

Good evening, Forest Preserve District commissioners, ladies and gentlemen in the audience, and members of the District's staff.

I want to take a few minutes this evening to address the proposed construction of a fleet building at Blackwell Forest Preserve in Warrenville and to respond to several issues raised at recent commission and planning meetings.

I also want to set the record straight with respect to what I believe have been inaccurate statements and representations made during the public comment portions of those meetings as well as to the media.

I think the best way to start is by giving a brief history of how we got to this point. Let me begin by showing you how Blackwell has served as the Forest Preserve District's primary maintenance facility for over 40 years.



This centralized facility has supported structural, grounds and fleet maintenance operations, natural resource management and visitor services. A variety of equipment, a warehouse, and a refueling center have been located here to fuel and perform vehicle repairs since 1968.

Several of the buildings on this site predate the construction of neighborhood homes as well as McKee Marsh in 1977, which was the same year the existing fleet and storage building was constructed.



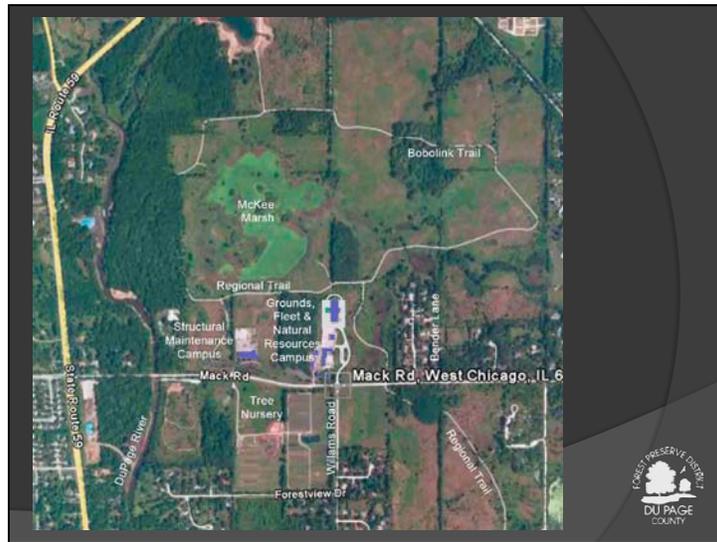
The concept of using Blackwell as a centralized facility was first recommended in 1990 by a consulting firm nationally recognized for working with governments and other public-service institutions to provide services ranging from technical studies of central-management problems to analyses of public-policy issues.

They provided a 200-page report, which stated, “Performing forestry, road maintenance, and maintenance of streams and trails on a centralized basis makes sense because of the specialized skills and equipment used. ... For the same reasons, it makes sense to provide specialized building maintenance and construction services on a centralized basis.”

It added that “it goes without saying that vehicular maintenance can best be performed in a properly equipped central garage with skilled mechanics and other specialists.”

The report also suggested the construction of a new equipment-repair garage and a new central receiving and warehouse facility at the same location.

While this study was done 19 years ago, the concepts it presents, such as centralizing and streamlining operations, ring just as true today. Now when we talk about centralization, we are not talking about a geographical location, we are talking about a location that is central to the District’s overall operations and maintenance.



This slide shows the fleet services building's proposed location. Contrary to what has been claimed, this is not a pristine natural area or a sensitive wetland ecosystem.

The north portion of the site has been used to stockpile soil materials. The southern area of the proposed site is covered with a mixture of gravel and pavement. There are presently 6 buildings on the site including an office and guard residence. There are 58 permanent and 23 seasonal full-time employees who report to work here every day before dispersing to their work sites. The remaining buildings are used to service District equipment and vehicles and warehouse District materials and supplies.

There are 404 pieces of District equipment and 53 vehicles currently stored at the site, and there are a total of 140 parking spaces for employees and District trucks, semitrailers, tractors and other vehicles. Statements have been made by several residents that the new facility will increase heavy equipment traffic on Mack Road. This is simply not true. The fact is that all of the District's heavy equipment already operates from the Blackwell site.

We are good neighbors. The existence and operations of this facility have been unobtrusive and without any complaints from the neighbors for several decades.

In this same slide, you can see the structural-maintenance building that the District constructed in 1992. It is located approximately 300 yards southwest of the proposed fleet services building site. It should be noted that at the time this facility was constructed, plans called for a Phase II expansion. Phase II included the proposed fleet services building that we are discussing today.

