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News Release

For Immediate Release

Parks Events Economic Impact Estimated at $2 Million

The Springfield-Greene County Park Board has recently wrapped up a two-week stretch of events that demonstrate the economic impact of the countywide parks system and the caliber of events it attracts to the Springfield area. These events brought more than $2 million into the local economy and had a total attendance of more than 50,000.

The slate of events between Oct. 11 and Oct. 24 included:

- A week-long grand opening celebration for the Springfield-Greene County Botanical Center that included dedications, a national symposium, concerts and hands-on educational activities;
- Missouri State High School Athletics Association state championships in golf, tennis and softball;
- One of the largest tournament weekends ever hosted with longtime partner organization Lake Country Soccer;
- A record-setting weekend at the Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park, thanks to its annual Harvest Fest event;
- The 27th annual Halloween Spooktacular at Dickerson Park Zoo

The Parks system saw an approximate attendance of 50,000 patrons and visitors directly related to these activities. It’s worth noting that this total does not include other ongoing parks activities or passive use throughout the countywide system during the two weeks.

Parks Department staff estimates a direct economic impact of more than $2.0 million in non-resident spending during the two-week period. These estimates are based on actual attendance totals compiled by Parks staff and event organizers, coupled with demographic information about whether attendees were overnight visitors, out-of-town commuters or local participants. While local residents are counted in overall attendance numbers, the economic impact is calculated using conservative estimates derived from the Greater Springfield Convention and Visitors Bureau. Get details of the estimated totals for all eight events.

“A strong parks system is an obvious asset to any community in terms of leisure, health and personal enrichment,” said Mayor Jim O’Neal. “Sometimes the economic impact of parks is less obvious to the public. Yet more and more, the impact of our nationally recognized system here in Springfield and Greene County is impossible to deny. For the past 25 years or so that I’ve been involved in public life, I’ve always said that a dynamic parks system is an economic development engine. This just proves it.”

Parks are a significant driving force in the Springfield area economy throughout the calendar year. In 2009, the Park Board estimated more than $4 million was generated in visitor and tourism spending through just 20 Parks athletic events out of several hundred hosted during the year. More than 2.2 million participants and visitors were counted at gates and doors last year, with several thousand more enjoying passive use of a parks system that includes 102 sites and facilities and more than 100 miles of trails.
For more information, contact: Bob Nelson, Public Information Administrator, Springfield-Greene County Park Board, 417-839-2005; or Bob Belote, Assistant Director of Parks, 417-864-1327.