

Welcome to the seventh annual State of the Village Address. For those of you who have attended the State of the Village in the past, or watched it on the Village's cable channel, this year's Address will follow a slightly different format. Tonight, I'll have the pleasure of presenting the Village's accomplishments and challenges alongside the Village's management team. Each of the Village's Department Managers will take a few moments to share with you the items of interest in their respective departments.

This year the Village was honored to receive three important designations. Movoto named La Grange Park as one of the "10 Best Chicago Suburbs," recognizing the Village's high quality of life, low crime rates, quality educational institutions and access to amenities. Earlier in the year, the Village was ranked by ValuePenguin as the seventh safest small city in Illinois. The Village was also recently notified that we will be receiving the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus Environmental Achievement Award. The MMC noted that our sustainability plan will be used as a foundation for the regional template sustainability plan, as our plan is both balanced and realistic. This is a honor of which we are very proud.

For those of us that call La Grange Park home, these recognitions come as no surprise. Still, great communities like ours don't happen by accident. It's only through careful planning and an ongoing focus on fiscal responsibility that our Village continues to thrive in these challenging economic times. One of the people responsible for leading our community is Village Manager Julia Cedillo.

Good evening everyone. As the Village Manager, I am responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Village and executing the policies as set forth by the Village Board and President. In conjunction with the members of the Board who truly have resident's

concerns at heart, we also have a very dedicated staff who through six departments works hard each day to provide the best possible services to residents.

But it all starts with a vision and the Village Board and President are responsible for the development of a vision for the community, its policies and a long-term strategy for sustaining the Village financially. Each year, the Village Board gathers for a strategic planning workshop to review and discuss key issues in depth. Past strategic planning sessions have been focused on topics such as identifying key priorities for the Village. The priorities identified by the Board include:

1. Maintain Fiscal Responsibility with Sound Budget Practices
2. Improve and Maintain Infrastructure and Roads
3. Maintain and Communicate Good Government Practices and Services
4. Maintain Public Services Through Safe Practices and Proper Equipment
5. Attract, Retain and Expand Business

The Village Board has also engaged in strategic planning to evaluate short and long term capital needs of the Village – and to review the Village’s fees, fine and revenue structure in an effort to determine how we might pay for our growing capital needs.

This past year, the Village Board held two strategic planning sessions, both focused on what needs to be done to sustain the Village financially over the long-term. The first session was held in February and focused on the potential of creating a Tax Increment Financing District in the Village. Assistant Village Manager Rodman will speak more about that later in the presentation. The second session, held this summer, was focused on evaluating

options for the how the Village could finance its long-term capital needs. Finance Director, Larry Noller, will share more about the results of that session shortly.

The environment that local government works in is ever-changing – in terms of resident needs and priorities (population changes), trends in services, economic conditions and state and federal requirements and mandates. And the state of Illinois as an environment has become particularly challenging – with no budget in place, there is a hold on five sources of revenue for our community – at this time we are not receiving revenue for motor fuel tax for our roads, 911 funding for our dispatch operations and Use Tax for our general fund operations. There is also a hold on grants – the IGIG grant for which we designed our downspout disconnection program and the OSLAD grant, a Park District initiative, for improvements to parks.

With the Village Board being proactive through strategic planning, it allows us to better anticipate challenges, react more quickly, look for opportunities and forge ahead in the best possible manner for our community.

Before I turn it over to our Finance Director, I would just like to say, if there is one message that I want to impart with residents this evening is that we are an active, proactive, responsible and responsive local government. The Village Board, President and Staff are available for residents to discuss issues and answer questions – so please – do not hesitate to reach out.

Good evening. Over the past year, the Village has realized several significant financial achievements. Last November, the Village refinanced bonds issued in 2006 to pay for sewer improvements. As a result, the Village will save over \$426,000. These savings will allow

the Village to invest more dollars into continued sewer improvements. As part of the bond refunding process, the Village was required to obtain an updated credit rating. Standard & Poor's rated the Village AA+. This is a just one notch below AAA, which is the highest possible score. The AA+ rating is a reflection of the Village's history of strong financial management.

