



All-America City



2005 ANNUAL REPORT

CITY
OF
WILLMAR

Willmar



All-America City



2005

City Attorney
City Clerk-Treasurer
Community Ed & Recreation
Cultural Liaison
Finance
Fire
Planning & Development Services
Police
Public Works



Annual Report

Lifelong Learning · Community Involvement · Efficient Use of Resources

2005

2005

Annual Report

Willmar Community Education & Recreation

Report includes:

- Message from the Director
- Mission
- Advisory Council
- Coordinator's Reports
- Financial Statement

Mayor Heitke & Members of the Council;

It is a pleasure to report on the past years WCER programming information. 2005 was another banner year in Willmar and our department was certainly thrilled to be a part of the many wonderful things that took place in our "All America City". Highlighting the summer for LeAnne Freeman and myself was the trip to Atlanta for the process that ultimately came to us being named an All America City! We learned a lot about our city and fellow citizens who represented our community in this process.

In 2004-05, WCER programs had over 22,713 enrollments in 1,650 plus programs. These programs included summer camps, reading and math tutoring, swimming, youth and adult enrichment and recreation, computer training, and senior citizens' programs. In addition to all these programs our department handles the facility use within the community and 2005 was again a busy year related to facilities and we anticipate the same in 2006. I would be remiss in not addressing our biggest change for 2005, which was the retirement of long-time recreation supervisor Dave Gort and the hiring of his replacement, Nick Thompson.

At the council retreat in 2005 the council directed WCER staff to take the lead on three projects they wanted addressed in 2005.

- * Soccer Field Project
- * Senior Meal Site at Senior Center
- * 5-10 Year Park Plan

All of these items were completed and reported to various committees for consideration.

The following pages will contain many reports from program coordinators highlighting our year. Please contact me directly at 320-231-8494 if you have any questions or comments about the information in this report.

*Steve Brisendine,
Director of Community Education & Recreation*



**Willmar
Community**
Education & Recreation



The Mission

of the Willmar Community Education & Recreation Department is to generate, support, and encourage life-long learning opportunities in areas of education, personal growth and leisure activities.

Willmar Community Education and Recreation programs evolve to meet the needs of area residents and surrounding communities through collaboration and non-duplication of services.

Steve Brisendine, Director

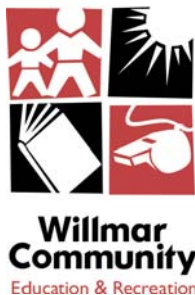
- Tammy Rudningen
- Veronica Collins
- Rob Baumgard
- Lynette Christenson

- Janet Flick
- Becky Sorenson
- Joanna Schrupp
- Kevin Madsen
- Colleen Ruby

- Ann Trochlil
- Nick Thompson
- Jodi Wambeke
- LeAnne Freeman
- Ann Rislov

Advisory Council Members

Steve Sharstrom; Chair	Dewey Bock
Owen Antil	Tori Leitch
Andy Bjur	Raul Vazquez
Eric Setrum	Edel Fernandez
Marilyn Bolin	Hibo Ashour
Ron Christianson	Anita Nelson
Mike Carlson	Brandt Haglund



WCER is community-based and consumer-driven. Involvement of community members in the process is essential. The Advisory Council is responsible for seeing that Community Education & Recreation programs serve the interests and concerns of the community. The Advisory Council consists of members who live, work or attend school in the Willmar area community. Council members represent several different age groups, neighborhoods, organizations and agencies in the community.

Coordinator's Reports

Dorothy Olson Aquatic Center



The summer of 2005 brought us our first **full** season at the pool. Because we were open a full season, we were able to collect valuable data. Some of the data that we collected was:

- *We had over **14,000 people** come and use the facility!*
- *Our best week of the season was the week of the SonShine Music Festival. Each day we went over the 500 patron mark with one day topping out at 691.*

Interesting Information:

- Mountain Dew and water were the top sellers in beverages. Freeze pops were once again the top seller with nachos and Snickers right behind.

