

UPDATED 7/29



*... Fall Into
What's Next*

IPRA FALL WORKSHOP
CEDAR RAPIDS

SEPTEMBER 14-16, 2026

2nd Annual
**MAINTENANCE
RODEO**
MARION

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026



MORE INFORMATION



WORKSHOP INFORMATION

Hilton Garden Inn

4640 North River Blvd NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52411

Reservations:

Room Rate: \$134 plus per night

Room Block Ends: August 24, 2026

Reserve Room

Rooms are limited and not guaranteed

Registration Deadline: Sept. 4 at noon

<u>IPRA Member Rate</u>	<u>Non-Member Rate</u>
Full Package: \$175	\$275
Student: \$20	\$20

Late Registration: Sept. 4 at 12:01PM- Sept. 9

<u>IPRA Member Rate</u>	<u>Non-Member Rate</u>
Full Package: \$225	\$325
Student: \$20	\$20

Additional Fall Workshop Information and Registration

Contact Us

Kelly Johnson Rose

President & CEO
kelly@iapra.org
641-325-2164

Mallory Iverson

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

PLANNING COMMITTEE

City of Cedar Rapids - Brian Ruffles, Jerry Kirk, Brittany Hamer
City of Marion - Seth Staashelm, Brinkley Braden

Thank You

MONDAY - SEPTEMBER 14



GOLF OUTING

Twin Pines Golf Course

3800 42nd St NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Shotgun start at 11 AM

Best Shot
\$60 per golfer
*lunch included

Presented by:
Boland Recreation



Registration



MONDAY EVENING SOCIAL

5:00 PM

Hilton Garden Inn Parking Lot

4640 North River Blvd NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52411

**meal included*

*Golf outing awards will be presented
during the evening social*

Presented by:



Real People. Real Solutions.

**Join us for an evening of food, drinks,
games, and football!**

Enjoy complimentary food and beverages, challenge your colleagues in yard games and a bags tournament, and enter for a chance to win a custom bags board set courtesy of MUSCO Lighting. Then settle in to watch the Denver Broncos and Kansas City Chiefs face off on the MuscoMAX™ mobile video board and after dark, MUSCO will put on a light show! Bring a lawn chair, connect with fellow professionals, and get ready for a fun night under the lights!



TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

7:30 AM - Registration Opens

Presented by: **SYNLawn**



8:30-9:30 AM Educational Sessions

Session #1 - Social Media that Connects Community

Alexis Hauge, *City of Mason City*

Location: Cedar C

Ready to move beyond simply posting flyers and event reminders? This session will provide parks and recreation professionals with practical social media skills, real-world tips, and proven strategies to create content that connects with their community. Learn how to identify meaningful stories, create engaging content with purpose, increase community involvement, and develop a simple content plan that works. Through examples, discussion, and hands-on planning, participants will leave with actionable ideas they can implement immediately.

Session #2 -Balancing Access & Sustainability in Water Recreation

Paul Marston & Paul Nelson, *ISG*

Location: Cedar DE

The planning and design of recreational areas that incorporate lakes, rivers, or streams require solutions that address user needs while restoring and conserving the waterway, reinvigorating underused space, and enhancing the area's natural resources. This session uncovers a clear path to implementation that leverages public interest in water recreation to integrate water quality and ecological outcomes in recreational design.

Session #3 - Engaging Adults 55+: Programs that make a Difference

Danya Thoms & Katie Poirier, *City of Urbandale*

Location: Cedar AB

The Urbandale Senior Center caters to the 55+ population of the Des Moines Metro with daily, weekly, and monthly programs that connect "seniors" with social programs and crafts, educational opportunities, and health and wellness programs we offer at a reasonable price. Come learn about our most popular programs and classes and what it takes to operate and support a variety of senior citizen programs in your community.

