



2024

# ANNUAL REPORT

Forsyth County Parks & Recreation

[parks.forsythco.com](https://parks.forsythco.com)

PO Box 2417, Cumming GA. 30028

(770) 781 - 2215



# About us

In 2024, our department was comprised of 94 full-time, 55 part-time and 117 seasonal positions as well as five (5) parks and recreation board members. The department has an executive team with five (5) divisions.



## MISSION

Working together to enrich the community by providing safe, clean, and inclusive parks and recreation

## VISION

Working together to enrich the community by providing safe, clean, and inclusive parks and recreation

## VALUES

### Health & Safety

Offering opportunities for healthy lifestyles in safe places

### Valued Service

Offering professional consistent and positive interactions with customers

### Accessibility & Inclusions

Ensuring parks, programs and services are available to everyone

### Stewardship & Sustainability

Preserving land and parks through sustainable practices

### Quality

Offering exceptional parks , programs and services

### Innovative

Providing state of the art parks, programs and services

### Fun

Creating memorable experiences through connection and pla

### Community

Fostering collaboration for a thriving community

# Director's Message



It is my pleasure to present the 2024 Annual Report for Forsyth County Parks & Recreation. This year has been one of continued growth, innovation, and recognition as we remained focused on delivering excellent parks and recreation services to our community.

We proudly serve Forsyth County through 30 unique parks—14 active and 16 passive—spanning nearly 3,000 acres and offering everything from trails and athletic fields to inclusive playgrounds, lakefront camping, and natural preserves. Our three recreation centers, miles of greenways, and ever-expanding pickleball courts reflect our commitment to healthy lifestyles, accessibility, and community connection.

Thanks to the dedication of our 94 full-time, 55 part-time, and 117 seasonal staff, our department was honored as both the GRPA District 7 and State Agency of the Year in 2024. We also celebrated individual excellence with two team members receiving GRPA Professional of the Year awards.

Participation in our programs reached over 51,000 residents, with highlights in youth athletics, therapeutic recreation, and special events like Letters from Santa and Veterinary Camp. Our outdoor programs, including the popular Sawnee Mountain Preserve, drew over 31,000 visitors. The department achieved an impressive 38% cost recovery, well above the national average of 24%, reflecting our focus on financial responsibility and service value.



## Kirk Franz

*Director of Forsyth County Parks & Recreation*

Capital improvements in 2024 included a major addition to Central Park Recreation Center, revitalization of Bennett Park, and the expansion of our campground operations through a partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

None of this would be possible without the steadfast support of the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners, our incredible staff, and the residents we proudly serve. Your engagement, trust, and participation are the foundation of our success.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to enhancing the quality of life in Forsyth County through safe, clean, inclusive, and inspiring parks and programs.



## Awards & Recognitions

In 2024, Forsyth County Parks & Recreation was honored with two prestigious awards, recognizing our commitment to excellence, innovation, and service to the community. We were named the District 7 GRPA Agency of the Year and proudly received the 2024 GRPA State Agency of the Year award. These achievements reflect the hard work of our staff, the strength of our programs, and the continued support from our community.