As part of the Village's implementation of new pension reporting requirements mandated by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board otherwise known as GASB, the Village Board chose to thoroughly review how the Village's pensions are funded. Last fall, the Village Board formed a working group that included two members from both the Village Board and the Police Pension Board. The Working Group was tasked with selecting and working with an actuary to review the actuarial assumptions used to calculate the Village's annual police pension contribution and to incorporate those assumptions into a recommended pension funding policy for the Village. The Working Group's recommended funding policy was approved by both the Village Board and the Police Pension Board in April 2015. The new funding policy reflects the Village's commitment to meeting its financial obligations in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Village's General Fund ended the 2015 fiscal year in a stronger financial position than was originally budgeted and included a \$1.2 million transfer from the General Fund to fund needed road projects and equipment replacement. The Village received increased sales tax revenues due to new businesses, additional permit revenue from home and commercial projects and higher shared revenues from the State. All are positive indicators that the economy continues to recover from the Great Recession.

There were also signs of continued challenges as well. Telecom taxes, a major revenue source for the Village, continued a long term trend downward. In addition, there are continued efforts at the state level to reduce municipal revenues. The Village's share of the income tax, motor fuel tax and 911 fees are all vital in supporting essential services to Village residents. Reductions in these revenues by the state would result in reduced services or require increased local revenues.

The current year budget for all funds totals approximately \$13.8 million; and is aligned with the service goals and capital projects rankings identified by the Village Board. More specifically, the current budget provides funding to complete approximately \$1 million in road projects, over \$200,000 in water projects, over \$240,000 in building maintenance, as well as implement two programs to address the impacts of flooding to homeowners.

In recent years, as a result of the Great Recession, the Village has taken proactive measures to control costs. The Village has also taken a focused look at how services are delivered and through the Local Revenue Study, made several adjustments to fees and fee structures. Despite these efforts, costs to provide essential services continue to increase. In addition, one of the primary challenges for the Village in the near term is to continue to repair and replace aging roads, water and sewer infrastructure. The Village Board and management are working diligently to meet the necessary funding for the maintenance of the Village's roadways, including aggressively pursuing grants and matching funds. However, the 2014 Paving Evaluation identified many more roads in need of repair than current funding can support.

At the June strategic planning workshop, the Village Board discussed the need for additional funding for the Village's long-term capital program. Existing revenues are not

sufficient to maintain the Village's 35 miles of roads at a sustainable pace and replace essential fire department equipment. As a result of the strategic planning workshop, the Village Board recently approved including two bond referenda on the March 15, 2016 election ballot. The proposed combined \$11.2 million in bonds includes \$10 million for road projects and \$1.2 million for fire department vehicles and equipment. With that, I am going to turn it over to our Public Works Director, Brendan McLaughlin.

The Public Works Department includes a Water Operator, Mechanic, a Foreman and five Maintenance Workers. We also have a part-time support position that keeps our office in check. We recently added a new employee to our ranks. Anthony DeSanto is a lifelong resident and a graduate of Nazareth Academy. He was also one of our summer workers from a few years back.

In the last year we performed all the usual services you have come to expect – snow plowing and salting, three rounds of leaf collection, six rounds of brush collection and filling many potholes along the way.

In coordination with our contractors we have removed over 400 Ash trees and planted 100 new trees. We started with 1,398 Ash trees and only have 466 left to remove. We expect these to die over the next two years. We are injecting 84 trees in strategic locations in an effort to save them.

Design work has been completed on water main replacement on La Grange Road (between Garfield and 29th). This work will go out to bid this Winter, with construction starting once the weather breaks in the Spring.

This summer repaving took place on three blocks of Cleveland, two blocks of Finsbury and one block of Pine Tree Lane. We were also able to secure a grant to fund the repaving of four blocks of Kemman (north of 31st Street). This is the most paving to occur in one year since 2006.

While there remain many more streets in need of paving, the voters will decide in the March Primary if they want to fund a Ten Year Road Program, which will repave all streets current identified as needing resurfacing. By funding this initiative, it will decrease the wait time for resurfacing. Based on the last ten years, we were able to repave 4 ½ blocks per year. This program will double the amount of blocks we can repave. If we stay at the current level, it is projected that there will be enough money to repave streets on a 70-year cycle. Approving the referendum will reduce this to a 35 year cycle. For those interested, there will be an open house at the Village Hall on November 12th at 7:00 PM to learn more about the referendum.