Additional improvements to the centralized site include:

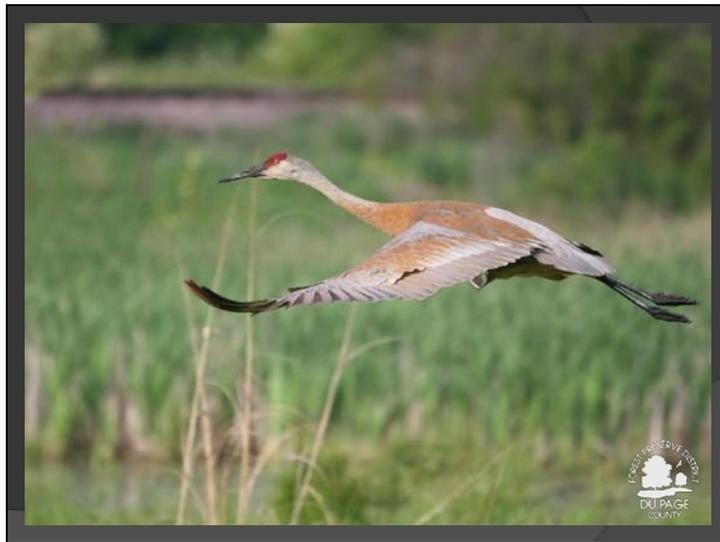
Storage bins were added to the site in 1997.

In 1998, a metal storage shed was fabricated.

In 1999, the District constructed a wash-bay building.

In 2008, the alternative-fuel station was built.

It should be noted that there has not been any documented impact to the wildlife that inhabits McKee Marsh as a result of any of this construction or daily operations. In fact, our life list of identified species continues to grow.



Since 2000, American coots, grebes, Virginia rails, and wood ducks have all successfully bred at McKee Marsh. 18 kinds of waterfowl have used the marsh to rest and refuel along their migratory journey. Even sandhill cranes have used McKee Marsh, despite the fact that daily District operations occur only 200 yards away.

May 10, 2001
Operations Committee
State of the Fleet Report

Hire a consultant to analyze combining the two mechanic shops into one and develop a corresponding cost estimate



In 2001 — when the Forest Preserve District Board of Commissioners and the DuPage County Board contained the same 25 individuals — the commission began to review the entire fleet operation.

At an Operations Committee meeting on May 10, 2001, District staff presented a “State of the Fleet Report.” Following that presentation, the committee approved a motion to direct staff to hire a consultant to determine if combining the existing two mechanic shops into one was feasible and to estimate a corresponding cost.

September 18, 2001
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #01-427

Authorizing the execution of a
contract for professional services
between the Forest Preserve
District and Patrick Engineering



On September 18, 2001, the Board of Commissioners approved the related resolution for a contract with Patrick Engineering. This action got the ball rolling and a contract was awarded to determine the feasibility of constructing a fleet facility at Blackwell Forest Preserve.

September 18, 2001
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #01-427

Motion Healy, seconded by Didzerekis

Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis, Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, Kotecki, Kurzawa, McMahon, Merkel, Noel, O'Shea, Peterson, Pierotti, Rion, Schillerstrom, Schroeder, Stone and Zay

Absent Heap and Maio

Motion Carried



Now, take a look at the voting record on this, and you'll notice that many current county board members acting on behalf of the District before the board split in 2002 — many who today have spoken out against the project for various reasons — favored the project and voted for and supported the idea of a building at Blackwell, including District 6 representatives.

April 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Centralization of Fleet Division

Centralize Fleet Services at one location in Blackwell via the construction of a new facility for \$5 million and fund the project via the Mallard Lake 80 Fund Account



On April 16, 2002, a motion was passed to relocate the fleet services to one central location at Blackwell with the construction of a new building for a total cost of 5 million dollars and to fund the project with nonreferendum bonds that would be paid back with landfill interest monies.

That motion was subsequently amended to read that the initial funding would come from the Mallard Lake Landfill Fund, unless sufficient surplus funds were not available in which case, nonreferendum bonds would be used.

April 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Centralization of Fleet Division

Motion Healy, seconded by Zay

Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gow, Healy, Heap, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, Kotecki, Kurzawa, Maio, McMahon, Noel, O'Shea, Pierotti, Rion, Schroeder and Zay

Absent Gilgis, Merkel, Peterson, Schillerstrom and Stone

Motion Carried



Again, let's take a look at the voting record for that amended motion. You'll see that many current county board members who have spoken against this project were in favor of its construction when they served as Forest Preserve commissioners.