9:30-9:45 AM - Break

Presented by: **MSA Professional Services**



TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

9:45-10:45 AM Educational Sessions

Session #4 - Ushers Ferry Historical Village

Ann Cejka, *City of Cedar Rapids*

Location: Cedar C

TBD

Session #5 - Parks/Conservation Session

Zac Hall, *Kirkwood Community College*

Location: Cedar DE

TBD

Session #6 - Bang for your Buck: Creating Community Experiences Through Aquatics & Recreation

Jordan Allsup & Jack Eckstaine, *City of Grinnell*

Location: Cedar AB

Explore low-cost, high-impact events that create memorable experiences that boost participation and generate positive community support. This session will highlight creative programming ideas, practical strategies for maximizing limited budgets, and ways to develop partnerships that reduce costs while enhancing the participant experience. Leave with fresh ideas you can implement immediately to provide meaningful recreation opportunities while making the most of your resources.

10:45-11:00 AM - Break

Presented by:

11:00-12:00 PM Educational Sessions

Session #7 - Park System Master Planning that Connects Facilities, Programs & Equity

Jay Lotthammer & Claire Roth, *ISG*

Location: Cedar C

This session will share practical, field-tested insights into building an actionable parks and recreation system master plan. Speakers will highlight a people-focused approach that translates community vision and staff expertise into prioritized actions, informed decision making, and an achievable roadmap. A three-step planning strategy will be described: Assess, Envision, Implement. Continuous engagement will be emphasized as a tool to create a high-quality process and product that includes quantitative and qualitative insight. Long-range planning steps will be covered, including defining guiding principles, evaluating current and future needs, identifying gaps and opportunities, and producing prioritized recommendations that help shape policy, recreation programs, and capital planning. Common challenges will be shared through examples that use this planning framework.

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

11:00-12:00 PM Educational Sessions continued

Session #8 - LaCrosse

Location: Cedar DE

TBD

Session #9 - Operational Insights: Lessons Learned, Challenges Faced, and What's Next (ELN Roundtable)

Mallory Iverson, *IPRA*

Location: Cedar AB

The busy summer season is behind us—now it's time to reflect, recharge, and learn from one another. Join fellow Emerging Leaders Network members for an interactive roundtable discussion focused on the successes, challenges, and lessons learned throughout the summer. We'll discuss the tasks and responsibilities that consume the most time, strategies for improving efficiency, opportunities to automate or streamline processes, and approaches to preventing burnout while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Participants are encouraged to share experiences, ask questions, and leave with practical ideas they can apply in their own agencies.

FOR ELN MEMBERS ONLY, [LEARN MORE](#)



Off-Site Tour Opportunity!

Max 15 participants. Pre-register at Registration Table

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Old McDonald's Farm

LUNCH & RECHARGE

12:00-1:30 PM

Location: Hallway/Cedar C

Presented by:

ACCO Unlimited Corporation

Enjoy an Executive Boxed Lunch following a brief presentation of the new board member installation and Annual Report. Then, relax—grab a seat in the common area, head outside, or return to your room to recharge. Take a moment to check in with work and come back refreshed for afternoon sessions!



TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

1:30-2:30 PM Educational Sessions

Session #10 - Preserving the Past, Building the Future: Historic Park Assets & Capital Improvements

Daniel Calvert, *City of Des Moines*

Location: Cedar C

This session will use recent City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation projects to show how historic preservation can be successfully integrated into capital improvement planning and project delivery. Examples may include the Union Park Rocket Slide restoration, WPA-era enclosed shelter renovations and conversions, and interpretive projects that connect residents to the history and meaning of public spaces. Presenters will discuss how the team identified historic assets, navigated requirements and partnerships, balanced preservation with modern use, accessibility and safety, and communicated project value to the public. The session will emphasize practical lessons learned, community response, and tools other park and recreation agencies can adapt for their own historic facilities and park infrastructure.

Session #11 - Recruiting & Retaining Volunteers

Taylor Kruse, *Houses Into Homes*

Location: Cedar DE

Do you struggle to recruit volunteers for one-time or ongoing projects? Do your volunteers frequently no-call, no-show? Do you ever avoid utilizing volunteers altogether because the training, supervision, and management creates more problems than it solves? Learn from two experts in the non-profit social services field who manage >1,000 volunteers annually from a wide mix of ages, abilities, and group sizes by curating thoughtful experiences and communicating effectively before, during, and after a volunteer activity. We've made lots of mistakes and we want you to learn from them, and better engage your communities in your work!