Overall the season went well. We learned that when the weather is cool (75 or below), the numbers drop dramatically. When it is hot and humid, it is the place to be. The most important concern that we have as a staff is the safety of the swimmers. I'm proud to say that the staff we have at the pool is top notch and professional. We pride ourselves on safety.

Senior Citizens

2005 was a busy year for senior programs and the Willmar Area Community Senior Center. From a facility standpoint we discussed the meal site issue at length and determined it would be great to have that program at the Center, but 2005 was not the time to make such a move. Our facility needed some enhancements with the rooftop units and other items starting to show their age. We also painted the inside of the facility and put in new flooring in the Burlington Northern Room.

The biggest highlight is working with seniors and kids together. Our intergenerational programs such as Jefferson Kids," Pumpkin Patch Carnival and working with the Girls Scouts always provides seniors the chance to grandparents for the day.

Our very own performing group; L.A.A.F. players (laugh a lot after fifty) have performed at many functions. Not only at the Center but other senior living locations. They have become so popular that they will be performing again in 2006 for various activities.

Coordinator's Reports

Civic Center Arena

Floor Activities and Revenues: The Civic Center Arena continues in its purpose of meeting the wide range of community needs as a multi-purpose facility providing indoor ice skating and a large event and exhibition space. The facility overall, attempts to provide a well-balanced blend of rentals, public options and access to most groups during ice season, and works to maintain a balance between ice and dry floor. Scheduling ice time between user groups and using maximum available time for promoting a healthy list of dry floor events requires considerable cooperation from all renters.

Dry floor activities continue to fill most weekends in March and April, with the Sonshine Festival the largest single event. Other dry floor events continue to represent a variety of endeavors, both for private business activity or community use. Dry floor revenue increased by \$8,015.08 from 2004.

Total ice usage by major renters increased by 347 hours for 2005. The summer hockey program returned for its third consecutive session and revenue for concessions and vending, showed increases in 2005. High school hockey game attendance declined even though acceptance of reduced priced activity passes was promoted for the first time.

Operation and Maintenance Issues: The Civic Center maintenance staff replaced both compressors at the Civic Center building with used re-built compressors. The old compressors had done their duty for 25 years and their break-down was anticipated. All the compressors in both buildings are of the same model so interchange of parts is convenient. One of the old compressors will be re-built to use as a back-up unit, the other one is used for parts. The staff acquired valuable knowledge in compressor repair and operation during this time.

The reduced staff situation from 2004 was relieved somewhat by the hire of a two-thirds time maintenance person, Justin DeLeeuw. Justin's other obligation is maintenance of the Aquatic Center during the summer months. The acquisition of the Blue Line building, which added 28,000 square feet of maintainable structure, has changed the work assignment from maintenance/projects to strictly maintenance. Large summer projects such as painting locker rooms, replacing flooring material, or adding needed capital improvements cannot be done with only one maintenance staff person. Therefore, overall condition of the 26 year old facility is slowly declining, and we are faced to contract for project services at a much higher cost.

Summary: In summary, 2005 was an excellent year in dry floor production, with the Sonshine Festival continuing to grow in attendance and revenue generation. The increase in ice usage by all groups reflected the need for more and better ice time rentals which is being satisfied by the addition of the Blue Line building. Of particular note is the commitment by Willmar Youth Hockey to use 1100 hours per year. For this commitment a reduced rate of \$85.00 per hour was granted. Of concern is the struggling numbers of participants in youth hockey and figure skating. We are also waiting for more of the City's minority youth to discover the fun and recreational value of ice skating. Tournaments continue to have difficulty in filling, and an assessment of factors contributing to this decline should be made.

The curling program which was offered by Community Ed/Rec in 2004 has grown considerably in popularity and numbers. Currently, 55 members are involved with the club, men and women, ages 19 to 68. Additional growth is anticipated, with plans to increase equipment by one more curling sheet, and to move to two nights of curling. Of particular interest is the curling sessions offered by staff to the Senior High physical education classes. This ice activity requires no experience in skating, so all students, even those whose culture does not include ice skating can use the Civic Center ice for this enjoyable game. Inquiries into starting a Junior Curling program (ages 13-18) are high with at least 40 students expressing interest at this time. It is imperative that additional improvements be made to the Blue Line Arena, namely insulation, de-humidification, and building heat so that curling can be moved to that facility for the two nights needed.