May 21, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-223

Authorizing the execution of a contract
for professional services for the
Blackwell Fleet Services facility



At the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 21, 2002, a resolution was passed for a contract for the design, engineering and construction-administration services associated with the proposed fleet services building.

May 21, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-223

Motion Formento, seconded by Didzerekis

Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis, Gow, Heap, Henry, Kotecki, Kurzawa, Maio, McMahon, Merkel, Noel, Pierotti, Rion, Schillerstrom, Schroeder, Stone and Zay

Absent Healy, Hilbert, Jenisch, O'Shea and Peterson

Motion Carried



Here is the voting record. Again, I am sure you will recognize many names voting in support of the Blackwell fleet building.

June 18, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-303

Authorizing the execution of a contract
for professional services for the
Blackwell Fleet Services facility



At the June 18, 2002 meeting, a resolution was approved for administration of a contract and management of a contract with Owner Services Inc. for the construction of a proposed fleet services building.

June 18, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-303

Motion Healy, seconded by Zay

Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis, Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, Kotecki, Maio, McMahon, Merkel, Peterson, Pierotti, Schroeder, Stone and Zay

Absent Heap, Kurzawa, O'Shea, Rion and Schillerstrom

Motion Carried



Once again, you'll notice a few familiar names.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #02-571

Amending Ordinance #02-168
“Annual Appropriation Ordinance
of the Forest Preserve District”



Then, at a meeting on November 16, 2002, two ordinances and one resolution were approved that appropriated funds to provide for the design and construction of the proposed fleet services building in the Construction and Development fund.

I later vetoed all three actions after careful review of the financial implications of using landfill funds and having other serious concerns until I was convinced that the building was absolutely necessary, that it was the right size for our operations and that it was an economically feasible project.

The first ordinance appropriated funds to provide for the design and construction of the fleet services building.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #02-571

Motion Maio, seconded by Jenisch
Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis,
Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, Kurzawa,
Maio, McMahon, Merkel, Noel, O'Shea, Pierotti,
Rion, Schillerstrom, Schroeder and Zay

Abstain Kotecki

Absent Heap, Peterson and Stone

Motion Carried

Vetoed by President Pierotti November 25



Here is the vote for that ordinance.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #02-572

Amending Ordinance #94-121
concerning the transfer of
interest from the Landfill
Expense Fund for the Mallard
Lake landfill



This is the second ordinance that was approved that day and that I later vetoed.

It provided for the transfer of interest earnings from the Mallard Lake Landfill Expense Fund to fund the design and construction of the Blackwell Fleet Services building.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #02-572

Motion Maio, seconded by Healy
Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis,
Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, **Kurzawa**,
Maio, McMahon, Merkel, Noel, O'Shea, Pierotti,
Rion, Schillerstrom, Schroeder and **Zay**

Abstain Kotecki

Absent Heap, Peterson and Stone

Motion Carried

Vetoed by President Pierotti November 25



Once again, please notice the voting record of your elected officials.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-546

Authorizing execution of contract for
“Blackwell Infrastructure Project: Fleet
Service Building and Equipment
Storage Building” between the Forest
Preserve District and Paradise Group



This is the third item that I vetoed on November 25, 2002. It is a resolution that authorized the execution of a contract for a Blackwell infrastructure project, which included the Fleet Services building and an equipment and storage building.

Once again, I did this because of the financial implications of using landfill funds, my concern for the necessity of this building and to be 100 percent certain that it was the right size for our needs.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #02-546

Motion Healy, seconded by Formento
Ayes Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento,
Gilgis, Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch,
Kotecki, Kurzawa, Maio, McMahon,
Merkel, Noel, O'Shea, Pierotti, Rion,
Schillerstrom, Schroeder and Zay

Absent Heap, Peterson and Stone

Motion Carried

Vetoed by President Pierotti November 25



Here, once again, is the vote tally showing overwhelming support for this project. Subsequent to this vote, Commissioner Healy moved that the motion be reconsidered.

