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## **JANUARY 2008**

- In process of upgrading Meadow Brook restroom (installing drop ceiling, replacing toilets, urinals and sinks, replacing gutter & downspouts and repainting).
- Painted walls and floors in Richland Gym restroom hallways and foyer.
- Tied down and mulched (6) new Red Maples trees in Richland Park.
- Daily cleanup in Richland Gym.
- Daily trash duty at Richland Park and Meadow Brook Park.
- Repainted old fiberglass benches to put at Quad playground.
- Noted sub-contractor error on fencing project at Richland Park, had error corrected before funds disbursed.
- Completed final inspection on Quad fencing, requested (and approved) to complete concrete work at Quad as part of the current grant. Beginning planning phase for concrete work.
- Submitted request for partial reimbursement for grant (Richland Park expansion, fencing project).
- Started working on baseball fields for upcoming season .
- Ordered Saf-Coat field dressing for new ball fields (1-4).
- Initiate Electrical/Lighting punchlists for Meadow Brook and Richland Parks.
- Met with Billy Clark of Clarkland Sports Fields to discuss planting of Bermuda grass seed and herbicide spraying at Richland Park soccer and baseball fields.
- Fabricated field drag to pick up rocks on playing surfaces.
- Completed installation of fence cap on Quad.
- Built box to help build pitchers mounds.
- Took inventory of all bases, base anchors, home plates, etc.
- Purchased and installed safe in gym concession stand to secure cash in this facility.
- Began registration for new volleyball clinic for girls, coordinated with Trevecca Nazarene Volleyball.
- Entering final stages on grant / trail enhancement project (phase 1) – will start work on this project in 2008.
- Created standardized procedures and guidelines for facility rentals within the Parks Department.
- Increased part-time staffing for gym supervision, to eliminate unsupervised periods at Richland Gym.

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## **FEBRUARY 2008**

We've had another busy month in the Parks Department. We're winding down winter sports and working hard to prepare for spring sports.

The Trevecca / Portland Parks Department volleyball clinic was a success, on February 16. The first year saw a relatively low number of girls, but I started a similar program in another city and saw it grow from 18 girls to 40 in 2 years, and in fact in year 6 this past year they had over 60 girls! We are thrilled to open this relationship with Trevecca and help introduce volleyball to more girls in this area.

Our youth basketball league finished play earlier this month, and adult volleyball concludes March 1. I consider both programs a success. I've included a copy of a letter we prepared for all parents, which will summarize some of my thoughts on the basketball program.

We are going to try to revive adult softball this spring. We didn't offer leagues last spring. Registration is underway for leagues for men, women and co-ed.

The Portland Soccer Club and Portland Dixie Baseball and Softball are starting practice. We have worked closer with these organizations – and in fact Dixie asked our office to prepare their complete practice schedule this year. Our office is also controlling all of the facility lights, which should greatly reduce the amount of time that empty fields are lit (saving us a lot of money).

The Portland Youth Football League is also preparing for their season, including their signups in May and their June camps. Of course, many are aware of a report that they were tardy with a payment to the City of Portland. While they were in fact unpaid at the time, and I will still defend any statements made regarding how the Parks Department will handle such issues, I want to stress that the intent of bringing up the subject with the Parks Committee was simply a matter of informing the Parks Committee, and there was no action being taken at that time. There was no intent from this office to publicly embarrass the Portland Youth Football League, and I regret that it was unnecessarily presented to the community in that way.

That said, the Portland Youth Football League has now paid all funds due, and are in good standing with the City of Portland. We have also met with the leadership of the club, and hope to move forward with a positive relationship.

The lighting project (field #5 at Richland Park) is nearly complete. In fact, if the weather cooperates, it should be in play by March 3. We've also repaired the lights at Meadowbrook, including the skate park and the walking trail.

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We are also doing a lot of things with our internet presence. It will always be a work in progress, but be sure to let folks know that they can get more information from the Parks Department on the website. They can get facility rain out information, facility maps, Parks Committee meeting information (agendas and minutes), league and registration information, etc. They can also actually register online for programs, and can even pay for a facility reservation (such as shelters) online with a credit card.

