



News Release

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Shawnee County Parks + Recreation recognized with three awards at Kansa Recreation and Park Association Conference in Hutchinson

John Knight receives KRPA Distinguished Fellow award

TOPEKA, KAN. – John E. Knight, Shawnee County Parks + Recreation director, has received the Kansas Recreation and Park Association Distinguished Fellow Award. The award is KRPA's highest honor next to being named to the KRPA Hall of Fame. Knight received the honor during the Awards Luncheon at KRPA's annual conference in Hutchinson.

Also receiving recognition were Ashley Gilfillan, recreation leader, who received the KRPA Distinguished New Professional Award and Jim Martin, a member of SCP+R's Advisory Board, who received KRPA's Distinguished Volunteer Award.

Gilfillan began her career with SCP+R as a volunteer at age 14 helping with special events at Shawnee North Community Center. She went on to manage concessions at ball fields, helped with youth camp programs and taught preschool for a couple of years before becoming a full-time recreation leader at Velma K. Paris Community Center. Gilfillan helped lead an SCP+R team that drafted the department's final application for accreditation by the Council for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies. She helped organize the Kansas Recreation and Park Association's recent SHARP conference which was held at Lake Shawnee Event Center and also leads SCP+R's social media efforts.

Martin, a retired engineer who worked on key projects for SCP+R during his career has made parks and recreation a second career. His 29-page report identifying \$1.6 million in annual capital maintenance needs helped gain the department \$3 million in leftover county funds to be used for deferred maintenance. He developed the concept and public survey and led a public engagement meeting that led to the opening of Phase I of the Lake Shawnee Adventure Cove. Martin has dedicated thousands of hours to projects including the design of new cart paths on golf courses, continued site work and replacement of a water pump at the Adventure Cove, concept designs for the creation of a

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Baseball Hall of Fame at Bettis Family Sports Complex and assisting parks and recreation staff with pavement review criteria.

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Shawnee County Parks + Recreation includes nearly 60 miles of trails, 2,625 acres of parks and 320 annual days of sporting activities. In addition, the department offers recreation programs, educational programs and golf. A combination of tax dollars, user fees and private donations enables Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to offer parks, sporting and aquatic facilities with state-of-the-art features, and beautiful, nationally recognized gardens.

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