November 16, 2002
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Motion to Reconsider

Motion Healy, seconded by Jenisch
Nays Bennington, Brown, Didzerekis, Formento, Gilgis, Gow, Healy, Henry, Hilbert, Jenisch, Kotecki, Kurzawa, Maio, McMahon, Merkel, Noel, O'Shea, Pierotti, Rion, Schillerstrom, Schroeder and Zay
Absent Heap, Peterson and Stone
Motion Lost



And here is the vote regarding that motion to reconsider. Now I need to mention at this point that there were certain “political issues” associated with the original building that was approved in late 2002. You will notice that all along I had voted on the prevailing side of this issue. I did that with the intention of introducing a motion to reconsider the original vote. Under the rules of parliamentary procedure such a motion must be made by one who voted on the prevailing side.

As I mentioned a moment ago, a motion to reconsider was made and approved by the old board immediately following the vote to proceed with the construction of the new building. This was a parliamentary maneuver designed to finalize the vote and to preclude any further consideration of the issue. In other words, the reconsideration vote essentially locked in the vote to proceed with the construction and prevented any commissioner from taking any action at a future meeting to reverse the vote.

The action taken by the former board was absolutely inappropriate. It threatened the District's overall integrity as well as the funding set aside to protect the future financial stability of the District. These approvals were definitely not in the best interest of the District.

My only recourse and last official action as president of the 25-member board was to veto these last three actions. Had I not taken that action, we wouldn't be here today because the building would have already been constructed. With the new seven-member board meeting for the first time in December, I waited until the last possible hour to veto these actions. After my veto, there was not enough time for the opposition to meet the 48-hour notice required by Illinois law to convene a "special-call" meeting in order to gather the votes necessary to override my vetoes.

I felt it was very important for the newly elected board of commissioners dedicated solely to Forest Preserve District business to take a fresh look at this situation, and that it was important for fresh eyes to conduct a "needs assessment" to see whether the fleet services facility was necessary and to evaluate the location and be certain it was the right size for District needs.

May 2, 2006
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #06-109

Authorizing the execution of a contract for professional services between the Forest Preserve District and Knight Engineers and Architects



When the new commissioners took office in December of 2002, they were not aware of the last minute action taken by the 25-member board to...shall I say...ram through the construction of the new building, for lack of a better term. Eventually, however, the time came for the new board to revisit the issue.

Thus, at the Board of Commissioners meeting on May 2, 2006, the new seven-member board authorized a contract with Knight Engineers and Architects to conduct an extensive “needs assessment” of the District’s maintenance facilities and to make recommendations whether existing facilities need to be combined, upgraded or expanded, or whether a new fleet services building needed to be constructed.

May 2, 2006
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #06-109

Motion Henry, seconded by Murphy

Ayes Brown, Cantore, Henry, Kotecki, Murphy,
Pierotti and Schultz

Motion Carried



And here is the vote.

February 6, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
To Obtain Fleet Building Proposal

To authorized staff to obtain a proposal for the Blackwell Fleet Services Building Project and to prepare the architectural/engineering contract for commission approval



I want to make absolutely clear to everyone—and the Executive Director and District’s Attorney can attest to this fact because they were present at the meeting with Knight—that my instruction and direction to the firm was very simple and direct: I wanted an honest and objective opinion concerning whether the District needed a new maintenance facility, and if so, what type of building was necessary to meets the District’s needs.

Knight Engineers and Architects is a well known and very experienced firm. But one of the things that was particularly significant to me is that Knight had no political or other connection to the District. Therefore, I was confident that they would be able to take a totally fresh look at the issue and provide a truly objective opinion. And let me say I think the firm has done an outstanding job.

After receiving the report from Knight, on February 6, 2007, the board unanimously supported obtaining a proposal for the Blackwell Fleet Services building project and preparing the architectural and engineering contract for approval. The motion was approved.

February 6, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
To Obtain Fleet Building Proposal

Motion Kotecki, seconded by Schultz

Ayes Brown, Formento, Kotecki, Pierotti and
Schultz

Absent Cantore and Murphy

Motion Carried



I call your attention to the vote tally.

May 15, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #07-156

Amending Ordinance #06-112
“Annual Appropriation Ordinance
of the Forest Preserve District”



At the meeting on May 15, 2007, an ordinance was approved for funding in the amount of \$5.2 million for the construction of a fleet services building at Blackwell Forest Preserve.

May 15, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Ordinance #07-156

Motion Formento, seconded by Schultz

Ayes Brown, Cantore, Formento, Murphy, Pierotti
and Schultz

Nay Kotecki

Motion Carried



I call your attention to the vote tally.