We've also created a hotline for the public to call, regarding field closings due to rain or snow (323-0264).

Maintenance Items

- In process of upgrading Meadow Brook restrooms – finishing up the job, still need to replace gutter & downspouts and repaint exterior.
- Continued work on baseball fields for upcoming season (Located base anchors, replaced damaged/old base anchors, prepared elbows for top dressing).
- Clean up from storm damage – Lost (2) trees at Richland Park and (1) tree at Meadow Brook – Cut up and haul off to burn piles.
- Repaired heater in Gym – replaced thermal coupler.
- Repaired gym floor – replaced loose pieces on gym floor.
- Cleaned out underneath press boxes on baseball fields in preparation for upcoming season.
- Installed mini blinds in Cold Springs School House; also caulked around windows.
- Installed (3) fire extinguishers in gym (men's restroom, women's restroom and interior hallway).
- Lowered water level in pool due to heavy rains.
- Built shelves in Pump House.
- Installed new field number signs and shelter number signs.
- Moved soccer goals into place for beginning of soccer practice.
- Received new picnic tables for Meadowbrook barn, ordered grill.
- Made bat racks for BB fields 1-4.
- Fixed holes in Quad where work was done on irrigation last fall.
- Ordering gravel for exit road and parking areas around Richland Park fields 1-4 (quad).

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## MARCH 2008

Spring is here, and our parks are already seeing increased activity! The Portland Soccer Club has already started their regular season play, and Dixie Baseball and Softball leagues will begin play March 31.

The lighting project (field #5 at Richland Park) was completed March 3. Our staff provided a great deal of labor in assistance with this job, and no scheduled practice slots were lost.

We offered adult softball leagues this spring, but they didn't make. We will try again in the fall. We have scheduled an NSA qualifying tournament here in April (19-20) that might help generate some more interest in adult softball in Portland.

We also have a lot of programs and events coming up, some of which are new ventures. We will be taking registration soon for the Swim Team, Scrap-booking Classes, Summer Camp, and a Mini-Triathlon event that will help mark the opening of the pool in May. Two popular events will also return in '08 – the Civil War Reenactment on April 25 at Richland Park, and the T.A.P. Enterprises Tool Show May 3-4 at Richland Gym. Portland will again host the TSSA D2 Girls State Tournament May 3-4. Also, the Strawberry Festival is right around the corner.

We continue to work on our internet presence. Please let folks know that they can get more information from the Parks Department on the website. They can get facility rain out information, facility maps, Parks Committee meeting information (agendas and minutes), league and registration information, etc. They can also actually register online for programs, and can even pay for a facility reservation (such as shelters) online with a credit card.

### Maintenance Items

- Restrooms at Meadowbrook are open. We still have some exterior work to do there, and will likely have to address that next budget year. But the facility is in much better shape than it was a year ago.
- Installed new picnic tables and a grill at Meadowbrook Park (barn) shelter.
- Replaced flags at Richland Park and Citizen's Park.
- Athletic fields (soccer/football 1-8 and baseball/softball 5-7) seeded with Bermuda grass. After we get through a rough spring season, we should start seeing the benefit of this effort this summer and fall.
- We've added an entrance to the park on Jim Courtney Road, and we've started laying gravel in that area. We have a "new" exit from the park from the center parking lots (one-way) by baseball fields 1-4 to Jim Courtney. There is also a new parking area near the Jim Courtney Road entrance.

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## APRIL 2008

Spring sports continue play, of course as the weather permits. Baseball, softball and soccer play is regularly filling the park.

Our softball tournament (April 19-20) was canceled. Unfortunately, our efforts to revive adult softball haven't been successful this year, but we will continue to offer programs and keep trying.

The Civil Re-enactment show was a big hit this past Friday (25<sup>th</sup>). The park was full and the event went well. The artillery display was, of course, popular with all. This is an event that we will seek to bring back again.

The T.A.P. Enterprises Tool Show is May 3-4 at Richland Gym (from 11 AM – 7 PM each day). Portland will again host the TSSA D2 Girls State Tournament May 3-4. Please try to make it out for these events!