This past November, the Village in association with a national search completed by Gov-HR selected the next Chief of Police. I was chosen to represent this great Village which I have served since 1999 from Patrol Officer to now Chief of Police. This also opened new opportunities for advancement in the Police Department and has positively added to the overall morale, commitment and dedication to this outstanding profession.

First, John Strezo who has been with the department since 1999 was selected as the Commander of Daily Operations, next Tim Contois a sworn officer since 2002 was promoted to Sergeant, also Tim Griffin a sworn officer since 2012 was promoted to Detective. Leading to new Probationary Police Officer hire of David Escamilla who completed his training at the Cook County Sheriff Department Academy in June of 2015.

The retirement of Radio Operator Karen Widd created a new opening that was filled in February of 2015 by Irene Luikey who has over 15 years of experience in the field. Recently, Part-Time Police Officer Kris Gardner who is a Full-Time Police Officer at Indian Head Park PD was selected to join our department in July of 2015 to assist with daily patrol operations (one day a week), along with Auxiliary Officers Brad Lautner & Gary Padalik which primarily assist with special event coverage.

Community policing is a major focus of the police department. Through new programs, innovative patrol, special events and open communication this objective is being met on a daily basis. New Programs such as – Coffee with the Chief which in the future will be Coffee with an Officer, Walk & Talk with the Community, Door Hanger, Shop with a Cop, Safety Briefs with the integration of a Tip of the Week are just some of the new changes with more to come. In addition, all officers have been trained in the administration of Narcan, which is used to assist in counteracting possible opiate use. The Narcan is kept in the officers new “Go Bags” which are kept in all police squads and contain necessary first responder supplies.

The National Night Out Program coordinated by Sergeant Felix Hernandez & fellow police staff was again a well-attended event in its second year of comeback. A special thanks to the Village President & Trustees for taking the time to attend as well. The return of the Adopt-A-Cop Program which is entering its 15th year affiliated with K thru 8th Grades. The bringing back of the Spark Plug Program at Park Jr High School consisting of police department staff in conjunction with at risk students meeting once a month for one hour study time, one hour activity time and one hour meal time. The Police Department also distributes the electronic Safety Bulletin usually on a weekly basis, informing residents of

the most recent police incidents to be aware of and adding a detailed tip for personal safety. To sign up to receive these bulletins, visit the Village's website.

The Village remains committed to providing top quality services to all our residents and business owners. An example of this is the agreement between the Villages of La Grange Park, La Grange & Western Springs to consolidate our Police, Fire & Ambulance dispatching services. The name for the new consolidated dispatch center, to be housed at the Village of La Grange, will be LTACC (Lyons Township Area Communications Center). This extensive project continues to move forward, in large part due to the efforts of the recently hired new Executive Director – Kim Knusten in June of 2015. The Executive Committee (comprised of all Village Managers) & Operations Committee (comprised of all Police & Fire Chiefs) have been meeting on a regular basis to establish the overall needs of the center. The goal is to have the LTACC Dispatch Center operational in 2016.

The Village continues to benefit from the Police Departments participation in the Local Debt Recovery Program. Through this program initiated by the Illinois State Comptroller Office, the Village has been able to recover outstanding parking tickets and compliance. This past fiscal year, we recovered fees and fines associated with 468 tickets, totaling over \$26,600.

In July of this year, the Police Department was awarded a \$46,000.00 Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) by The Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (Cook County Division). This grant will be utilized for the purchase and installation of new front and rear cameras in the Village's patrol vehicles. We anticipate the cameras will be installed and fully operational within a couple of weeks.

In the coming year, the Board of Police Commissioners will be involved with completing a testing cycle and a final eligibility list for the Village's Sergeant position and Probationary Police Officers. This testing is done every couple of years, depending on how many position openings the Village has available, how many people pass the test, and when the list expires.

Thank you Chief Rompa. I've had the honor of leading the Village's Fire Department for the last 14 years, and the Fire Department continues to work to both maintain and enhance the levels of service to our community. Our Department continues to operate using a combination of full-time contract paramedic/firefighters, and mostly dedicated part-time, or what are considered "paid-on-call" personnel. All of these personnel are vital to our department's efficient service. Most of our "paid-on-call" personnel hold full-time jobs in addition to their service for our community, with many having careers outside of the fire service.