June 19, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #07-098

Authorizing the execution of a contract for professional services between the Forest Preserve District and Knight Engineers and Architects



On June 19, 2007, the Board of Commissioners authorized a contract with Knight Engineers and Architects for the architectural design, engineering, completion of construction documents, assistance with bidding, contract administration and site observation relating to the construction of a new fleet services building.

June 19, 2007
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Resolution #07-098

Motion Kotecki, seconded by Formento

Ayes Brown, Cantore, Formento, Kotecki,
Murphy, Pierotti and Schultz

Motion Carried



Here is the vote tally for this action.

October 7, 2008
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Request for Approval of Fleet Building

Request for approval of 16-bay
facility design for the Blackwell Fleet
Services building and for investment
earnings from the Landfill
Environmental Funds be used to cover
\$2,510,198 budget shortfall



At the meeting on October 7, 2008, after a presentation by District staff and Knight Engineers and Architects, a motion providing for the design of a 16-bay fleet building was unanimously approved, and it was determined that investment earnings from the Landfill Environmental Funds be used to cover the budget shortfall in the amount of \$2.5 million.

I should note that this proposal called for an 11 percent reduction in height and a 30 percent reduction in the number of bays as compared to the previous recommendation approved before the board split. This supports my decision to take a fresh look at the situation and the importance of another set of fresh eyes to conduct a “needs assessment” to determine if the fleet facility was necessary and to evaluate the location and to be certain it was appropriately sized for District needs.

October 7, 2008

Board of Commissioners Meeting

Request for Approval of Fleet Building

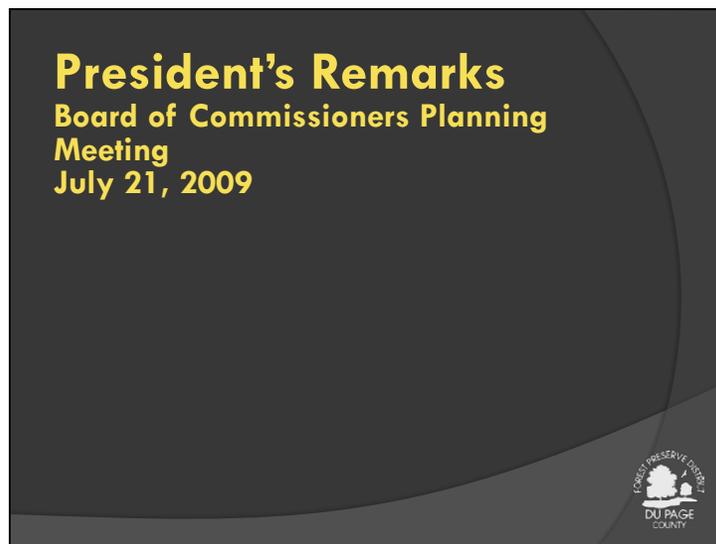
Motion Formento, seconded by Brown

Ayes Brown, Cantore, Formento, Kotecki,
Murphy, Pierotti and Schultz

Motion Carried



Here is the vote total for that motion. Once again this vote tally was unanimous.



I want to adamantly assure you that this forest preserve board approaches development projects carefully. In the case of the Blackwell fleet building, commissioners have toured this site three times and have reviewed videos, maps, and photographs of the location. District staff has been heavily involved; their expertise aided the commission in decision-making.

I also feel the need to comment about the integrity of District staff and commissioners and to reassure people in DuPage County of the District's continued open financial and operational practices, especially at a time when the cry for "transparency" is heard across the nation.

That being said, I'd like to clear up five inaccuracies I've heard.

Inaccuracy 1

The District planned and approved this project in secret, not making it known to the public until the 11th hour.



Number one. The District planned and approved this project in secret, not making it known to the public until the 11th hour.



The District is a public agency — projects are never approved in secret.

Items related to the proposed fleet services building were on 35 commission, planning session and operations committee agendas since March 2001. These agendas were made available prior to the meetings to the media and the public and were posted on the District's Web site and at District headquarters.

In addition to the various meetings where the matter was discussed, several stories were printed about these developments in local papers and in The DuPage Conservationist. We have heard public comments at numerous meetings just like this, and staff has responded timely to numerous Freedom of Information requests.

Inaccuracy 2

The Board of Commissioners is fiscally irresponsible and mismanages the organization.

