

New Parks and Rec program delivers instant field, event info

By Katherine R. Dougan

With the click of a computer mouse or cell phone, sports participants in Clinton can now opt to stay up-to-date with field conditions for soccer, baseball and softball games, said Parks and Recreation Director Adam Wade.

By a unanimous vote earlier this fall, the Board of Alderman and Mayor Phil Fisher approved a contract between the city and BFAC, a Canton-based communications business. The group text messaging system delivers field and event status updates to those who opt in for notifications.

Previously Parks and Recreation used Remind101; however, when Remind 101 went up to a cost of "\$4 per user and we had over 5,000 users, the annual cost was going to be over \$20,000 instead of \$5,000 for the 5,000 members signed up," City Communications Director Mark Jones said. When the price jumped, Wade began searching for lower-cost options.

"The [new] system allows us to send out mass text messages," Wade explained. "When we have tournaments and events, it allows us to get the word out quickly." The text messaging system from BFAC is the best option for the city. "This was

the best one for us to use and go forward into the future."

The price with BFAC is "\$1,800 annually with unlimited deployments of texts," Jones said. This

price is good for three years.

Alderwoman-at-Large Ricki Garrett said she used the system when she was director of the Mississippi Nurses Association.

"It worked great for conferences and communications. I can certainly recommend this system."

Ward 4 Alderman Keith Perritt said he has used the BFAC communications service for six years, and the price never increased.

The switch to BFAC does require the City to begin anew with their notification list, as the 5,000 contacts cannot be carried over to the new system. However, since Parks and Recreation has email addresses for the soccer, baseball and softball contacts, it won't be difficult for people to set up contact information with BFAC's services.

"Is it possible we could lose those [the contacts] again if we change companies?" Ward 6 Alderman Mike Cashion said. Wade said it is possible, however, going with BFAC is the best option for the City. Not only is the price good, but also BFAC offers good, reliable service.

In order to register for the Field Alerts and Updates, users can text CPRD to 855-785-7996 and follow the instructions to sign up. Or, by reading a Quick Response, or QR code, on a QR code reader application installed on a cell phone, users can sign up that way. The instructions for the sign up, which includes the text telephone number and the QR code, are on the City's website at www.clintonms.org.



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