We are excited about our summer programs this year. We are reviving our Summer Camp, and it is tentatively scheduled to begin June 2. We are also planning for swimming lessons and water aerobics, as well as a tennis camp.

Swim Team registration closes the last week of April. This program continues to grow – we're already up 25% over 2007 participants, with several days left to sign up. A 50% increase (or more) is very possible in 2008.

And finally, the pool will open May 24, to coincide with the Mini-Triathlon.

In addition to our daily maintenance, some of our recent projects are detailed below.

### Maintenance Items

- Fertilized all soccer and baseball fields. We're starting to see some green!
- The gravel parking lot off Jim Courtney Road is a work in progress, as we add gravel and spread and level it.
- We built our first "permanent" pitching mound in a few years ... on field #5. This was done in time for the start of their season.
- We received a donation of concrete picnic tables and some planters earlier this month. We've already put them to good use, installing the picnic tables and one planter in the "mini-park" in the middle of town.
- Installed some cover for picnic tables at Meadowbrook Barn. This is to help keep the bird droppings off the tables and people using that area.

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## MAY 2008

The pool is open! Our swim team doubled this year, in fact registration increased over 100% from 2007. Swimming lessons start next week as well, we're nearly full for 2 weeks of classes already. Might add a 3<sup>rd</sup> week if the demand is there.

The T.A.P. Enterprises Tool Show was a big hit in early May. A lot of folks attended and they were happy with the turnout.

The Portland Soccer Club hosted the TSSA D2 Girls State Tournament earlier in the month. Rain hurt them a bit, with some field delays – but all said they didn't lose a game. We delayed some fields opening on Saturday for a few hours to protect the turf, and worked with TSSA officials on scheduling.

Of course, a lot went on in the park in preparation for the concert. We made many cosmetic improvements, including seed and straw around the amphitheater, the new sewer and water lines, and the front parking lot. We cleaned up the hill near shelter 2, as well as the front entrance. And of course, all the labor that went into the concert, before and after.

Our department was aided by the help of many, including other departments, the inmate labor program and volunteers – and we're very grateful for the assistance and cooperation from everyone. We have to get a lot done with a small crew here, and the assistance of others with manpower and equipment goes a long way.

All that said, I couldn't be more proud of my staff, and how hard they have worked this month in keeping this facility looking good.

Our tennis camp will run the week of June 23, and will accommodate ages 8 and older. A flier for this new program is included. We are hosting a couple of Dixie district tournaments, baseball and softball, in June. The dates are roughly June 20-28.

In addition to our daily maintenance, some of our recent projects are detailed below.

### Maintenance Items

- Continued work on athletic fields. Repaired irrigation system, and we're starting to seed and get the fertilizer and water on the fields.
- Cleaned and opened the pool.
- Repaired leaks in soccer restrooms and metal concession restrooms.
- Painted gym/pool concession floor.

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## **JUNE 2008**

A lot going on at the swimming pool. Our swim team is doing well. Record numbers and we won a meet June 30. We filled 3 weeks worth (6 sessions, 72 kids) of swimming lessons in June, and we're offering 2 more weeks the end of July.

We had some crowd control problems at the pool early in the month. We closed the back area off with a fence, and put in some gate control procedures and that has helped a lot. This remains something we have to stay on top of, but the crowds have become more manageable lately.

The tennis camp did not make (just 4 kids). We'll try another in the fall.

Dixie baseball and softball tournaments went well this month. We've got one more in July.

The Portland Youth Football Camp also utilized the park in June, and went smoothly.

In addition to our daily maintenance, some of our recent projects are detailed below.

### Maintenance Items

Dealt with a lot of irrigation issues, and made a few repairs. Also applied more seed and fertilizer to the fields.

They are starting to get greener! The fields are bouncing back, and we're starting to see the benefit of our efforts. They will look much better this fall, and should look very good next spring, if the weather cooperates.

We installed 5 new bricks at Memorial.

Planted 3 donated trees at Richland Park.

