



City of Bridgeton
Department of Recreation & Public Affairs
(856) 455-3230 EXT 280

James B. Begley
Mayor

Melissa Hemple
Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Kevin C. Rabago
Office of Development & Planning
(856) 451-3407
rabagok@cityofbridgeton.com

CITY OFFERS FULL SLATE OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Director earns top state designation and opens season with innovative family programs

The building up of one of Bridgeton's key assets, the city's park and recreation system, took a huge step forward recently as Bridgeton's Director of Recreation & Public Affairs became a State Certified Recreation Administrator.

Melissa Hemple, City Director of Recreation & Public Affairs for the past 15 months, recently completed the multi-level program established by the National Recreation and Park Association and administered by the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association (NJRPA). The program exists to ensure that professionals in the field of parks, recreation, and leisure services can achieve appropriate professional certification.

The NJRPA board of examiners provides a New Jersey specific certification for recreation supervisors and administrators for public park agencies. This process provides recreational professionals with the tools and credentials to administer what is an industry all its own across the state. Ms. Hemple, who began the process in September 2007, passed the state exam in March 2008 and received her state certification.

Unlike the field of Recreation in the private sector, the Recreation field in Government is completely different. Ms. Hemple, who minored in Recreation Administration in college and served as Recreation & Social Director in the private sector for *Home Properties of New York*, notes the differences between the public and private sector. "Planning and administering recreational programs for a city means that programs and activities must be as diverse as the community itself", Hemple said.

Recreation Administration involves a number of disciplines. From generating ideas, planning and managing an event to preparing budgets, fundraising, grants, coordinating with community groups and advertising, the function of Recreation Administrator is truly about multi-tasking. Toward that end, a number of exciting recreation programs are slated to kick-off with the start of the summer season in Bridgeton.

The Bridgeton Parks & Recreation Summer line-up includes an expanded Fourth of July celebration. ***The 4th of July Festival***, funded in part by the Cumberland County Cultural and Heritage Commission and held in the City Park, will include music, rides, food and theater to go along with the traditional fireworks show that has been a staple of Fourth of July celebrations for years in Bridgeton.

Additional summer programs include ***Outdoor Movie Nights*** and a ***Going Green at the Zoo*** program later in the summer which will see the unveiling of new signage and picnic tables at the Zoo as part of the Cohanzick Zoos new look.

A proponent of continuing education, Bridgeton Mayor Jim Begley sees this as a way to better serve the citizens of Bridgeton. “The more our people know, the better equipped they will be to serve the community”, Begley said. He went on to note that Bridgeton City Park is to Bridgeton what Central Park is to New York City. Bridgeton City Park is roughly the same size as Central Park in New York City, which stands at 843 acres

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If you'd like to learn more about Bridgeton's spring and Summer Recreational Programs and Events, Please call the Bridgeton Department of Recreation at (856) 455-3230 EXT 280 or visit the City of Bridgeton website at www.cityofbridgeton.com