

Ripon School News Email Network Bulletin

August 28, 2014

Ingalls Field Group Receives 2014 Friend of Public Schools Award

The Ingalls Field Group is a true friend of public education. For over 31 years the group's members have been the stewards of Ingalls Field, repairing and improving the field wherever and whenever it has been needed. Their efforts have resulted in a field on which hundreds of events are hosted each year by Ripon Area School District, Ripon College, and the Community of Ripon.

The Ingalls Field Group is currently comprised of 14 members including Keith Cluppert, Dennis Cotton, Chet Fenner, Jon Heatley, Dr. Cris Johnson, Jeff Jordan, Bob Lukoski, Dan Luskey, Dennis Luskey, Dennis Miller, Gorden Minch, Marty Moldenhauer, Warren Sherman, and Tom Stellmacher, but the membership has varied over the 31 years. In addition to the work of the group, Charlotte Sherman has acted as the secretary and treasurer of the Ingalls Field group since it began in 1981. Until about 10 years ago, the group didn't have any formal meetings. Planning and project development occurred through informal gatherings and conversations. Just in the last decade, the group began to meet once a year to review what had been done over the past year and to determine what projects the group was anticipating in the future.

Ingalls Field formerly known as Ingalls Park is used for both Ripon High School and Ripon College student athletic events, particularly football, soccer and track. The land was donated to Ripon College in 1889 and sold to the City of Ripon in 1939 with the understanding that the property be maintained and kept usable and that the College would still have rights to use it for athletic competitions. In January of 1967, the City of Ripon transferred the deed to the Joint Common School District No.1 now known as the Ripon Area School District with the same stipulation. In 2001, a formal agreement between Ripon College and the Ripon Area School District provided that the costs of improvements, once approved, would be borne one-third by Ripon College and two-thirds by the Ripon Area School District.

In 1980, the field was in disrepair and a group of volunteers called the 7:00 a.m. Booster Club, led by Warren Sherman, Bill Manzer and Art Muenster, announced their intention of raising \$175,000 to build a new locker room, a new press box, new bleachers and add lights. Since that time, over 41 projects have been completed. The projects have included bleachers, lights, sprinkler systems, football field excavation, a new entrance, a storage garage, a scoreboard, college and high school signs, a security system, and the Voysey Building updates. Community members have donated over 4,000 hours to work on the projects and well over three million dollars in materials and equipment.

The Ripon Area Public Schools are fortunate to have a friend such as The Ingalls Field Group and the support the Group received from a vast number of area contractors and businesses with their uncompromising dedication to athletics and the health and well-being of thousands of students.

The Ingalls Field Group has been instrumental in recognizing a need, developing a plan, and then securing and coordinating the human and material resources necessary to see the projects through to completion. The volunteers give their time and talents as a labor of love for the public schools, college, and the entire community. The Ingalls Field Group consists of committed and caring community members who ask “Why not?” Ingalls Field will always be a testimony to the selfless service and commitment these individuals have shown to improving their neighborhood schools and community.

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