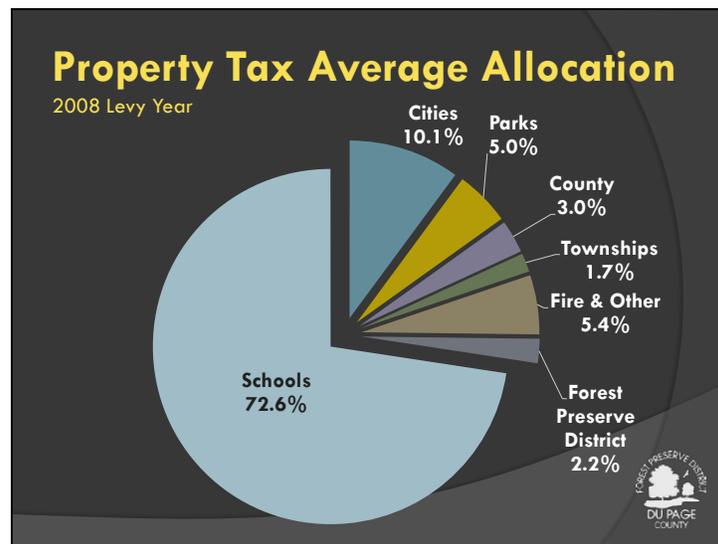


Inaccuracy number two. The Board of Commissioners is fiscally irresponsible and mismanages the organization.

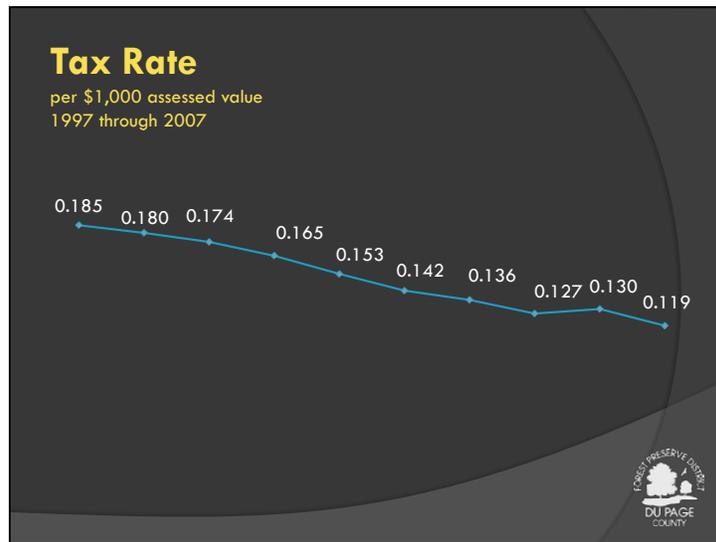
I'm sure I'm not the only one on this board that takes this as a personal insult.

The Forest Preserve District manages more than 25,000 acres — that's nearly 12 percent of the county — for DuPage citizens and has an annual operating budget of \$39 million. We provide services for 3.4 million visitors annually.

I am proud of the way District commissioners and staff have provided outstanding services to the citizens of DuPage County at a low cost.



Take a look at what a homeowner paid in 2008 to the District in taxes. According to the county clerk's office, it's 2.2 percent of a homeowner's tax bill. Compare that to what you pay to the school district, which in 2008 was 72.6 percent, or compare it with any other taxing district, and you will begin to see that the forest preserve system is a bargain for what you receive in return.



Since I became president, we've lowered the tax rate for 11 of 14 years. The three years the rate increased was due to taxes levied to pay for bonds issued for land acquisition and development approved by a vast majority of voters. Many of our projects are funded in whole or in part by grants.

Unlike other governmental agencies, we do not have the ability to gain revenues from other sources, such as sales tax, utility taxes and gasoline taxes.



The District's bonds are rated AAA by both Moody's Investor Service and Standard and Poor's and have been since 1997 when they were upgraded from AA. This is a very significant achievement as Moody's reports that only 27 units of local government in Illinois and only 290 in the United States have achieved this rating. When the District's rating was upgraded in connection with the issuance of bonds in 1997 we were advised that we were the first special purpose district in the nation to be rated AAA. The financial statements are audited annually by an independent firm of certified public accountants and consistently receive an unqualified opinion, which is the highest possible ranking.

To say, as some have alleged, that this board is financially irresponsible is ludicrous and totally unfounded. To put it bluntly, those who have made that allegation clearly don't know the facts and do so only to serve their own personal agenda. I defy anyone here to find another governmental entity in this state that is in a better financial position than the District.