Over the past year, the Fire Department responded to over 2000 calls for service, with over seventy-five percent (75%) of those calls being EMS related, summoning our ambulances, paramedics and EMT's to 1,652 incidents. The remaining calls were responses to fires and various other emergencies. Between these EMS and fire responses, many emergencies were quickly and safely mitigated thanks to our dedicated and skilled staff. For example, three times this year, our EMS personnel, along with support from police and bystanders, revived residents suffering from cardiac arrests. Those residents are alive today as a direct result of the actions of our first responders.

In order to remain prepared to face various challenges, firefighting and EMS training takes place continuously throughout the year. Last calendar year, La Grange Park Firefighters

logged nearly 3,500 hours of fire training alone. Our firefighters continue to utilize actual existing structures whenever possible, acquiring them prior to demolition. This past March, the Fire Department partnered with the Community Park District, and utilized the former Shelter House at Memorial Park for live fire training. Firefighters set actual fires throughout various rooms of the shelter house, in order to practice search and rescue, and fire extinguishment, in actual fire conditions. Throughout this past year, the Fire Department was able to also partner with residents and their contractors, and utilize some single-family homes for training. These were homes that were scheduled for demolition to make room for new homes. Just this past weekend, the Fire Department trained in a home in the 700 block of Brainard. We greatly appreciate the use of such homes, and also greatly appreciate the patience of all of our residents when training in their neighborhoods. Training in actual structures definitely makes for a much better prepared Fire Department. As part of a firefighters' initial training, La Grange Park firefighters complete a firefighter training academy, and become State Certified. Because we are staffed predominantly by paid-on-call firefighters, we have utilized a variety of resources to train newly hired personnel over the years. This past spring, we were lucky to partner with the Western Springs Fire Department, another mostly paid-on-call department. They hosted a fire academy tailored to part-time personnel. Some of our more veteran firefighters assisted with instruction, especially at hands-on sessions. Six of our new Fire Department candidates attended the academy, and I am happy to report that all have graduated, and recently passed their state certification tests. Unfortunately for them, the training is not over, as most of them are now currently working hard in an Emergency Medical Technician course to become licensed EMT's.

As part of their regular duties, Fire Department personnel complete regular maintenance checks on fire department vehicles and tools. They also help maintain the Villages two fire

stations. As part of such, over the past year, firefighters helped to complete two significant capital projects. The first was the complete replacement of all of our large diameter supply hose. This is hose used to get water from the fire hydrants to the fire engines, and also to pump water over long distances between fire engines. The complete replacement was budgeted for in the Village budget. Firefighters also replaced fire station lockers this year, which are used to store firefighter's turnout gear, or their protective coats and pants. Older wooden lockers were replaced with new metal lockers that have an open grated design. This allows for better air flow, thus allowing for the turnout gear to dry out better, which in turn is much better for it. This purchase was made possible by using funds from the Foreign Fire Insurance Board, and from our Fire Department Foundation, which many residents and businesses support with their generous donations.

Firefighters not only commit a great deal of time to training, call response, and maintenance, but they represent the Fire Department in other community oriented events. They have regularly donate time to fill the Park District's ice rink, participate in fundraisers, attended block parties, and various other special events.

As you are all quite aware, fire is destructive to both life and property. Our Fire Department strongly believes that Fire Prevention and Public Fire Safety Education can reduce the impacts of fire. As such, we ask that all residents do their part in preventing fires from occurring, and that they understand what can be done to help mitigate the effects of fire, should one occur. Having adequate working smoke detectors on every floor of your home, and in every bedroom, is a critical start. And practicing a family escape plan can be critical to your survival. If you live in a new home, or are substantially remodeling your home, residential fire sprinklers are your best option. As of today, more than sixty

new homes in our Village are completely protected with residential life safety fire sprinkler systems.

