

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Forest Preserve Finance Director to retire after 23-years
District announces Ken Stanish as new finance director

GENEVA, IL — Jan. 3, 2012, will be the end of an era at the Forest Preserve District of Kane County.

That's the day long-time Finance Director Robert "Bob" Quinlan will officially retire, after a 45-year career in finance, with 23 of those years as finance director for the Forest Preserve District.

If you've ever attended a Forest Preserve public meeting, requested documentation, stopped by the office with a question, or attended a bid opening — chances are, you've met Quinlan. If you've seen Commissioners ask a question involving finances, procedure or past practice during a public meeting — chances are, you remember Bob.



Robert Quinlan caps a 23-year career at the Forest Preserve District on Jan. 3.

Throughout his tenure, Quinlan has seen numerous changes at the Forest Preserve District. His office on his first day — Jan. 2, 1989 — was in the County Building, where he shared an office with four other administrative employees including then President Philip B. Elfstrom. After the District outgrew the office in the County Building, Quinlan oversaw the rehabbing of the Cole Pope House (also known as Building G and "the old, yellow house"). Building G served as the District's administrative offices for many years. The District remained there until 2009, when the administrative offices moved to their current Kirk Road location in the Fox Valley Ice Arena.

Land holdings have also changed dramatically over those 23 years. Quinlan has overseen four land acquisition and preserve improvement referenda, the latest in April of this year. Upon Quinlan's hiring, the District held less than 7,000 acres. Today, the District holds roughly 20,000 acres of open space.

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He's also been largely responsible for the District's much stronger financial position — something that's helped the District weather the current economic downturn. The Forest Preserve's bond rating was A when Quinlan was hired. It's now AA+.

Though Quinlan announced his retirement well in advance, it's been difficult for staff and Commissioners to imagine the District without him.

"It's hard to not think about Bob being here every day. He's really become the fabric of the organization," said Executive Director Monica Meyers.

"Bob's been the go-to guy for so many years. He's the District's historian and he's ingrained the financial stability of the organization. He's seen all the growth in the District from land acquisition to building resources to meeting the needs of the community. Capital, people, equipment — everything that we use as a resource — Bob's been integral in developing all of that. It's not necessarily the finance director that's involved in everything, but Bob has been so involved in the District's growth. That's where the whole historian piece comes in. Because of his care and leadership, we are so much better financially and structurally. There are very few people who have done something with the District that haven't interacted with Bob at some point," Meyers said.

Forest Preserve President John Hoscheit has served on the County Board and Forest Preserve Commission for 15 years, 10 of those as president of the Forest Preserve Commission. He echoed Meyers' sentiments about Quinlan.

"During his tenure as finance director, Bob Quinlan has truly been an asset to the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. His detailed and conservative approach to financial planning, reporting and record keeping has helped the District to maintain its sound financial position. Bob has been the financial point person for the District's four referenda. His approach to prudent budgeting and the implementation of sound financial policies has resulted in the District achieving its superior bond rating. During his tenure, the District has nearly quadrupled in size, yet Bob has been able to efficiently operate the finance department with virtually the same size staff and resources. He was always there to provide thorough answers to any questions from the Commission or the public. He will be truly missed," Hoscheit said.

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When asked what Quinlan would do upon retirement, he didn't have a ready answer. "I don't know what I'm going to do," he said. "Everybody says travel. I'm going to spend more time with my family," he said. Quinlan and his wife Maureen live in Geneva.

He then added, "It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with the men and women of the Forest Preserve District of Kane County. I consider it the distinction of my career to have worked for a unit of government that actually gives back to the taxpaying citizens more than it takes. Every day, I see staff and elected officials going the extra mile to provide Forest Preserve services. I can't think of a unit of government that provides more services."

Quinlan's replacement, Ken Stanish, begins with the District on Monday, Nov. 28. Quinlan will stay on through the first week in January, to help with the transition. Stanish brings 17 years of finance experience to the position. He's currently director of finance for the City of Lockport, a position he's held since 2007. While Stanish acknowledges the challenge of following someone with such institutional knowledge, he's also excited about the opportunity.

"I am looking forward to working as part of a team that will be creating and maintaining outstanding preserves and facilities for Kane County," said Stanish. It will be a challenge to follow Bob Quinlan, who has served as the director of finance for many years, but I look forward to maintaining the professionalism that he brought to the organization," he said.

Stanish added, "I appreciate the unique focus of forest preserve districts and the importance of recreation and open space for the quality of life for all. I look forward to working with the commissioners and citizens of Kane County."

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