### Carrie Toth

*Natural Resource Supervisor*

*Recipient of 2024 District 7 Parks and Outdoor Professional of the Year award*

### Tim Daniels

*Natural Resource Supervisor*

*Recipient of the GRPA District 7 Facility and Grounds Professional of the Year*



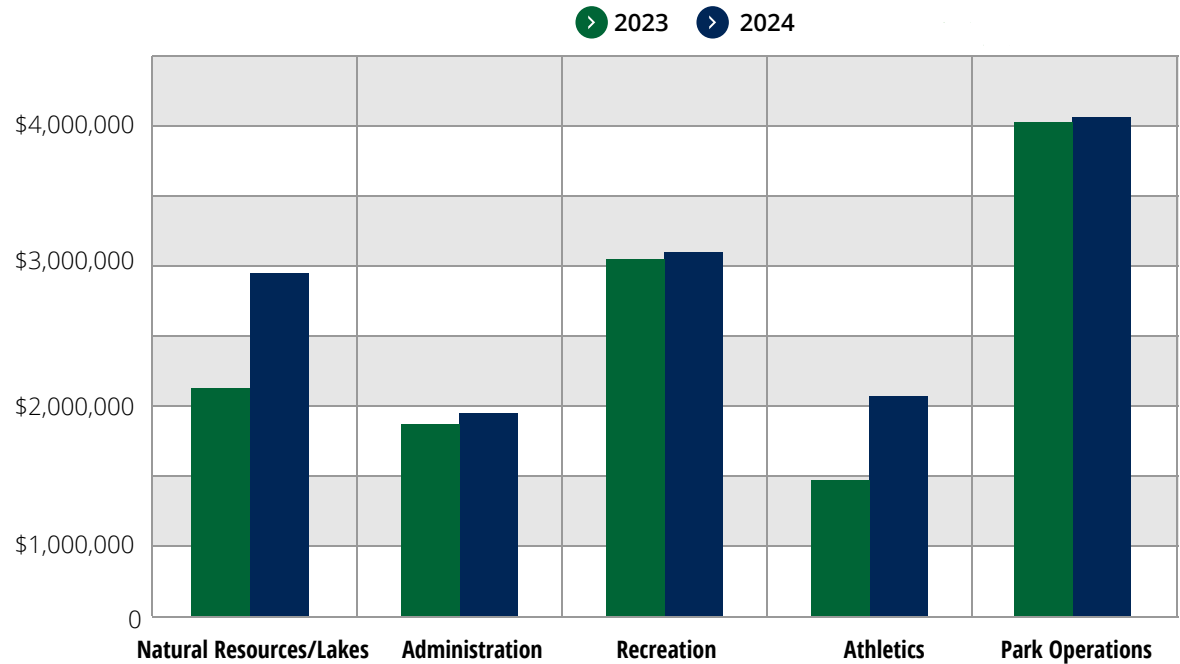
# 2024 Parks & Facilities

- 1 **Bald Ridge Creek Campground**  
4100 Baldrige Park Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 2 **Bennett Park**  
5930 Burruss Mill Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 3 **Big Creek Greenway**  
• 6265 Corland Walk  
• 5259 Union Hill Rd  
• 4110 Carolene Way  
• 5120 Bethelview Rd  
• 4075 Spot Rd
- 4 **Caney Creek Preserve**  
2755 Caley Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 5 **Central Park**  
2300 Keith Bridge Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30040
- 6 **Charleston Park**  
5850 Charleston Park Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 7 **Chattahoochee Pointe**  
5790 Chattahoochee Pointe Dr  
Suwanee, Ga. 30024
- 8 **Coal Mountain Park**  
3560 Settingdown Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30028
- 9 **Denmark Park**  
500 Windy Hill Dr  
Alpharetta, Ga. 30004
- 10 **Ducktown Community Park**  
5895 Heardsville Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30028
- 11 **Eagle's Beak Park**  
8420 Old Federal Rd  
Ballground, Ga. 30107
- 12 **Fowler Park**  
4110 Carolene Way  
Cumming, Ga. 30040
- 13 **Haw Creek Park**  
2205 Echols Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 14 **Joint Venture Park**  
3660 Melody Mizer Ln  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 15 **Lanierland Park**  
6115 Jot-Em-Down Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 16 **Mary Alice Park**  
1820 Mary Alice Park Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 17 **Matt Community Park**  
6555 Wallace Tatum Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30028
- 18 **Midway Park**  
5100 Post Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30040
- 19 **Old Atlanta Park**  
810 Nichols Rd  
Suwanee, Ga. 30024
- 20 **Polo Fields**  
6050 Majors Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30040
- 21 **Poole's Mille Park**  
7725 Poole'd Mill Rd  
Ballground, Ga. 30107
- 22 **Sawnee Campground**  
3200 Buford Dam Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 23 **Sawnee Mountain Park**  
3995 Watson Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30028
- 24 **Sawnee Mountain Preserve**  
• 4075 Spot Rd  
• 2500 Bettis-Tribble Gap Rd  
• 2505 Bettis-Tribble Gap Rd
- 25 **Shady Grove Campground**  
7800 Allyn Lane Memorial Way  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 26 **Sharon Sprngs Park**  
1950 Sharon Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 27 **Six Mile Creek Park**  
6020 Browns Bridge Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 28 **South Forsyth Soccer Complex**  
800 Kemp Rd  
Suwanee, Ga. 30024
- 29 **Windermere Park**  
3355 Windermere Pkwy  
Cumming, Ga. 30041
- 30 **Young Deer Creek Park**  
7300 Heard Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041