In addition to the AAA bond rating, I am also proud to mention the District has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association for 22 consecutive years. This is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and it represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

Even in light of our nation's challenging economic situation, we anticipate no reduction in services, unlike many surrounding agencies and municipalities.

Inaccuracy 3

The District's fleet is too big and has too much heavy machinery.



Inaccuracy number three. The District's fleet is too big and has too much heavy machinery.

The District has a sizeable fleet, but it is by no means an exaggerated fleet.



The District has 173 vehicles, but crews use these vehicles for everything from patrolling preserves and managing recreational areas to maintaining trails, paving roads, trimming trees and clearing streams to prevent dangerous flood conditions.

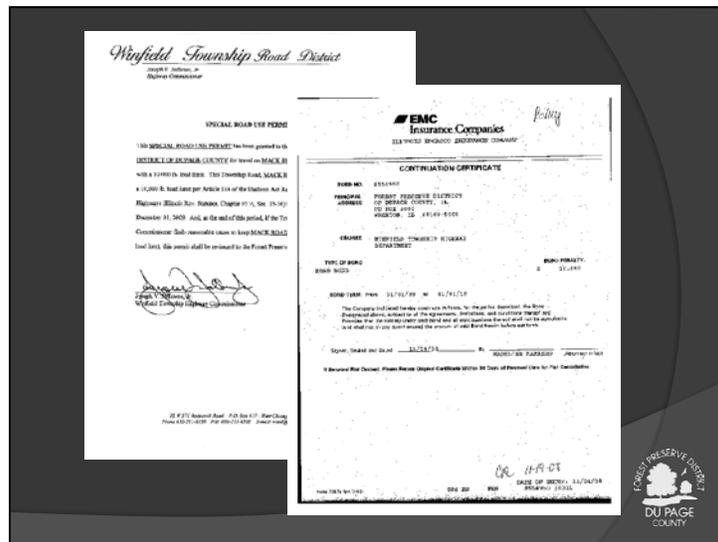
Studies have shown having such a diverse fleet requires in-house mechanics, who can provide critical repairs to get crews back to work more quickly.

In the long run, routine maintenance by trained mechanics familiar with various equipment keeps vehicle life spans high, costs low, and the need for new purchases at a minimum.

Inaccuracy 4
It is illegal and inappropriate
for the District to use Mack
Road in the manner that we do.

The logo of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is located in the bottom right corner of the slide. It features a circular emblem with a tree and a sun, surrounded by the text "FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT" and "DU PAGE COUNTY".

Number four. It is illegal and inappropriate for the District to use Mack Road in the manner that we do.



As you can see, the District is permitted to use Mack Road, and over the years, the Forest Preserve District has actually reduced its impact to this arterial road.

Mack Road is an arterial road which has evolved from a rural road. By definition, arterial roads are capable of carrying large volumes of traffic and connecting to major expressways. Posted speed limits average between 30 and 60 mph. Uses include residential, commercial and industrial.

Mack Road has been used by heavy construction vehicles from the 50s thru the 80s. Up until 1984, Arrow Construction company owned property next to Spring Brook and Springbrook Marsh, which was operated as an asphalt production plant. On a daily basis, large bomber-style semitrucks capable of hauling 80,000 pounds used Mack Road to make deliveries to area construction projects. During the construction of Blackwell's lakes and campgrounds, Mount Hoy, and McKee Marsh, large semitrailers, dump trucks, earth graders and scrapers were common on Mack Road.

Inaccuracy 5

The District is using tax dollars to build in a wetland and destroy McKee Marsh, a designated bird sanctuary, using the excuse that it is disturbed land.



