



City of Harrisonburg
Public Information Office
409 South Main Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801
540-432-8931 (office)

For Immediate Release
March 1, 2016

Contact: Mary-Hope Vass, Public Information Officer
540.432.8931
MaryHope.Vass@HarrisonburgVA.gov

Director of Parks and Recreation Plans for Retirement

Harrisonburg, Va. – The City Manager’s office announces the retirement of the director of Parks and Recreation.

Lee Foerster is making plans to retire after serving the city of Harrisonburg for nearly 40 years.

“It has been a pleasure working with Lee over the years,” said Kurt Hodgen, city manager. “His career and experience with the city is impressive, knowing he started as a seasonal employee while working his way through college. The knowledge and skills he developed early on have allowed him to grow the department to an award-winning system that provides high level programming and a variety of park amenities.”

Mr. Foerster started his career in the 70s as a member of the mowing crew, while working his way through college. He graduated from Bridgewater College with a bachelor’s degree in health and physical education and then went on to earn a master’s of arts in education and athletic administration from James Madison University (JMU).

Starting out as an athletic supervisor in 1976, it didn’t take long for Mr. Foerster to begin moving up the ranks and he was promoted to athletic director in 1980 and parks superintendent in 1990.

In 2001, Mr. Foerster was then named director of Parks and Recreation to oversee all parks facilities, recreational programs, and staff. Under his leadership, the department and opportunities for recreation activities and programs has expanded to benefit the citizens of this community, supported by a budget of over \$5 million and a staff of 46 full-time employees.

“It has been my pleasure and privilege to serve as an employee of the city for almost 40 years,” explained Lee Foerster, director of Parks and Recreation. “I am appreciative of the opportunities given to me and equally appreciative to have served under the past and present administration and councils throughout my career. This support has given our department the resources to continue, improve, and expand upon the recreation programs and park facilities serving the city.”

Under Mr. Foerster’s leadership a comprehensive Parks and Recreation master plan was developed in 2003 and updated in 2013, which outlines policies, programs, and actions that would need to be implemented to ensure the system continued to meet the needs of the community. The plan provides a framework for new programs, facilities, and funding in the short and long term.

-MORE-

PRESS RELEASE: DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION PLANS FOR RETIREMENT
PAGE 2

The mission of the department is to enhance the quality of life and meet the needs of every citizen by providing comprehensive leisure service opportunities. The department's mission is also to develop and maintain a safe system of open spaces and public facilities for the use and enjoyment by the community.

Mr. Foerster's retirement will be effective June 30. In the coming weeks, the director position will be posted [online](#) and open to accept applications.



***The Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Department** manages 12 parks, Dream Come True Playground and numerous other playgrounds, a skate park, bike trails, soccer complex, softball and baseball fields, a dog park, and two pools. The largest park in the City of Harrisonburg is Hillendale Park that encompasses 74 acres. More information about the parks can be found online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/parks-recreation.*



###