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Harford County Streamlines Access to Hundreds of Parks & Recreation Opportunities

BEL AIR, Md., (Aug. 30, 2018) - Finding your happy place just got easier in Harford County. The Harford County Department of Parks & Recreation has streamlined its online services to help citizens find activities, register for programs and make payments more conveniently than ever before. The new services are now accessible from the county government's website and free mobile app.

An improved search feature saves time with results that can be filtered by programs for families, youth, adults or seniors; by types of activities, and even by the day of the week activities are offered.

Parks and recreation/nature centers can be searched by location, and by available keywords or "tags" for amenities such as dog parks, gymnasiums and basketball courts. For each facility, a photo of the park entrance or the front of the building is displayed along with the address. Subpages provide details on each amenity at that location, including community meeting rooms. Convenient tabs also help users find fitness room memberships, volunteer opportunities, and outdoor facilities available for reservations/rentals. Beginning in January 2019, online reservations/rentals will also be available for some facilities.

"Harford County has hundreds of opportunities to have fun and stay fit through our parks and recreation programs," County Executive Barry Glassman said. "We want to make it easier for citizens and visitors of all ages and abilities to find and enjoy them."

To sign up for programs, users follow a few simple steps to set up an account that lets them manage activities seamlessly, from registration through to confirmation. When fees are necessary, participants can use the secure online payment system and receive an automatic receipt. Those without computer access can still register for programs by visiting their local Parks & Recreation office during business hours.

Account holders in the new system can link to their social media accounts and opt-in to receive email or text alerts for emergency announcements, courtesy messages and upcoming events. Busy parents will appreciate being able to manage multiple activities for the whole family from a single account.

“In addition to the convenience for our citizens, these new features will help us be more efficient and responsive to their needs,” Harford County Director of Parks & Recreation Kathy Burley said. “For example, we can quickly see which programs are most popular, or where we may have a gap in serving a particular age group, and expand programs accordingly. Also, citizens can more easily see what we offer and let us know what they would like to have added.”

Rec council activities in Harford County are overseen by separate nonprofit organizations that are linked on the county website, but are not operated by Harford County Parks & Recreation and therefore are not under the new system.

Following a soft launch on August 6, early users have reported that they appreciate being able to sign up for multiple programs at once, and the option to pay online and manage individual and family activities through one account.

For more information or to set up an account, please visit <http://www.harfordcountymd.gov/225/Parks-Recreation>.

The new online features for Parks & Recreation follow a complete redesign of the county website www.harfordcountymd.gov in October 2015 and launch of the free HarCo Mobile app in December 2017. Download instructions for the mobile app are available at <https://bit.ly/2BSEwS2>.

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