As you should all be aware, we are currently in the midst of observing Fire Prevention Week. This week commemorates the Great Chicago Fire, and the devastating fire in Peshtigo, WI, which both took place on this day back in 1871. As such, this is the time of the year when our Fire Department conducts its' Annual Open House. In addition to fire and rescue demonstrations, the Open House provides an opportunity where all family members can obtain valuable fire safety information, and actually practice fire safety skills. Attendees can practice extinguishing cooking fires, crawling low in smoke, and plan for a home fire drill. Our Open House will take place this coming Saturday, October 10th, only two days from now, from 10am until 1pm, at our Fire Station No. 1. We hope to see you all of you there, for a day of both learning and fun.

As part of preparing for disasters and other major emergencies within our Village, the Village also formally operates an Emergency Management Agency. Although there are no actual employees assigned to the Agency, all Village employees will serve critical roles in keeping our Village running, and helping it to recover, from a disaster. Through the agency, the Village is able to maintain our Emergency Preparedness Plan, and is an active participant in the Cook County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. Such plans are designed to provide a framework for responding to and recovering from disasters, and in some cases, are also required in order for the Village to be eligible for disaster preparedness funding. During the past year we have further increased our initial preparedness capabilities by constructing a centralized storage area, where a cache of disaster supplies will be kept. Over the next several years, we plan to add to those supplies.

As noted earlier, I also serve as the Director of our Village Building Department. We continue to operate the department using a lean staffing model. We employ only one Inspector, and the building permit process is handled by a Senior Fiscal Assistant, who shares her hours between Finance Department duties. She is assisted by other Finance employees who also share their time, helping with phone calls, inspection scheduling and permit transactions at the front counter of our Village Hall. Each of these employees do a great job juggling the various tasks they are assigned, with the best possible focus on customer service.

In addition, we also continue to utilize a contracted service for structural plan review and plumbing inspections. This way, Village resources are better matched to actual services needed and rendered, depending on the state of the economy, and the volume of permits actually issued. We now also utilize a contract service to help our in-house inspector with the enforcement of property maintenance violations. There has been an increased need and demand for property maintenance inspections, which we are now able to better address.

Calendar year 2014 again was a near record for the number of permits issued in the Building Department. 997 permits were issued, and 1,786 inspections were conducted. So far in 2015, we appear to be close to being on the same pace. Of note this calendar year are a couple of larger projects taking place. One is the new three story addition, currently being constructed onto Nazareth Academy. Another is at the Homestead Apartments, where the first phase of electrical upgrades were made in every individual apartment throughout the buildings at the complex. Also, work began on the Cook County Sheriff's Police facility, which is moving into the Cook County Highway Garage complex. New vinyl perimeter fencing has already been installed, along with new landscaping, significantly

improving the look of their site. In addition, permits were issued for six new homes over the last several months. As such, so far in 2015, the estimated construction costs have been nearly 17 million dollars, representing a significant increase from last year, and a significant reinvestment in our Village.

One other item of note is the Ace Hardware. Late this summer it was discovered that the roof in a portion of their building had been damaged. The situation was quickly assessed by structural engineers, and repairs are currently underway. Although protective fencing remains in place along Beach Ave., I am pleased to report that the business remains open, and the owners look forward to your continued patronage.

As you may know, the Village had previously been awarded a \$416,500 Illinois Green Infrastructure Grant from the IEPA, for a new Downspout Disconnection Assistance Program. The program is now in place, under the direction of our Special Projects Coordinator, whose position is funded by the grant. He continues to work closely with residents in getting their downspouts disconnected from the Village's combined sewer system. Although the program has been curtailed a bit by State of Illinois budget issues, it remains ongoing. If you are interested in the program, please make sure to check the Village's website for the most up to date information. In addition to this program, residents are also able to obtain free rain barrels through an incentive program the Village is helping to coordinate through the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Great Chicago. This information is also on our website, for those wishing to obtain free rain barrels.

In addition to these programs, the Village Board authorized the implementation of a Sewer Backup Prevention Program this past spring. \$50,000 was allocated to help offset the cost of certain actions residents can take who are experiencing raw sewage backup in their

homes during periods of heavy rainfall, when the Village combination sewer surcharges. Approved actions include installing backflow prevention valves, and installing overhead plumbing. This particular program is first come, first serve, and so far the Village has reimbursed residents nearly \$10,000. Again, be sure to check the Village's website to review the details of the program, and to determine if you are eligible, and to learn how to apply.

