He specializes in assisting communities in finding creative solutions to complex park projects. He assisted Windsor Heights in completing its park system plan in 2020 and helped lead the design and construction of the transformation of Colby Park starting in 2024.

SPEAKER BIOS



Danielle Propst, Planner, ISG

Danielle is a certified planner with expertise in securing funding, leading public initiatives, and facilitating stakeholder engagement. She excels in project management, grant writing, and developing actionable plans that deliver measurable results. She has led more than 30 capital improvement plans across the Midwest, helping communities prioritize infrastructure investments and support long-term growth. Her work includes advancing transformational economic development projects, strengthening public-private partnerships, and integrating destination public space improvements that enhance community identity and economic vitality.



Derek Zarn, Marketing & Communications Director, City of Urbandale

Derek Zarn is the Marketing and Communications Director for the City of Urbandale. Derek leads the City's marketing, branding, and storytelling efforts across digital, print, and social media, helping share the story of Urbandale in ways that are clear, engaging, and authentic. He works closely with departments to capture programs, services, and events as they happen—often right in the moment.



Dylan Schultz, Commercial Account Manager, Concrete PolyFix

Dylan Schultz is a seasoned sales and customer relationship professional currently serving as Commercial Account Manager at Concrete PolyFix. With over eight years of experience spanning retail management, software support, and B2B sales, Dylan brings a strategic, service-driven approach to every client interaction. Prior to joining Concrete PolyFix, he led operations as Store Manager at PPG Paints, where he honed his skills in inventory analysis, team leadership, and customer satisfaction. Dylan holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the University of Dubuque, where he was also a member of the football team and earned Dean's List honors. Known for his hands-on problem solving and commitment to safety and efficiency, Dylan helps clients transform their concrete spaces with innovative lifting and coating solutions. He's passionate about delivering value, building trust, and making every project smooth from start to finish.

Doug Stumpf, Sales Representative, GenPro Energy Solutions

SPEAKER BIOS



Eric Griffith, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Moline, IL

Eric Griffith has served as the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Moline, Illinois, since March 2020, following eight years as Recreation Supervisor in Sioux City, Iowa, from July 2012 through March 2020. He oversees a diverse system of parks, facilities, recreation programs, and aquatics operations. With more than thirteen years of experience in public parks and recreation, Eric manages a \$7.5 million annual operating budget and has led over \$14.6 million in capital improvement projects since 2020, approaching public facilities with the same strategic planning, accountability, and performance expectations as a private business. He holds a Master's degree in Management with an emphasis in Sports Management and is a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional. Eric's work focuses on operational efficiency, staff development, financial sustainability, and maximizing community return on investment through well-managed facilities.



Hank Moyers, Associate Principal, Confluence

Hank has practiced landscape architecture throughout the world over the past 22 years. Over the past 12 years, Parks and Recreation design, Master Planning, Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Planning, and Aquatics have been a focus of his practice on sites throughout the Midwest and for various City Parks Departments.



Jan Herke, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Urbandale

Jan Herke has worked in the Parks and Recreation field for over 36 years, including 28 with the City of Urbandale, Iowa, where she has served as Parks and Recreation Director since 2005. She oversees more than 1,000 acres of parks, trails, playgrounds, recreation programming, and community spaces designed to connect and engage residents. A lifelong athlete, Jan played college and professional basketball and spent 15 years officiating women's basketball, including at the Division I and WNBA levels. These experiences taught her the importance of leadership under pressure, effective communication, and building strong, inclusive teams. She looks forward to sharing leadership lessons, personal stories, and experiences to inspire and empower others at the Spring 2026 IPRA Conference.