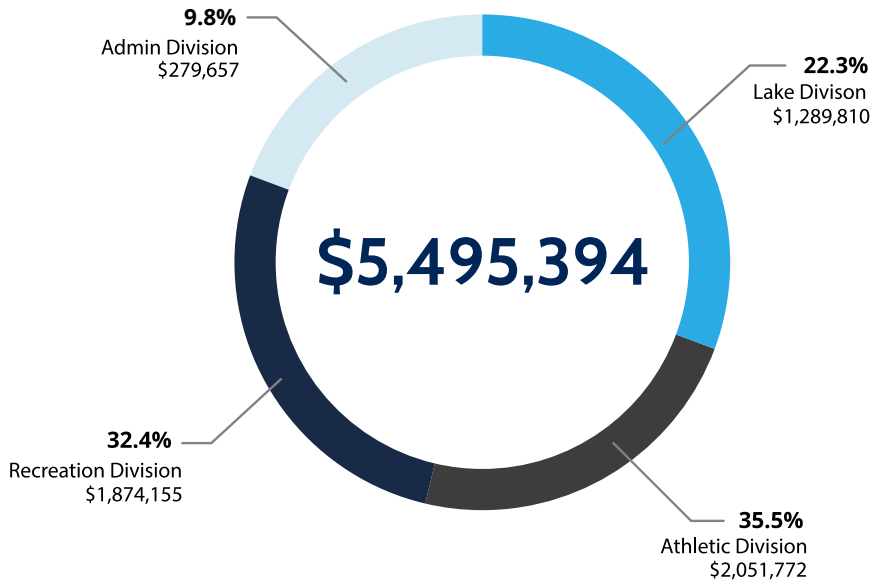
# Department Budget

The 2024 department budget supported the continued growth and success of our recreation programs, community events, and facility operations. Through careful planning and responsible financial management, resources were allocated to enhance program offerings, maintain park spaces, invest in equipment and infrastructure, and support staffing needs. Our budget reflects a commitment to fiscal responsibility while prioritizing community impact, accessibility, and long-term sustainability.

## 2024 Operational Expenses



## 2024 Revenue



## 2024 Operation Budget

**EXPENDITURES: \$14,312,162**  
**REVENUES: \$5,495,394**

### COST RECOVERY

**38%**  
**NRPA national average 24%**

## 2024 Capital Budget

**SPLOST VIII: \$5,534,639**  
**Capital Outlay: \$163,030**  
**Impact Fees: \$2,010,006**  
**Park Bonds: \$605,677**

Funding from SPLOST VIII, Impact Fees, and Park Bond funds are used for creating conceptual park designs, construction plans and actual construction. Capital outlay funds are used for the replacement of equipment and vehicles, land acquisition and general site improvements across the park system.

# Park Highlights & Facilities

## 14 Active Parks

Amenities vary by location and may include baseball and softball fields, turf and natural grass multi-purpose fields, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, track & field facilities, and more.

## 16 Passive Parks

Park users can be found camping, hiking, biking, kayaking, boating, or enjoying miles of trails while in a natural setting.

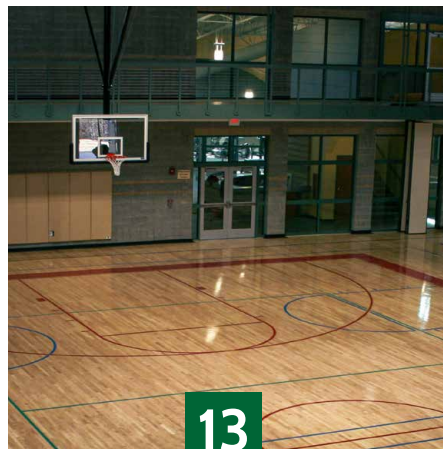
**Total Acres of Parkland: 2,924**



23

### Playgrounds

Passive parks feature nature themed play areas, while other locations vary in more active structures. Five (5) accessible and inclusive playgrounds can also be found throughout the park system.