The facility continues to host a variety of trade shows and events that serve to draw visitors to the community and translate into an excellent economic benefit for the City far beyond funds raised through rentals. The un-documented amount of economic benefit goes beyond hotel/motel, restaurants, service stations, retail and fast food establishments.

Coordinator's Reports

Civic Center Arena (continued)

REVENUE SERVICE CHARGES	2004 \$ AMOUNT	2005 \$ AMOUNT

Miscellaneous	\$ 1,540.35	\$ 1,094.66
Admissions	\$.00	\$.00
Tournament Fees (Commissions)	\$ 1,257.80	\$ 2,560.80
Skating Programs	\$ 780.00	\$ 940.00
Ice Arena Rent	\$118,803.50	\$138,102.79
Dry Floor Events	\$ 52,976.90	\$ 60,991.98
Skate Rentals/ Skate Sharpening	\$ 903.27	\$ 1,150.24
Open Skating Public Fees	\$ 1,546.49	\$ 2,170.41
Advertising Sales	\$ 7,164.56	\$ 5,043.72
Vending Machine	\$ 10,756.88	\$ 13,324.80
Concessions	\$ 44,564.15	\$ 47,890.09
Hockey Games	\$ 17,489.00	\$ 15,362.00
Accessories Sales	\$ 70.43	\$ 60.09

TOTAL SERVICE CHARGES	\$257,853.33	\$288,691.58

Coordinator's Reports

Early Childhood Education

September 2005 brought the start of a new year at **Cardinal Kids Preschool**. 20 students were enrolled in Cardinal Kids for the beginning of the new school year. The program, which serves four year olds in their last year before kindergarten, is an inclusion program for students from the Early Childhood Special Education department learning along with students from the community. Students receive a **top-notch** educational experience from certified teachers, specialists and staff. The educational piece runs from 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with before and after school care being provided by Kids Kastle childcare program. The program coordinator is Ann Trochlil. We have had a successful start to our program and look forward to continuing to serve families in Willmar and the surrounding areas.



Early Childhood Family Programs (ECFP) continues to provide exceptional educational and support services to children in families in Willmar.

For 2005 our **Early Childhood Family Education** program saw over 680 families that were involved in one or more of the 50 + classes, special events and open house. Even though our '**ECFE on Wheels**' has been significantly cut we still continue to see several families at WIC Clinics, Rice Hospital, Paz Y Esperanza, Women's Shelter, Jennie-O Turkey store and through home visits. **The Family Literacy** program is growing bigger and better each year! For 2005 this program is at maximum capacity with 13 adults and 16 children. There has also been collaboration with Public Health and Heartland Community Action to offer 4 sessions of **Incredible Years** which is a parent program designed to strengthen parenting skills and prevent behavior problems in children 3 to 10 years of age. **Incredible Years** has seen over 40 families in 2005 and will grow for the 2006 year. **Kids Together Preschool** has expanded by providing parents with the option of 2, 3 or 4 day a week, programming. For the 2005-2006 school year there are 89 children enrolled up from 66 in 2004-2005.



The **Week of the Young Child**, which is April 2-8, is always an exciting time for us! For the past 5 years Washington Learning Center Early Childhood Staff along with Ridgewater College Student Senate and Kandiyohi County IEIC has provided the families in our community with **Family Fun Night**. This event sees over 700 families with young children each year.

Coordinator's Reports

Youth Recreation Leagues

Another successful season happened in youth *football* this past fall. One new aspect to the league was that we played more games in New London and Morris. This was to help off set the cost of the entry fee for the out of town teams and to cut down on the travel of the out of town teams.