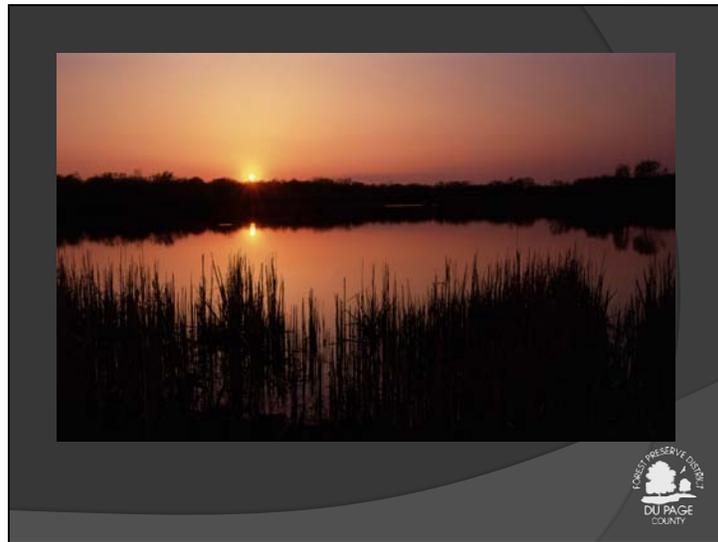
And finally, number five. The District is using tax dollars to build in a wetland and destroy McKee Marsh, a designated bird sanctuary, using the excuse that it is disturbed land.

First of all, neither bond proceeds nor property tax dollars will be used. \$5.2 million will be funded by O'Hare mitigation fees, and \$2.5 million will be funded by investment earnings on landfill environmental funds.



Second, although McKee Marsh provides many wonderful wildlife-watching experiences — and will continue to do so — it is by no means a designated bird or wildlife sanctuary. In fact, McKee Marsh has only been there since 1977 and was farmland before that. Ecologists have evaluated the site relative to any endangered or threatened species or cultural significance, and are convinced and have stated more than once that the proposed building will have no adverse affects on the marsh.

Additionally, the proposed building site is **not** in a wetland. If it was, the county's stormwater management department would not let us build. Even if the county did allow it, we would never build in a wetland. We know they're too important. That's why we've created over 9,000-acre-feet of stormwater storage and currently maintain 28 percent of the District's property within designated floodplains, making the District the single largest owner of floodplains in DuPage County.



Yes, the ecologists who evaluated the site are District employees, but I've been in this room more than once when these professionals — many who have advanced science degrees — have objected to proposed projects, and let me tell you, they do not let things just slide by.

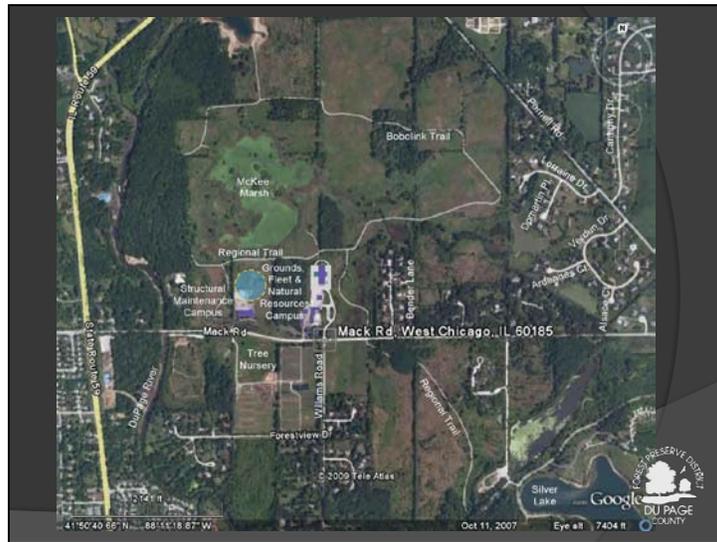
This proposed building will not be the first time we've had to make tough calls. We've heard when areas cleared of invasive trees were eyesores for some or when work to improve aquatic habitats within a streambed looked like disaster areas to others. Within a short period of time, they flourish and become a thriving habitat for wildlife and a beautiful landscape for people to enjoy.

As I noted earlier, Blackwell has been the District's primary maintenance facility for more than 40 years. Fuel pumps have been there for at least 35 years. And during that time, the Forest Preserve District has been a good neighbor. Our daily operations continued unobtrusively during that time without any complaints from the neighbors.



We all need to remember that there are almost one million people in this county. Our job is to focus on the best ways to serve them all.

Now having said all of this, I have taken a hard look at this matter, and I have discussed it with the District's professional staff, who I hold in high regard, and I am going to ask Knight Engineers and Architects, Inc., in conjunction with staff, to reaffirm our current site selection once again taking into consideration the second choice south and west of the proposed site, near the current structural maintenance building that was built in 1992.



That said, I have personal concerns over the environmental impacts of the newly proposed location, which is shown here in blue, because it is closer to McKee Marsh. But we're going to take a close look to be absolutely certain we have selected the right area for the fleet building at Blackwell Forest Preserve.