13

### Basketball Courts

Indoor courts can be found at our three (3) recreation centers: Central Park, Fowler Park and Old Atlanta Park. Outdoor courts are also available at four of our other parks.



7

### Lake Parks

Located along the shoreline of Lake Lanier, our lake parks provide picnic areas, sand beaches, multi-purpose trails, camping, and boat launch ramps with courtesy docks.



55

### Miles of Trails

Trail options include hiking, walking, and biking. Trails surfaces vary by location and include natural surface, rubberized, and paved.



45

### Tennis Courts

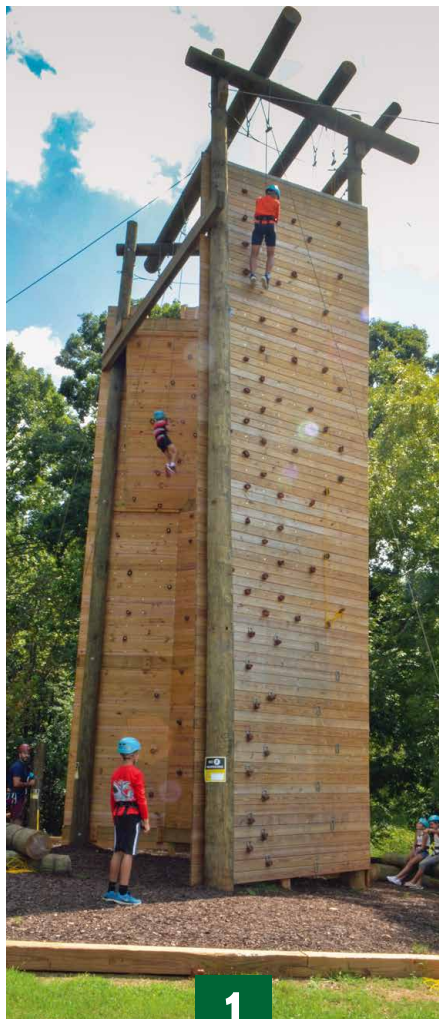
Players of all skill levels and ages can be found taking part in private or group lessons, league play, or open play on the tennis courts at eight different parks.



3

### Recreation Centers

Indoor classrooms provide space for programs such as art, dance, martial arts, gymnastics, camps, public meeting space and more! Centers also boast indoor gymnasiums that can be used for open play including basketball, pickleball and badminton, as well as cardio-weight areas and year-round fitness classes.



1

### Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center

Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center not only provides information to park goers about conservation and preservation, but is also home to environmental education programs and outdoor adventure programs for all ages.



14

### Pickleball Courts

Pickleball continues to grow in popularity across Forsyth County, with 28 outdoor courts now available for public use. These courts see steady use year-round, reflecting the community's rising interest in the sport.



88

### Athletic Fields

Forsyth County is home to fifty two (52) baseball/softball fields, as well as thirty six (36) multi-purpose rectangle fields.



4

### Dog Parks

Even our furry friends have dedicated park space! Caney Creek Preserve, Fowler Park and Windermere Park offer fenced natural areas for off-leash play.



52

### Pavilions

Our pavilions remain a popular choice for family gatherings, community events, and outdoor celebrations. We have many locations throughout the county.

Learn more about our park features & amenities by scanning the QR code below:



# Park Projects & Improvements



## Central Park Recreation Center Additions

In June 2024, we opened a new addition at Central Park Recreation Center. The addition features two new classrooms, a multi-use gym space, community room, spin bike room and free weight room that will be used for Special Olympics practice as well as other weight classes. We also relocated the cardio-weight room downstairs and updated an older classroom. The center also features two standard gymnasiums, a pottery studio and an indoor walking track. A portion of the recreation center that was previously used for recreation programming will now be operated by Senior Services. The trading of spaces allowed the funds that were allocated for a new Senior Services Center to be used on the recreation center addition and renovating space for Senior Services.