At this time we are currently looking at adding Litchfield to the league. Depending on the number of teams that Litchfield brings in, we could have a 12-14 team league. We did something different with youth *baseball* in grades 3-6 this pass summer. We joined together with NLS and Atwater to form a youth baseball league. We had the 3rd and 4th graders combined and the 5th and 6th graders combined. We had a total of 5 teams in the 3rd and 4th grade and 4 in the 5th and 6th just from Willmar. This was an in-



crease from the previous years. This league was just what Willmar needed. Kids really enjoyed the new format for baseball. As with football, we had another great season in *wrestling*. We had over 65 wrestlers in the program aging from kindergarten to 6th grade. We had several go on to the state elementary tourney. Doug Mittag has done a great job helping us develop this program, and we are glad that he continues to lead the way for others.

Youth Recreation

2005-2006 was a decent ice season. Ice quality and rink attendance was down slightly in the



earlier part of the season due to weather, but the end of the season brought large numbers of skaters nearly every day. The rinks stayed open through February. Open gyms at the Auditorium, Junior High and Senior High have also been fairly well attended with a regular crowd.

Summer continues to be the busiest time of the year for youth recreation. **Playground Adventures** gets kids back into the parks. Miller, Hilltop, Rice and Lincoln were the locations for Playground Adventures. Summer Staff kept kids busy with structure activities such as; kickball, dodge ball, & whiffle ball. Special events such as Splash Fest, Survivor Park & Game Day were big hits, along with the finale of going to the Dorothy Olson Aquatic Center.

Our department had its first annual **Pumpkin Patch Carnival** in October. There were over 250 children participating in carnival booth, costume parades, the great pumpkin design contest and tours of the spooktacle locker room. This activity was a great intergenerational program as well, with fifteen seniors helping staff with this event. A big thank you goes to these seniors for there help setting up, running booths, judging costumes and cleaning up. **THANK YOU!**

Coordinator's Reports

Youth Enrichment

The past year has been a busy one! The biggest change was the addition of teaching the high school Youth Service class at Willmar Senior High. Nearly 100 eleventh and twelfth grade students enrolled for the 05-06 school year. These students learn while they volunteer in our pre K- 8 classrooms. The classroom teachers enjoy the extra hand in the classroom and the Youth Service students benefit from the many learning opportunities that occur. Nearly **15,000 volunteer hours** will take place during these three terms.



Prairie Fire Theatre returned to Willmar for the ninth year in a row to put together two successful shows. The popular shows involved about **150 local youth**. The touring actors were also able to visit all of the first and second grade classrooms in the district as a result of a cooperative effort with the Willmar Area Arts Council.

Funding from a **21st Century Learning Center Grant** and a grant from **PACT 4** have made several before and after school programs available to many kids at all four elementary schools. These programs promote positive self esteem and academic success for all participants. A collaborative effort continues with Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center that allows for several outdoor hands on learning experiences for children and their families.

The **13th Annual Rural Youth Leadership Conference** for students in grades 6-8 was a huge success with maximum enrollment and excellent participation. The Rural Youth Leaders continue to do a variety of “random acts of kindness” at the 6th –8th grade levels. Their favorite project was designing and creating the “Celebrate Diversity” mural that now hangs in the Roosevelt School cafeteria. As a STRIVE mentor, I was able to see another student graduate. This mentor program has proved to be quite valuable to students who struggle academically and are at risk of not graduating.

Academy Camp was attended by 133 students from seven area school districts. All feedback indicated that the students and teachers enjoyed this Gifted and Talented summer program. Popular classes included “Journey to Japan” and “Chess: The Game of Champions.” Summer band and orchestra continue to be popular summer offerings. The Junior High Students particularly enjoy marching at Valley Fair as the grand finale of their summer lessons. Athletic camps are also popular options for our youth. Volleyball, Tennis and Basketball continue to be well attended. The Heart & Sole Running Club is a popular option for students in grades 4-6. They love learning about health and fitness while they prepare to participate in the Foot Lake 4! General adult enrichment offerings continue to evolve as the needs arise in the community.

