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For Immediate Release

### **Professional Excellence Recognized at IAPD/IPRA Annual Conference**

La Grange IL– On January 24, 2025, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) honored Jim Rogers, Executive Director at the Elmhurst Park District with the IPRA Professional of the Year Award, for his commitment and excellent service to parks and recreation in Illinois. Mr. Rogers was recognized during the IAPD/IPRA Awards Program at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights Conference, held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

The IPRA Professional of the Year Award is an honor presented to an individual with more than eight years of full-time service, who has made a major contribution to the park, recreation and conservation profession, and someone who consistently goes above and beyond the call of duty.

With 30 years of service at Elmhurst Park District, Jim Rogers has transformed recreational opportunities, improved accessibility, and elevated quality of life. His leadership on three strategic plans has driven achievements like the \$1.8 million Wilder Park Conservatory renovation and the Salt Creek Greenway Trail connection.

Under Jim’s guidance, the district has developed award-winning facilities, implemented sustainability initiatives, and earned accolades like the Governor’s Sustainability Award. His financial stewardship has saved taxpayers \$3.9 million in grants, and his partnerships have expanded services for individuals with disabilities.

As Elmhurst embarks on its \$90 million Elevate Elmhurst Parks plan, Jim’s vision continues to shape the future. We are proud to honor his outstanding leadership and lasting impact!

‘On behalf of IPRA, I want to congratulate Jim on being recognized by his peers with this award for his long-time leadership and significant contributions to the profession,’ Suzi Wirtz, IOM, IPRA Executive Director. ‘Jim is forward-thinking, progressive and looks to make an impact— which clearly he has done, evidenced by his long list of accolades. We are proud to have him as



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a member to continue to help advancing this important profession, leading by example and paving the way for the next generation.'

A complete list of IPRA Award winners is available on the IPRA website, [ILipra.org](http://ILipra.org).

Established in 1944, the Illinois Park & Recreation Association (IPRA) serves over 3,000 park, recreation, and conservation professionals throughout the state, and is a national leader in providing premier education, networking, and resources. For more information about IPRA, its board and mission, please visit the IPRA website: [www.ILipra.org](http://www.ILipra.org).

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