Session #12 - High Impact, Low Cost Park Activation Strategies

Shawn O'Shea, *MSA Professional Services*

Location: Cedar AB

Meaningful park activation doesn't require major capital investments. This session explores practical, low-cost strategies for transforming underutilized park spaces into vibrant community destinations through flexible programming, community partnerships, and simple infrastructure improvements. From pop-up events, markets, and organized activities to story walks, community gardens, and outdoor fitness spaces, attendees will discover scalable approaches that increase park use, build community connections, and create momentum for future investments. Learn how to leverage existing assets, test new ideas with minimal risk, and maximize impact with limited resources.

2:30-2:45 PM - Break

Presented by: **Pilot Rock**

Pilot Rock
RJ Thomas Mfg. Co.

TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

2:45-3:45 PM Educational Sessions

Session #13 - Conflict to Conversations: Responding to Escalated Patrons

Malory Smysor, *City of Iowa City*

Location: Cedar C

This engaging presentation is designed for leaders who want to master the art of handling upset customers without breaking a sweat. You'll learn practical techniques to stay calm, listen effectively, and de-escalate tense situations - while keeping your professionalism (and sanity) intact. You will learn how to identify escalating situations, how to respond to negative interactions, and get tools to understand how you impact outcomes.

Session #14 - RECreating the Floodplain/Floodway: The Right Use, in the Right Place

Casey Byers & Reid Stamer, *Bolton & Menk*

Location: Cedar DE

Floodplains and floodways offer unique opportunities for creative, flexible recreation when matched with the right uses. This session highlights how to align site conditions with appropriate amenities that can coexist with periodic flooding and how these design choices influence maintenance and long-term performance. Attendees will explore real-world examples of successful park and trail spaces in these environments.

Session #15 - After the disaster: Lessons Learned from the Derecho of 2020

Todd Fagan, *City of Cedar Rapids*

Location: Cedar AB

Recovering from a natural disaster requires careful planning long after the immediate response. This session will highlight lessons learned from post-event debris management and reforestation efforts, including recommendations for bidding and managing large-scale cleanup contracts. Attendees will also gain practical insights into what has—and has not—worked in restoring community tree canopies, helping agencies better prepare for future recovery efforts

Off-Site Tour Opportunity!

Max 15 participants. Pre-register at Registration Table

2:45 PM - 3:45 PM

Marion Uptown Plaza



TUESDAY - SEPTEMBER 15

3:45-4:00 PM - Break

Presented by: TBD

4:00-5:00 PM Educational Sessions

Session #16 - Managing Up: Working Smarter with Your Supervisor

Rachelle Stewart, *City of Cedar Rapids*

Location: C

Managing up is about taking ownership of how you work with your supervisor to create a more productive, collaborative and less frustrating work environment. Whether you're coordinating programs, managing facilities, leading seasonal staff, or supporting departmental operations, your success is often influenced by how effectively you communicate and align with your manager. In this interactive session, participants will learn practical strategies to clarify expectations, communicate proactively, adapt to different leadership styles, and navigate workplace challenges with confidence. Through discussion, self-assessment, and real-world examples, attendees will leave with tools they can immediately apply to strengthen work relationships and improve day-to-day effectiveness.

Session #17 - Safe Play for All - Playground Assessment

Jerry Kirk & Todd Odeen, *City of Cedar Rapids*

Location: Cedar DE

Discuss the methods, documentation and record keeping for inspection and safety of the 52 playgrounds we oversee at Cedar Rapids. 2 CPSI's oversee the process and organize all maintenance of the playgrounds. We will also touch on vandalism frustrations and how to handle playgrounds to make safe.

Session #18 - Golf Course Grounds Management

Jason Koester, *Grinnell College*

Location: Cedar AB

A session on general practices implemented for a successful golf course grounds, from proper mower, aeration, sand top dressing, seeding, PGR applications, fertilization. In depth with depend on the audience and their experience in the field, which will be determined by asking the group at the start of the session.

TUESDAY EVENING SOCIAL

PICKLE PALACE

101 1st Ave SW, Cedar Rapids

6 PM - 8 PM

Unwind from the day's sessions by connecting with fellow parks and recreation professionals at Pickle Palace in Cedar Rapids' Kingston Yard District. Enjoy a private social in our reserved party room featuring a buffet dinner, then take time to explore all that Pickle Palace and the surrounding area have to offer.