Good evening. In an effort to be environmentally friendly, reduce costs and improve efficiency, the Village recently completed the implementation of a new paperless agenda process. Similar to many other local municipalities, the Village Board meeting materials are now be distributed to all Village Board members and certain Village staff members electronically. Board Members and staff review the materials on iPads. The new paperless process significantly reduces staff time and Village costs associated with producing and distributing the bi-monthly agenda packets.

As good stewards of public funds, the Village recognizes that it is important to maintain the facilities we own and ensure they are accessible to the public. This past year, the Village installed new doors on the north side of Village Hall which comply with the American with Disabilities Act. These automated doors make it easier for residents to access the building hands free. The Village also installed new AED's in the lobby of Village Hall and the Public Works Facility. This fall, the Village will install a new emergency back-up generator to support the Village's operations in case of a sustained power outage. The Village received a \$150,000 grant from the Federal government to replace our existing generator, which is over 40 years old and grossly undersized to serve our needs.

In my role here at the Village, I have the pleasure of serving as the Village's liaison to the business community and working with the Village's Commercial Revitalization Committee, or CRC, to enhance the Village's economic development efforts. Lead by Trustee Jim Kucera, the CRC has been hard at work implementing the Commercial Revitalization Plan, adopted in 2013. A number of the action items identified in the plan have already been implemented, including: developing Village marketing materials, creating a Business Resource Guide, and development of a Business Outreach Program.

The newest and most exciting effort to date is the Tax Increment Financing Study that the Village will soon be undertaking. At the strategic planning session held this past February, the Village Board decided that as part of a long-term strategy to maintain and enhance the Village's revenue base, it is important for us to consider reinvestment tools that could improve our commercial and industrial areas. As a result, the Village recently released a Request for Proposals, seeking a consultant to evaluate five areas within our community. These include the Village Market, three areas along 31st Street and the Barnsdale Industrial Corridor. The selected consultant will evaluate each of these areas to determine if any of them would qualify as a TIF District, what the appropriate boundaries would be, and what the areas could potentially generate in tax increment revenue. While the Village does not intend to establish TIF Districts in all five areas, it is important for the consultant to evaluate them. The data gathered from the Feasibility Study will then be used to assist the Village Board in deciding whether establishing a TIF District would benefit the Village. We anticipate the Study will commence before the end of the year and the findings will be shared at a public meeting in early 2016. We will continue to provide updates on the Feasibility Study as we move through the process.

The strength of our local business community depends in large part on the businesses themselves. The La Grange Park Chamber, led by President Sheri Sauer and its Board of Directors, continues to grow its membership and to expand its presence in the community. The Chamber provides an excellent opportunity for our businesses to become involved in the community and to grow their business at the same time. Each year, the Chamber hosts a variety of business-friendly and family-friendly events including Bike Fest, the Haunted Trolley Trick-or-Treat and the annual Holiday in the Park event. These events are a great opportunity for entire family to have some fun and support our local business community.

The Village has over 100 businesses, including banks, retail stores, restaurants, professional and medical offices, and warehousing facilities. As in past years, the Village experienced some changes in its business landscape. This year the Village welcomed some new businesses, including:

- Christopher Glass & Aluminum on 26th Street
- Ironside Consulting on 31st Street
- A new branch of Fifth Third Bank

The Village is also excited to announce that The Dinner Club, currently located in downtown La Grange, will soon be opening their doors at the Village Market.

Information about new business openings and other important Villages news is provided quarterly to residents via The Rose Clippings newsletter. The Village encourages residents to review the latest edition, which was mailed to all 5,400 households in our community this week. Each quarterly edition of The Rose Clippings contains important information about Village services, infrastructure projects and Village personnel. Residents may also visit the Village website for information on Village regulations, to review meeting agendas and minutes, or to watch a Village Board meeting online. To receive the most up-to-date

information on what is happening in and around the community, the Village encourages residents to subscribe to the Village's weekly electronic newsletter, E-briefs. Currently, we have over 2,000 subscribers.

At this point, I would like to turn the presentation back over to President Discipio, who will provide some brief updates about our other taxing bodies.