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## **JULY 2008**

Swimming season is winding down. We will go w/e only hours for the public starting August 11, still offering pool parties through the week.

Our swim team finished their season, and did very well. Finished 4<sup>th</sup> in their conference, which I believe is their best finish (ever). Of course, we had record numbers of participants on the team in 2008. We finished with 5 full weeks of swimming lessons, well Over 100 kids served. We also had a nice pool event in July, and will have another (the Back to School Bash) in August.

We've learned a lot this year, with the pool, with respect to handling the crowd and security. The adjustments we made during the summer really helped with the earlier problems, and we will have a much better handle on this in 2009.

Football has started practice, and soccer will begin shortly. There has been a lot of work done recently to complete the transition of football to field #3 (giving them access to restroom facilities).

If you haven't seen the athletic fields, you really need to give them a look ... they are green! Seeing them last fall and even earlier this spring, that is a big deal. It is good to see our efforts paying off. We're not there yet, but our fields are closer to a full recovery than I expected at this time.

Of course, the skate park has been in the news. We do appreciate everyone's support during this period. We had a difficult decision to make, and I believe it will prove to be the best decision in the long term. We hope to have the skate park open soon.

In addition to our daily maintenance, some of our recent projects are detailed below.

### Maintenance Items

Maintained and game-prepped fields during tournaments (3 Dixie tournaments).

Replaced hot water heater in pool concession.

Repaired vandalism at Meadowbrook (restrooms) and Richland (light fixtures).

Replaced mulch – all playgrounds.

Sprayed for mosquitoes.

Fertilized athletic fields.

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## August 2008

Last few weeks of a long pool season. The last open day for the pool is September 1. We have one more event coming up (the Back to School Bash), on August 23.

Football starts their regular season play August 30 with regular season home games in Portland every Saturday through October 18. Soccer, baseball and softball have all started their practices for the fall season. These are all programs managed by civic clubs (volunteer groups), and coordinating facilities with the Parks Department.

We have started registration for our girls basketball program (deadline is September 12). Girls will play in the fall, and the boys programs will start in January, and they will register Oct 27 – Nov 21.

T.A.P. Enterprises will be holding another tool show here on Sunday, October 12 (at Richland Gym). This was a popular event for us in May of this year, and we are happy to have them back in town.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Highland Harvest Craft Show and Sale will be at Portland Middle School November 8 and 9. The Parks Department sponsors this event, along with the Highland Rim Historical Society.

In addition to our daily maintenance, some of our recent projects are detailed below.

### Maintenance Items

Prepared soccer fields and football fields for fall seasons.

Sprayed for mosquitoes.

Repaired and restored 3 wooden bleachers for football field use. A lot of money saved here to get these bleachers back in service.

Plumbing issues at Richland Gym.

Had some electrical and irrigation problems at soccer fields. Just general maintenance and repair items.

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## September 2008

We closed the pool with our Back-To-School Bash – and it went well, with about 50 participants!

Soccer, football, and baseball fall sports are all well underway. We've received regular compliments on the condition of our fields this fall – and the new turf is holding up pretty well under the use.

Our girls basketball program will start practices September 29, and games will start October 18. The girls will be through before winter break. The boys program will start in January, and they will register Oct 27 – Nov 21.

We expect to have our ROW clearance from the State of TN shortly, and we should be ready to go to bid soon on the walking trail enhancement (lighting and landscaping) project at Richland Park. We are finalizing our contract with Jenkins Construction, for completion of concrete work at Richland Park (baseball fields 1-4), to be completed this fall.

Coming soon - NWA (wrestling) is coming to Richland Gym on October 4. T.A.P. Enterprises tool show is here on Sunday, October 12 (at Richland Gym) – 11 AM – 7 PM. The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Highland Harvest Craft Show and Sale will be at Portland Middle School November 8 and 9. The Parks Department sponsors this event, along with the Highland Rim Historical Society.

Our Advisory Board will begin meeting in October (3<sup>rd</sup> Mondays at 4 PM).

In addition to regular maintenance, some recent projects are detailed below.

