

TO: Members of the Finance and Audit Committee
Sup. Lynne DeBruin

FR: Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker

DT: Thursday, October 11, 2007

RE: Parks Budget for 2008

My county budget proposal for 2008 is better for the parks than the 2007 budget. In total, our plan will provide nearly 20,000 MORE hours of labor in the parks on an annual basis. That impact becomes even larger when you realize that the parks system will be able to move most of those hours to the primetime of parks usage by the public (spring, summer and early fall).

In addition, we invest more than \$1.1 million in new equipment to provide more effective and efficient maintenance of the parks system. This is part of our \$12.9 million investment in parks infrastructure in the 2008 capital budget proposal.

Finally, Supervisors who complain about the status of the parks in 2007 should remember that a majority of the members of the County Board voted to restore similar full-time positions in the budget last fall, but only provided funding for 25% of those positions. This was the primary reason I vetoed the entire budget last year.

In other words, the budget in 2007 for the parks system is entirely the budget passed by the County Board. It is a testament to the hard work of the parks staff that they were able to get as much done as they did this year considering the budget given to them by the County Board.

Now some will note that the remaining 75% of funding was to come from the settlement of employee contracts, but that was not enough to cover the gap. I warned everyone last fall and it is interesting to see how short memories are on this subject.

Bottom-line: please do not short change the parks system again. If your main objective is to restore full-time, year-round jobs, be honest about the costs and put in the tax levy needed, but if your main objective is to restore greatness to the parks, approve our plan and put nearly 20,000 more hours of labor into the parks system.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.