

# Park Districts hold off on outdoor smoking ban

By Don Grigas

Staff writer

Bolingbrook Park District and Woodridge Park District officials agree with current smoking bans for indoor park facilities -- which is state law -- but are taking a wait-and-see approach before pushing for more comprehensive smoke-free legislation for outdoor sites.

"We are still in a kind of research mode, waiting to see what will happen at the county and municipal level," said Mike Adams, director of parks and recreation for the Woodridge Park District.

"Right now it seems everybody else is in a holding pattern, waiting to see what others do first," Adams said.

At the Nov. 14 Park Board meeting, Adams presented the idea of a smoking ban to Park Board commissioners, and further discussion is expected before officials decide whether to adopt legislation regarding smoking on open, outdoor park property.

"Currently we prohibit smoking at all indoor venues, including the club house at the (Village Greens) golf course," Adams said. "We don't even vend tobacco products there."

But those who want to smoke at outdoor, open-air events on Park District property are not prohibited from doing so.

"We are reviewing proximity provisions in other park districts, which determine a specific distance from an area smoking is to be restricted, but at this point we haven't really looked at details, just concept," Adams said.

He said staff is reviewing surveys conducted by the Illinois Association of Park Districts to seek more information.

The Bolingbrook Park District also prohibits smoking at all indoor facilities, but does allow smoking at the 10th Hole Pub, the restaurant/bar of the Boughton Ridge Golf Course.

"We haven't seen a public groundswell to prohibit smoking at outdoor venues, although we do get an occasional concern over smoke at the 10th Hole Pub," said Ray Ochromowicz, director of parks and recreation for the Bolingbrook Park District.

"The problem isn't so much the ordinance itself, but the enforcement of an ordinance. Outdoor smoking ordinances are difficult to enforce," Ochromowicz said. "We have control inside our buildings, but there is no realistic way to control outdoors."

"We could probably enact a politically correct ordinance, but how effective would it be if it cannot be enforced? You don't really change a behavior or solve a problem that way," he said.

Bolingbrook Park District residents may be asked their opinions on smoking bans in the next Park District Community Survey, Ochromowicz said.