

STEVE CARD  
Director of Recreation  
FRANCES KNOWLES  
Administrative Secretary  
KEVIN THOMAS  
Recreation Specialist  
RUTH ATKINSON  
Receptionist



345 EAST WALNUT STREET  
JESUP, GEORGIA 31546  
(912) 427-5915 OR 5916  
FAX: (912) 427-5906

## **Survey underway to assess recreation needs and goals Input on future of county parks sought**

Should our county parks be expanded to include a community center, gymnasium or skate park? Should the recreation department offer after school programs, dance lessons or more exercise programs? Does your family use the parks? If not, why? These are questions the county is asking all residents of Wayne County, beginning with a survey in this week's paper. The survey will also be sent home with school system students. Finding out what the public wants for recreation is the first step in developing a more refined master plan of our facilities and programs and figuring out what is needed and what we can afford, said Recreation Director Steve Card. "We don't want to spend money on it if people are not going to use it," said Card. He said many facilities we currently operate are over 40 years old and have been outgrown by the community. Building for the future will not only enhance the quality of life for existing residents but could also have a positive economic impact for years to come.

Card said until the results of the survey are compiled, he isn't making any speculation on where the direction may ultimately go, nor is he placing any limits of what can be considered. He said if the responses and numbers warrant major expansions and/or renovations, we may likely have to look at funding avenues outside of general county funds and grants to possibly include portions of future SPLOST monies. He said it is important for everyone who wishes to be heard on the future of the recreation facilities and programming here to complete a survey. "Community input is essential," he said. "I know what I feel is necessary, but I really want to get input from a true cross section of citizens. As public servants, we're here to serve the citizens." Card said as people ponder the options, they may want to envision a recreation department offering more than just team sports. There is a national trend in recreation programs moving toward classes, lessons and other non-sport activities, he said. "There is a move away from just balls and bats," he said. He said based on the population here and offerings from other departments around the state, some programs and events for senior citizens will be a highly desired addition to the recreation lineup. However, Card said the Wayne County Recreation Department is limited on what we can currently offer due to lack of dedicated facilities. "We can't facilitate many of the non-team sports type of events without a facility," he said. Even to offer basketball, the county program has to arrange practices and games in the school's gyms and work around the school basketball schedules. We have been very

fortunate that the school system has been very easy to work with to accommodate our needs and allow us to carry out the basketball program. The parks director said it is important to complete a long-range plan before anything is built. "The first goal is to develop a total plan," he said. "We're not just going to ask for money to build something here, there and everywhere, like hopscotch."

Card said Wayne County has a wonderful base of volunteers who will gladly coach, great kids participating, good parent support, but we want to make sure we are offering programs that span many areas to suite the diverse recreational needs. Card said he will present the results of the survey as soon as they are completed. For any plan, Card said the county will prepare a budget which clearly shows what will be built. "Before we seek any funding sources, we will show exactly what it is for," he said.

The surveys will appear in The Press-Sentinel, be available at the Recreation Department, The Chamber of Commerce and local businesses and also available on the county website at [www.co.wayne.ga.us](http://www.co.wayne.ga.us). Questionnaire is due back to the Recreation Department by March 12<sup>th</sup>.