## Sawnee Mountain Preserve Phase 4a

This park is not only a local favorite but also a tourist destination! The preserve features a visitor center that opened in 2008 and included indoor interpretive exhibits. With the exhibits being over 15 years old, we worked with a designer to create new exhibits for our visitors who come from all over the world. Phase 4 features a new pavilion near the climbing tower, a large grass field for camp activities and free play, a large storage facility for kayaks, canoes, and other outdoor recreation gear, as well as trail improvements and exterior visitor center improvements. Phase 1 to 3 of this park features the visitor center, over 11 miles of hiking trails, a playground, four pavilions and an amphitheater.



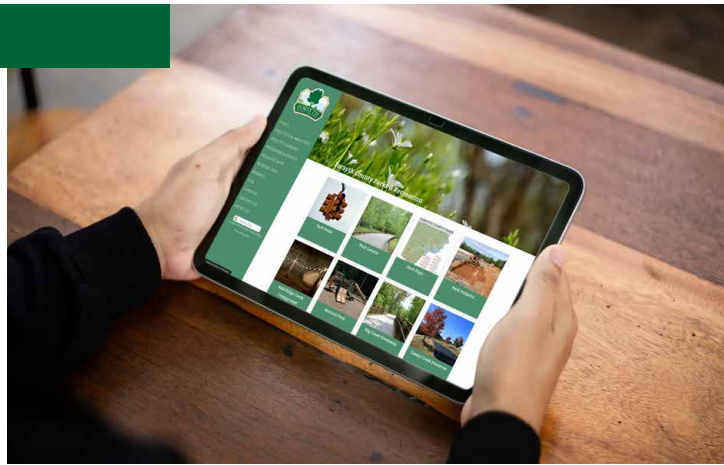
## Sawnee Mountain Community Building

In the spring of 2024, the renovation project was unveiled to reveal an updated and larger community building. By enclosing the previously attached pavilion, the building's capacity was increased from 60 to 90 people. The renovation also included two new restrooms, updated flooring, and refreshed kitchen. This building is rented for parties, weddings, family gatherings and any other local community events.



## Online Work Ticket System

In 2024, our department coordinated with the Forsyth County Geographic Information System (GIS) Department to implement an online work ticket system. Currently, the system is used internally by the Park Operations and Natural Resources Divisions to track work orders. Prior to the online system, we were using forms, emails and phone calls for work order processing. This new system of capturing work orders is more effective and efficient and will provide us with important data when we request more resources for our park system.



## 2 New Campgrounds



Forsyth County entered into a five-year Cost Share Cooperative Management Agreement with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to begin operating two additional campgrounds located along the shores of Lake Lanier. The addition of the new facilities at Bald Ridge Creek Campground and Sawnee Campground, increased the number of campsites maintained and operated by the Natural resource Division from 100 to 240.

### Baldridge Creek Campground

4100 Baldridge Park Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041

### Sawnee Campground

3200 Buford Dam Rd  
Cumming, Ga. 30041



## Bennett Park Revitalization Project

In June 2024, the Department began this renovation project to the County's first park built in 1978. The Department secured additional land surrounding the park to add to the park acreage as well as a \$2,000,000 grant from Governor Kemp's Revitalization Grant Program. The old park version featured 5 baseball/softball fields, a playground, one turf field and disconnected parking. The new design calls for 5 pavilions, 3 baseball/softball fields, 2 turf fields, 2 basketball courts, a state-of-the-art playground, a community building, batting cages and a walking trail system. This park is being funded by the grant, SPLOST, Impact fees and capital outlay funds. This project is projected to be completed by Spring 2026, bringing exciting new opportunities and enhanced experiences for our community.



# Program Participation

## Athletic Programs

In 2024, our athletic programs continued to thrive with a strong turnout and community engagement. A total of 131 camps and clinics were offered through our partnership with the Board of Education. These programs attracted an impressive 4,803 participants of all ages and skill levels, reflecting a growing interest in recreational and skill-building opportunities. The success of our athletic offerings such as baseball/softball, basketball, ultimate frisbee and kickball highlights the department's ongoing commitment to promoting active lifestyles and providing quality programming for residents throughout the year.