Janet Wilwerding, Communications Director, City of Johnston

Janet Wilwerding serves as the Communications Director for the City of Johnston, Iowa. She has been with the city for eight and a half years. Before her role at the City of Johnston, she served as a Communications Specialist for the City of Pleasant Hill, Iowa. Her extensive marketing expertise has been valuable in her current and previous positions. Janet has worked for seven years at the publishing company Meredith Corporation (Now known as People, Inc.) and for four years at two different advertising agencies in the Des Moines metro area. Her background in marketing and communications has been instrumental in ensuring that residents receive clear and concise information. Janet holds a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Iowa State University and a master's from Drake University. When she's not working, Janet enjoys watching her kids participate in various activities, such as basketball, volleyball, Ninja Warrior, and football. She also teaches early morning fitness classes at 5:15 a.m. Her motto is to wake up and strive to become a better version of yourself because no one else can do it for you.

SPEAKER BIOS



Jason Schillig, MUSCO Field Sales Representative, MUSCO Sports Lighting, LLC

Jason Schillig, based in Muscatine, Iowa, has been a valued member of the MUSCO team since 1998. Known for his strong work ethic and dedication to customer satisfaction, Jason is passionate about providing innovative lighting solutions that meet the unique needs of each client. His decades of experience and long-standing tenure at MUSCO are a testament to his expertise and the strong relationships he has built with contractors, school administrators, parks and recreation officials, and other influential Decision makers



Jason Walsmith



Jay Lotthammer, Development Strategist, ISG

Jay Lotthammer served as Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, from 2007 to 2023, leading major enhancements to parks and facilities, including expansion of the Community Center and aquatics facility, a new Art Center, and amenities such as pickleball courts, splash pads, and trail systems. He also served as Interim City Manager and as a board member and chair of the Eden Prairie Community Foundation. Previously, Jay worked for the City of Brooklyn Park, rising from a seasonal employee to Director of Parks and Recreation, where he led program development, neighborhood park expansion, oversight of two golf courses, and development of a premier athletic complex. A strong advocate for the profession, he served as president of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association, taught sport and facility management at Concordia University–St. Paul for 12 years, and now works with ISG supporting parks and recreation departments through planning, operations, and program evaluation.



John Byrnes, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Bettendorf

John Byrnes has served as the Parks and Recreation Director for the City Bettendorf since January of 2025, following eight years in various roles in Sioux City, Iowa. He oversees a rapidly growing park system, recreation programming, diverse facilities, a golf course and project management. In John's first year in as the Parks and Recreation Director in the City of Bettendorf, he completed or is currently constructing 11 projects at a cost of over \$1.2 million from the City's Capital Improvement Budget. With emphasis on facility management, in John's first year, Palmer Hills golf course operated in the black for the first time in three years and has positioned Bettendorf's new outdoor ice rink to recover the highest percentage of operating costs in the history of the operation. John and Eric worked together for four years in Sioux City, opening two new operations at the time, Cone Park a winter recreation facility, and the Siouxland Expo Center. They now get to work closely together in the Quad Cities with the City of Moline and Bettendorf.

SPEAKER BIOS



Jon Jacobson, Sr. Principal, Confluence

With over 30 years of experience in the design industry, Jon's passion for landscape architecture lies in public projects that all members of a community can experience and live within. He carries specific expertise in park planning and urban design and has won numerous awards for his design of public and private spaces.

Jonathan Holsworth, Solar Street Lighting Specialist, GenPro Energy Solutions



Justin Atlas, Recreation Superintendent, City of Sioux City

With more than 18 years of experience in parks and recreation management, Mr. Atlas has held senior leadership roles in municipal and county park systems, overseeing complex operations, diverse facilities, and large multidisciplinary teams. Holding an MBA in Sports Management and multiple professional certifications, Mr. Atlas brings a proven track record in strategic planning, staff development, and organizational leadership across both public and nonprofit sectors. At this conference, Mr. Atlas will share practical insights on Leadership and Management for All Levels, drawing on real-world experience to inspire emerging and seasoned professionals alike.

Katie Klus, Communication & Events Coordinator, City of Bondurant

Katie Klus oversees the city's parks and recreation, communications, and cemetery operations for the City of Bondurant. In addition to coordinating community events and recreation programs, she leads the city's strategic communications efforts, managing all digital platforms, including the city website, social media, and e-newsletters. Katie also oversees public relations and branding initiatives that keep residents informed and engaged.



