



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GARY HEBL
46TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
Representative Gary Hebl/608-266-7678

PRESS RELEASE

REP. HEBL ANNOUNCES \$25,000 GRANT FOR FIREMAN'S PARK IN THE PRAIRIE

MADISON - State Representative Gary Hebl (D-Sun Prairie) announced Tuesday the budget will include \$25,000 in funding for "Fireman's Park in the Prairie," a handicap-accessible playground on the City of Sun Prairie's southeast side.

The mission of the Firemen's Park in the Prairie is to establish a nearly 100 percent handicapped-accessible play environment that is physically and mentally challenging to children of all abilities, which is designed, built and maintained by every segment of the community. The playground in the park will give the children who are wheelchair bound, blind and hearing impaired, not only the ability to actually play but to play in and amongst children of all abilities, organizers of the park said.

"I am so pleased the State of Wisconsin could support this truly remarkable and worthwhile effort," Hebl said. "Fireman's Park in the Prairie is a park unlike any other anywhere else in Dane County. This park will allow children of all abilities to play together and bring families from around the area to see how we value *all* children - regardless of their ability - in Sun Prairie."

Rebecca Ketelsen and Anita Holcomb, organizers of the project, said the state grant would pay for three main elements: re-paying Chase Lumber Co. for the lumber used in the construction of the park's playground equipment, construction of a new parking lot and renovation of the park's bathrooms to make them handicap accessible.

"I am ecstatic," Holcomb said upon hearing of the additional funds from the state "It means so much to the people in this area."

The 12,000 square-foot playground will be complete with a two-story pirate ship, giant tree house and a music area. Americans with Disabilities Association-approved ramps and ground cover take children to every piece of playground equipment in the park.

"It is projects like this that make Sun Prairie such a great place to live," Hebl said. "I

would also like to thank state Sen. Mark Miller for his hard work in making sure this project was funded."

According to organizers, total cost of the project is \$168,000, and so far, the park has raised nearly \$100,000 in donations from groups such as the Madison Community Foundation, General Casualty, Ritter Insurance Agency, Kwik Trip and many other businesses, groups and individuals.

Both Ketelsen and Holcomb said the fact that this project is receiving funds from the state means the group needs to work even harder to make this park serve all the people of the state. According to the organization's website, a handicapped park built in Janesville receives over 50,000 visitors a year - including bus loads from area schools, and the organizers believe given the fact that Fireman's Park is located in a larger area and is located near interstate highways could mean more than 100,000 visitors from around the area.

"I never would have known these funds were possible without Rep. Hebl's help," Ketelsen said. "I want to thank all the taxpayers of the State of Wisconsin for helping bring like this project to fruition."

BREAKOUTS:

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE:

Make checks payable to:
Fireman's Park in the Prairie
P.O. Box 747
Sun Prairie, WI 53590

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

On the park or on volunteering contact Rebecca Ketelsen at 825-7346.

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