4,803

Total Athletic Camp Participants

3,769

Volunteer League Assistants

19,349

Youth League Participants

3,606

Adult League Participants



## Community Recreation

In 2024, Forsyth County Parks and Recreation continued to offer a wide variety of youth camps and enrichment programs. Our programs and camps including tennis, STEM, dance, art, sports instruction, gymnastics, and fitness offer children a safe and engaging environment to stay active, learn new skills, and have fun. These programs reflect our commitment to supporting youth development through inclusive and accessible recreational experiences.

6,292

Fee Based Programs & Events

63

Free Programs & Events

49,343

Program & Event Participants



31,263

### Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center Guests

## Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor Recreation continued to be a vital part of our department's offerings in 2024, encouraging residents and visitors to explore and connect with nature. Our parks, trails, and preserves provided a variety of opportunities for hiking, and outdoor programs such as environmental education, homeschool science, outdoor adventures and off-site excursions. A highlight of the year was the Sawnee Mountain Preserve Visitor Center, which welcomed an impressive 31,263 guests—demonstrating the community's strong interest in outdoor experiences. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to conservation, wellness, and access to nature throughout Forsyth County.



6,452

Program Participants

299

Programs Offered

## Therapeutic Recreation

In 2024, our Therapeutic Recreation program provided unique opportunities for children with special needs and disabilities to play, grow, and connect. From adaptive sports to creative social programs, each activity was designed to build confidence and foster friendships in an inclusive environment. The continued success of these programs reflects our dedication to ensuring that every child in Forsyth County has access to meaningful recreation experiences tailored to their abilities.



2,653

Program Participants



190

Programs Offered



624

Program Members



84

Special Events



382

Volunteers

# Outstanding Programs & Events



2

## 2 Battle of the Barbells

This event is an annual powerlifting meet held for participants in the Therapeutic Recreation Program's weightlifting program. Seventeen (17) participants took part in this year's event!



1

## 1 Adult Ultimate Frisbee

We offered a Adult Ultimate Frisbee league in Spring 2024 with 12 teams participating in the season. Our goal is to expand the adult leagues/offerings to encompass more sports and young adults.



3

## 3 Letters from Santa

Participation in the Letter from Santa event grew from 35 in 2023 to 224 this year, raising \$1,120 for the Kelli's Kids TR Scholarship Fund. This beloved holiday tradition continues to spread joy while making a meaningful impact in our community.



4

## 4 Veterinary Summer Camp

We partner with a local high school teacher to offer this camp. The camp is a hands-on experience led by actual veterinary medicine instructors with assistance from current veterinary students, who serve as the camp's counselors. Campers see, feel, smell and hear about animals from the view of a veterinary. The campers learn about animal anatomy, nutrition, behavior and a range of real-life aspects of the veterinary field, from small to large animal, research, rehabilitation and more! We had 100 children participate in the 2024 camp!



## 5 Youth Pickleball Lessons

In 2024, Forsyth County Parks and Recreation introduced Youth Pickleball lessons as part of its growing lineup of special events and programs. Designed for beginners and young athletes, these lessons provided a fun, engaging way to learn the fundamentals of one of the nation's

# Community & Employee Engagement

## Marketing Mediums

While trends and areas of interest are evolving daily, the need to provide relevant and beneficial resources to the community is a constant for Forsyth County Parks & Recreation. Marketing mediums and platforms used in 2024 include:

- Billboard campaigns
- Monthly e-newsletters
- Social media engagements - Facebook & Instagram
- Flyers and activity guides
- Local information exhibits
- Communication presentations

## Free Events & Programs

- Coffee & the Juice Box
- Mountain Do!
- Super Saturdays
- Community Yard Sale
- Senior Breakfast
- Trick or Trail
- Food Drive

## Staff Training & Development

A high priority is placed on staff development and involvement with professional and community organizations. Internal staff development trainings for 2024 were primarily focused on leadership development, with a few topics included that help create an understanding for day to day operations. The following opportunities were offered to department employees in 2024.

- First Aid / CPR Training
- Mental Health Training
- Customer Service Training





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