Coordinator's Reports

School Age Care

During the summer of 2005 Kids Kastle had a variety of experiences on and off site. With the addition of the Cardinal Kids pre school program, we made some adjustments to accommodate numbers. While serving approximately **80 participants per day** we made some adjustments. Our Pre-K thru 1st grades was in a kindergarten room while our 2nd –6th grades were in another. This seemed to split up the numbers as well as we were able to have more age appropriate activities for each group.

Some of our afternoons were spent off site on field trips. Some of our trips included going swimming at the Montevideo pool and enjoying our own pool in Willmar as well. The students also got to experience some climbing out at Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. Kids Kastle went out to PWELC to experience the challenge course. We did things from team building activities to climbing the 40-foot, 3 sided outdoor wall. All the kids had a great time. Other activities we participated in include: **Prairie Horizons Farm** located by Benson. This gave us the opportunity to see and learn about the animals--the cattle and the chickens, the wildlife and the crops, the soil and the water, and all of the plants that grow on the native prairie. We also went to **Glacial Acres**, we learned about how fruit is planted, picked and sent to local businesses for re-sale!



Kids Kastle is staying busy throughout the 2005/06 school year as well. We are located at Kennedy, Jefferson and Lincoln. We provide care for approximately **145 children per day** throughout all three sites. Our Lincoln site doubled in numbers this school year as well. Last year our Lincoln site opened, housing approximately 12 students, this year we have approximately 25!

Kids Kastle also offers all day care for non-school days. During the non school days we offer on and off site opportunities. This winter we took our 2nd thru 6th graders sledding at Ridgewater College. When we returned to the site, we enjoyed hot chocolate and cookies! The Pre-K thru 1st graders got to enjoy a few games of bowling at the KEC in Willmar. All in all, we are as busy as ever with a number of students and a variety of different ages! We are looking forward to summer, as it is just around the corner!

Coordinator's Reports

Adult Recreation



Late 2005 brought a change to WCER. Dave Gort retired after 30+ years, which gave me the opportunity to take over his duties. Overall I think it has been a smooth transition. Adult winter sports numbers were consistent with past years. There were 78 volleyball teams and 28 basketball teams during the winter season and 79 softball teams during the summer season. A

portion of my responsibilities I have been focusing on expanding is the Adaptive Recreation opportunities offered. In the last brochure I tripled the number of classes/activities offered and hope to do the same with the following brochures.

Adult Basic Education

Willmar's Adult Basic Education Program continues to grow in numbers of learners and the number of hours learners attend class. This trend mirrors the educational needs of the world of work here in Willmar, as in the nation. Entry-level jobs require a GED or a High School Diploma. The Workforce Investment Act and Welfare Reform play huge role in policy change from the federal level to the classroom. We are ever mindful of how federal funding and the learner's achievement goals are met. Staff and learners are linked in setting achievable goals to help learners in the workforce. Willmar's ABE program was awarded a Workforce Investment Act grant from Central Minnesota Workforce Investment Board. This grant focuses on English Language Learners in the Workplace. A collaborative effort with Jennie-O Turkey Store and Willmar's English as A Second Language staff provide 'on site' classes to nearly thirty workers. The eight-week program will be offered through out the year to a new group of learners each time. Adult learners find the Adult Basic Education Center a place where they can learner how to use a computer, how to pass the written driver's examination, and how to become a U.S. Citizen. Adults can learn how to pass the Civic portion as well as the oral examination to the U. S. Citizenship Test. Learners study for the GED, brush up on math and writing skills to get ready to enroll in college. Some learners want to learn to type or how to navigate the World Wide Web. English Language learners come from all over the world. Presently, we have learners from Russia, China, Japan, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, El Salvador, Columbia, Brazil, Somali and Senegal. Learners learn just how important learning English is when they become a friend with other classmates. Learning English is the key to their future and Willmar's Adult Basic Education Program is fortunate to play an active role in their success.



Schools and Parks Belong to the Community...



District 347 Schools and Willmar Parks are actually school/community centers, available day, evening, and weekend hours for the community to use and enjoy. Facilities include classrooms, conference rooms, kitchens, gymnasiums, fine art auditoriums, libraries, pools, park shelters and ball fields.



Willmar
Community
Education & Recreation