Katie McGrane, Recreation Supervisor, City of Ankeny

Katie has worked in the aquatics field for 11 years. She has experience working for municipal aquatic centers, University of Northern Iowa Recreation Services, and the YMCA, as well as getting the opportunity to work for the Navy MWR in Yokosuka, Japan. Katie has been with Ankeny Parks & Recreation for 3 years and currently oversees two aquatic centers as well as a variety of youth and adult recreation programs, sports leagues, and special events.



Kelli Erickson, Sales Manager, Powell Broadcasting

Kelli grew up in Sioux City and has worked in local broadcasting and marketing for more than 40 years.

SPEAKER BIOS



Kelly Ramirez, Social Media Manager, City of Sioux City

I moved to Sioux City in 2007 and spent nearly a decade believing there was nothing to do. In 2017, a downtown small business bingo event completely changed my perspective after I visited 24 businesses in one day and realized how much of the city I had overlooked. In 2019, I launched The Siouxland Blog to document local experiences and tell stories that build community pride. In 2023, after 12 years of managing Outback Steakhouse in Sioux City, I walked away from my corporate career to pursue content creation full-time. Through consistent work and collaboration, I demonstrated the impact of intentional social media storytelling for the Siouxland area. In July 2025, I was hired as the City of Sioux City's Social Media Manager, where I continue to highlight Siouxland through creative, community-focused content.



Kyle Hannigan, Landscape Architect, ISG

Kyle Hannigan is a Landscape Architect with ISG Inc., bringing 15 years of experience across both construction and design. His work focuses on community development and master planning, with particular expertise in community planning, sports and recreation facilities, and educational environments. Kyle brings a practical, well-rounded perspective to his projects, helping communities translate vision into functional, lasting spaces.



Lauren Campbell, City Council Member, City of Windsor Heights



Leslie Brandt, Sustainability & Resilience Project Manager, Bolton & Menk

Leslie Brandt is a Sustainability and Resilience Project Manager with Bolton & Menk. She is a nationally recognized expert in adapting urban forests to changing conditions. Over her 17-year career, she has developed regional urban forest vulnerability assessments for Chicago, Detroit, and Austin, TX, and trained dozens of municipal foresters and park managers across the Midwest in adaptation. She is the recipient of the 2024 climate adaptation leadership award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and holds a PhD in Ecology from the University of Minnesota.



Matt Salvatore, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Sioux City

With 24 years of full-time professional Parks & Recreation experience, Matt has had Director roles in both small and large cities. As the Director in Sioux City for the last 12 years, Matt served as the project manager for the Riverfront Development project (\$12 million), Siouxland Expo Center (\$15 million), Cone Park (\$9 million), and numerous trail projects. Matt has extensive project manager /fundraising experience and can provide insight of working in both a small town and large city.

SPEAKER BIOS



Mike Patten, Park Development Manager, City of Sioux Falls

Mike Patten is the Park Development Manager for the City of Sioux Falls and has over 20 years of professional experience planning, designing, and building public spaces. Mike plays a pivotal role in growing and maintaining the City of Sioux Falls' CAPRA Accredited Parks and Recreation System, which includes over 3500 acres of parkland, 85 developed parks, 42 miles of paved trails, 6 aquatic facilities, 3 golf courses, a zoo, and a variety of multi-purpose recreational experiences. Mike holds a master's degree in landscape architecture and is professionally licensed in South Dakota. He believes strongly that parks and public spaces improve the quality of life for residents, and that engaging the community in the design of projects is the key to creating successful outcomes. Mike is a South Dakota native and is proud to say he's played a small part in making his community special. He's been married for over 20 years and has 3 wonderful children. He enjoys fishing, home improvement projects, and, despite a so/so record, coaching youth football and wrestling.