Please note: IPRA has not reserved pickleball courts or duckpin bowling lanes. If you would like to participate in either activity, please visit the Pickle Palace website to make a reservation or view court and lane availability.



**Presented by:
Carrico Aquatic
Resources**



WEDNESDAY - SEPTEMBER 16

7:30 AM - Registration Opens

Presented by: **JEO Consulting Group**



JEO CONSULTING GROUP

8:30-9:30 AM Educational Sessions

Session #19 - Re-imagining Swimming Lesson Registration... A Simpler Way to Do It!

Brian Ruffles & Sidney Carstensen, *City of Cedar Rapids*

Location: Cedar C

Swimming lessons registration can be difficult for both patrons and Aquatics professionals. All of the different levels, timeslots, and changes can lead to a lot of staff hours, not to mention refunds and cancellations. This session will go into a new way to register for swimming lessons without having to have parents selecting levels for their children.

Session #20 - Leading with Alignment: Anchoring Parks & Recreation Excellence in Values

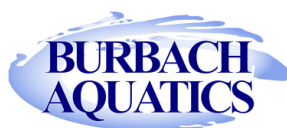
Kim Downs, *City of Marion*

Location: Cedar DE

Great leadership doesn't start with a strategic plan; it starts from within. In the fast-paced world of municipal parks and recreation, leaders are constantly balancing community demands, budget constraints, and operational hurdles. To navigate these challenges effectively, leaders must deeply understand and articulate their core values. Grounded in the proven principles of Kouzes and Posner's The Leadership Challenge, this session explores the critical practice of "Modeling the Way." Participants will discover how to uncover their personal and organizational values, align their daily administrative practices with those values, and build authentic trust across their teams. By learning to lead with clarity and consistency, attendees will walk away with actionable tools to transition from everyday task-managers to transformative team leaders.

9:30-9:45 AM - Break

Presented by: **Burbach Aquatics**



9:45-10:45 AM Educational Sessions

Session #21 - Keep Them Coming Back: Strategies for Seasonal Staff Retention roundtable

Colby Vlieger & Katie McGrane, *City of Ankeny*

Location: Cedar C

Recruiting seasonal staff is challenging enough—keeping great employees returning year after year can be even harder. Join this interactive roundtable discussion focused on seasonal staff retention across parks and recreation, including aquatics, recreation programming, camps, special events, and more. Participants will share successful strategies, lessons learned, and creative approaches to building a positive workplace culture that encourages staff to return season after season. Whether you're struggling with retention or looking to strengthen an already successful program, come prepared to learn from peers and contribute your own ideas.

Session #22 - Unhoused in Parks

coming soon

Location: Cedar DE

TBD

MAINTENANCE RODEO

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 15

Lowe Park

4501 Irish Drive

Marion, IA

Registration Deadline: September 4 at noon

Registration Fee: \$20 per person (competitor
or spectator)

**lunch included in registration*

Late Registration: Contact us

*****Maintenance Rodeo registration is included
in Fall Workshop full package***

Register HERE

Exhibitors

Registration Deadline: September 4 at noon

For more information on exhibitor booths and
fees, click [here](#).

**Event Information
& Flyer**

MAINTENANCE RODEO

9:00 - 10:00 AM	EVENT SIGN UP FOR COMPETITORS MEET & GREET WITH EXHIBITORS
10:00 - 12:30 PM	COMPETITION (PLANT ID MUST BE COMPLETED FIRST) EXHIBITOR BOOTHS
12:30 - 1:15 PM	LUNCH SPONSORED BY <u>CUNNINGHAM RECREATION</u>
1:15 - 1:30 PM	AWARDS

EVENTS

Event registration will take place the morning of the event at the registration table from 9 am to 10 am. Competitors can sign up for any or all events. Trailer maneuver requires teams of 2.

PLANT IDENTIFICATION
LEAF BLOWER CHALLENGE
ZERO TURN OBSTACLE
TRAILER MANEUVER
NAIL DRIVING
SKID STEER COURSE

PRIZES FOR TOP 3 WINNERS IN EACH EVENT

Event Manual & Rules *coming soon*

THANK YOU SPONSORS



SPEAKER BIOS

COMING SOON