Installed plastic sheeting in Cold Springs School attic to temporarily help avoid water damage (due to roof in need of repair).

Starting some maintenance on baseball fields, including cleaning up and edging infield, replacing base anchors, and inspection and repair of irrigation system as needed.

Repaired curb at Meadowbrook Park.

Removed rotten and unsafe wood from sandbox at Meadowbrook Park. Full repair will be a winter project.

Coordinated repair (with Street Department) of walking trail at Meadowbrook Park, area damaged by tree roots.

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## October 2008

All fall sports are winding down this month or early November. Our girls basketball program started regular season play October 18. The girls will be through before winter break. The boys program will start in January, and they will register Oct 27 – Nov 21.

The NWA event at Richland Gym (October 4) was a big hit. Fun event, decent crowd and a lot of energy in the building. The performers were pleased with the venue and the atmosphere, and are very interested in bringing events back to Portland. T.A.P. Enterprises tool show (October 12) drew a decent one-day crowd to the gym.

Our Parks Advisory Board held its inaugural meeting October 20, and minutes from this meeting are included.

We received our ROW clearance from the State of TN, and are preparing to proceed to the bid phase walking trail enhancement (lighting and landscaping) project at Richland Park. Jenkins Construction began work on the concrete work at Richland Park (baseball fields 1-4) this week.

We will submit a TDOT application for phase 2 of the walking trail (lighting and landscaping) enhancement project in November. This is a re-submittal for FY 2009. Matching funding (20%) already approved by Resolution #5230 (October 2006).

### Coming soon

The Parks Department will host our annual Trick or Treat on Main Street Event on October 31, from 4-6 PM.

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Highland Harvest Craft Show and Sale will be at Portland Middle School November 8 and 9. The Parks Department sponsors this event, along with the Highland Rim Historical Society.

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## November 2008

The girls basketball program continues play, and the boys program will start in January (their registration concludes Nov 21). The registration numbers are a little slow. Many of our neighboring communities and recreation departments are also seeing low registration numbers for basketball this year.

Our volleyball adult league registration has also started (begins play in January). We have made arrangements for this league to play at Portland High School this year, and this will be a major improvement for this program.

We should be placing ads by the end of the month to accept bids for the walking trail enhancement (lighting and landscaping) project at Richland Park. Jenkins Construction completed the concrete work at Richland Park (baseball fields 1-4), and the work has already been inspected by the state (and approved). They were very complimentary of the project, and the appearance of our park.

We submitted the TDOT application for phase 2 of the walking trail (lighting and landscaping) enhancement project in November. This is a re-submittal for FY 2009. Matching funding (20%) already approved by Resolution #5230 (October 2006).

The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Highland Harvest Craft Show and Sale at Portland Middle School (November 8 and 9) was a very successful event. We added more variety and new products. Sales were reportedly a little slow, but again, that is not a surprise (many vendors stated this was common at other shows as well). The newest idea (the area for kids) was very popular. This gave children the opportunity to make crafts and gave them something to do while their parents browsed.

### Coming soon

The Parks Department will host a visit from Santa, on December 13 (10-12) at the Community Center.

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## December 2008

The girls basketball program finished play December 18. The boys program has started practice and will start games in January.

Our volleyball adult league registration also took place in December, and teams will start play in January. We are also working on bringing the middle school girls volleyball program back to Richland Gym to some degree. This is a program that involves a lot of young ladies and helps introduce these athletes to the game of volleyball before they compete at the high school level.

We are in the process of accepting bids for the walking trail enhancement (lighting and landscaping) project at Richland Park. This will include the lighting of the trail from the library to Watt Hardison (the first phase of the existing trail).

Our visit with Santa program drew better numbers this year. We again followed up with personal letters to each child, where Santa personally writes to the child and references the gifts they are being brought for Christmas.

### Coming soon

One event coming up is worth some special mention. The NWA Wrestling shows at Richland Gym have gone well, and they been here 3 times now. And they are bringing Jerry Lawler to town to perform at the next show, January 24. We are very excited to have Mr. Lawler in Portland as part of this event.