Molly Moore, Recreation Coordinator, City of Johnston

Molly Moore holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology with a pre-veterinary focus from Iowa State University. Following graduation, she completed a year of AmeriCorps service at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, an experience that inspired her to transition her career toward the National Park Service and public land stewardship. Her path led through positions with Polk County Conservation and Iowa Parks & Recreation, ultimately sparking her interest in municipal government. Molly entered city recreation in 2022 with the Urbandale Senior Recreation Center and currently serves as the Recreation Coordinator for the City of Johnston.



Molly Wuebker, Founder/Owner, Uncurbed & Access Consulting & Professional Services and Iowa ADA Liaison, Great Plains ADA Center

Molly Wuebker, OTD, OTR/L, ADAC is an occupational therapist and universal design consultant with over 14 years of experience working in inclusive and accessible environments, with a strong focus on recreation and leisure. She has consulted on park, trail, ski, and sports projects across the Midwest, supporting both state and community-based recreation sites. Molly works closely with landscape architects, architects, engineers, industrial designers, and adaptive sports professionals to design recreation spaces and products that support meaningful participation across the lifespan. She also serves as the Iowa Liaison for the Great Plains ADA Center (Region 7 of the ADA National Network), where she provides national, regional, and local training and technical assistance on accessible recreation. Grounded in occupational therapy, Molly challenges the idea that play is separate from serious learning—viewing play as a powerful driver of development, health, belonging, and lifelong participation in community life.



Paul Nelson, Landscape Architect, ISG

Paul Nelson is a landscape architect who has worked in Des Moines for the past 10 years. His projects vary in size and scale, yet focus on park amenities, playgrounds, trails, and splash pads in recent years.

SPEAKER BIOS



PJ Novick, Principal, Confluence

With over 40 years of professional experience, PJ has been responsible for the design and project management of a wide variety of parks and recreation, educational and cultural facilities involving a multi-disciplinary approach to design through collaboration with planners, architects, and engineers. He holds a BLA from Kansas State University and a Master of Architecture from the University of Kansas. Over the course of his career, PJ has had the opportunity to work on a plethora of project types, his favorite being large-scale athletic and recreation projects that provide recreational opportunities for broad base of users.



Scott Kiley, GIS Solutions Administrator, MSA Professional Services

Scott is a certified GIS professional who's grateful to work in a field that can positively impact the lives of others and improve the world... even though he knows that sounds silly. He's interested in all types of data and ways to create, disseminate, and analyze it and loves to see data used to help make informed decisions, especially when it involves Spatial aspects.



Seth Staashelm, Parks & Recreation Director, City of Marion

Seth Staashelm is the Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Marion, Iowa, where he oversees more than 600 acres of parkland, 22 miles of trails, and a diverse portfolio of recreation programs and community events. Since joining the City in 2019 and being promoted to Director in 2020, Seth has led major capital projects, expanded recreation opportunities, and guided the community through significant challenges, including recovery efforts following the 2020 derecho. He is a Certified Park and Recreation Professional (CPRP), a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI), and an active leader in state and national parks and recreation organizations. Outside of work, Seth enjoys spending time with his wife and their five-year-old twin boys, and has a passion for sports, travel, and good food.



Shannon Gapp, Senior Planner, MSA Professional Services

Shannon is dedicated to creating equitable, healthy, sustainable and resilient communities. As both a project planner and a landscape designer, she understands how planning principles inform the built environment. Her experience includes urban design, parks and community master planning, public engagement, GIS analysis and mapping, community visioning, land use planning, construction documentation, digital rendering and more. Exposure to both the public and private sector has allowed her to see first-hand the importance of community involvement in planning and design.



Shawn O'Shea, Client Services Manager, MSA Professional Services

Shawn O'Shea, AICP is a Client Service Manager, Urban Planner, and Remote Pilot. His experience includes Community/Regional Planning and Design, GIS Analysis and Planning, Comprehensive Planning, Land-use Planning Downtown Planning, Park Planning, Funding, and Public Engagement. He is a certified planner (AICP). Shawn has 15 years of experience as an urban/regional planner and holds a Master's Degree in Community and Regional Planning from Iowa State University.

Steve Zeidman, Managing Partner, BarkPass