

# New year off to a great start for Recreation Department

On behalf of your District team, we hope the holiday season and the past year brought you many moments to enjoy all that life has to offer. Our wish is that 2015 will continue to bring many occasions to experience and participate in the events that are important and meaningful in your life.

From a District perspective, we think we had an amazing 2014! There were many successfully reached goals and achievements this past year that were a benefit to the community. It illustrated to our residents the meaning of sustainability and perpetuity in action.

This, of course, is a team effort from the residents, board members and staff who are involved. It requires collaboration to bring all these services and projects to reality. The passion and commitment from you, the residents, motivates the District to try to achieve great goals each year.

Before we reveal some of the happenings coming to recreation in 2015, I think it is worthwhile for current, seasonal and new residents to review what occurred in 2014. There are many highlights to share that will keep the momentum going into 2015.

Let's start with the recreational facilities. By far, in my 21 years working in and being a part of the community, last year was one of the single busiest capital project years to date.

The first phase of Paradise Park was completed. The project included paved walking paths, park benches, picnic tables, chess and checker tables and beautifully



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enhanced landscaping, adding a new park site to our already extensive amenity inventory. In addition, we added new petanque courts and a picnic pavilion at the Paradise bocce courts.

Southside Recreation Center was renovated both inside and out. This was the first recreation facility in the community, meaning it is well over 30 years old, but it looks brand new today!

Our first sports pool, La Hacienda, experienced a complete extreme makeover with new restrooms, a new pool deck, and pool improvements.

Next up was Chula Vista Recreation Center. This center was renovated and refurbished with so many improvements it would take this whole article to mention them. Also in that region, we added picnic pavilions at El Santiago and Saddlebrook.

These improvements and enhancements were the larger projects in 2014. We also repaired, resurfaced, repainted and improved upon dozens and dozens of other recreation facilities throughout the community.

New facilities that opened in 2014 included Lake Deaton, Dunedin, and Antrim Dell neighborhood recreation centers. This means you have access to more than 70 pools in your hometown. We also opened the Manatee Village

Recreation Center.

If you have any free time in your busy lifestyle schedules, I suggest a visit to all these facilities throughout The Villages. You will see firsthand how we continue to improve and enhance the recreational offerings to the community.

Having recreational facilities located throughout the community allows staff and resident volunteers to continue to offer and expand lifestyle services community-wide. Your resident volunteers now offer more than 2,200 resident led activities.

The Senior Games had more than 2,000 athletes, and 4,000 visiting grandchildren participated with their grandparents at Camp Villages. There were more than 400 lifestyle social events offered with 20,000 registered residents. This is just a sampling of the magnitude of residents and guests enjoying lifestyle activities.

All this energy and participation resulted in staff checking more than 1.5 million ID cards. We can't thank you and your guests enough for carrying them when they come to engage in an activity or use a facility. It is a true sign of our core value of stewardship.

What's on the horizon in 2015? More great facilities and events, along with new residents moving here to become part of the most active retirement community in the country.

To kick off the new year, in January three facilities will open: Alden Bungalows Neighborhood Recreation Center will open Friday,

followed by Soaring Eagle Softball Fields and Air Gun Range on Jan. 16 and the final

phase of Paradise Park on Jan. 23. Opening times and additional information are available at [districtgov.org](http://districtgov.org) and in the Recreation News.

This is only January! We never will get bored or tired

with all the unbelievable growth, involvement and interaction our department experiences year in and year out.

It is our hope that all of our residents will use this time

in their life to get involved, re-involved, try something new, or visit all their centers and pools over the course of 2015. There is so much to see, do and play; you surely don't want to miss the action in

2015. We'll be right here helping you.

Happy New Year.

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