La Grange Park is a community that offers its residents a wide range of amenities. These amenities include recreational opportunities provided by the Community Park District of La Grange Park. At the end of last year, after six years as the Executive Director, Roy Cripe retired. In January, Aleks Briedis was hired as the new Executive Director. Aleks grew up in Villa Park, graduated from the University of Illinois, worked at Wheeling Park District and then became the Recreation Director for the City of Rifle, Colorado in 1999 until he moved back to Villa Park in 2013. Aleks hit the ground running and continues to move the District forward.

The Park District Board of Commissioners had an election this past year. The District said farewell to Lou Ritten, who served on the Board for eight years, including four years as President of the Board. He brought a new level of professionalism to the Board, helping to develop the Master Plan, new website, logo, various policy manuals, and helped expand Beach Oak Park. The District also welcomed Bob Corte who was elected to fill Lou's position. Karen Boyd was once again elected by the Board as their President.

Robinhood Park completed its \$45,000 facelift that included improved visual appeal and additional park amenities in the northeast corner of the park.

The District was awarded an \$88,900 Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant in January for improvements to Beach-Oak Park. It also completed and bid out construction documents for improvements to Memorial Park, which is also funded in part with OSLAD funds. Construction was slated to begin in the Spring. The old fieldhouse was demolished to make way for a new picnic shelter, when Governor Rauner froze the OSLAD funds. Due to this, both the Memorial Park and Beach Oak Park projects have been put on hold until the grant funds are released.

The District continues to improve its communication with the residents by upgrading its web site. They are also preparing to offer on-line program registration in the next year.

Dave Romito was promoted to a full time employee as the District's Recreation Supervisor - Marketing, Publicity and Artistic Director. Martin Healy, Park Maintenance Supervisor, celebrated his 40th anniversary with the District.

This past year, the District was recognized as the La Grange Park Chamber of Commerce's business of the year. The District was also awarded the Helen Doria Arts in the Park Award by the Arts Alliance Illinois.

The Village and the Community Park District continue to enjoy a solid working relationship. As a result of our collaborative efforts, service to our residents is enhanced and tax payer dollars are maximized. The District partners with the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments regularly on the operation of events, maintenance of facilities and sharing of equipment. This intergovernmental cooperation reduces both operational and capital costs, benefitting the residents of La Grange Park.

La Grange Park residents also benefit from another exceptional amenity, the La Grange Park Public Library. In August, Kate Buckson joined the Library as its Executive Director. Kate came to the Library from the Westmont Public Library, where she worked for over 10 years working her way up from a public service assistant to Assistant Director.

The Board of Trustees and staff at La Grange Park Library had an eventful year as they celebrated their 40th anniversary. In honor of the original 1975 bookmobile that stopped around town when the library was first formed, the staff rented a bookmobile and toured La Grange Park the week of June 14-20. Other fun events took place during anniversary week, including movies, book discussions, craft presentations, and a final 1970s themed “birthday” party with disco music, dancing, and cake. The Library is grateful for the support of the community these past four decades and the staff looks forward to serving residents for many years to come!

Looking ahead, the Library plans to unveil an updated website this year which will focus on improved searching, pleasing aesthetics, and more robust content for teens and children. The staff will also tackle building issues that were investigated last year and begin the initial steps to update the 25 year old facility and fix structural damage and deterioration. Staff continually strives to meet the needs and wants of modern users with new electronic services like free downloadable music, movies, magazines, and books. Dozens of computers are available for public use along with nearly 100,000 physical items to choose from. Residents are encouraged to sign up for a library card and make use of the many valuable resources the library offers every day.

One of the ways the Library Board and Staff plan for the future is by asking for feedback from our residents. In the coming months, the Library will offer tax payers an opportunity

to share their thoughts on the Library, engage with staff on a variety of community needs, and collaborate on ideas for the future. Stay tuned for opportunities to have your voice heard and participate in the planning process.

As you have heard this evening, there are many exciting things happening throughout our Village. The reasons that so many of us love to call La Grange Park home are evident all around us, thanks to the efforts of many of you. Our community continues to benefit from the leadership provided by the Village Board, the expertise of our Village staff, the passion of our local business community and the dedication and commitment of our residents. For that, I extend my sincere appreciation to all of you. La Grange Park is a community of neighbors and together we can build a brighter and more sustainable future for our community.