



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

"A diverse mix of facilities means there's something for everyone."

OVERALL COMMITMENT TO AQUATICS Class 3 (pop. between 100,000 to 500,000)

Greenville County Recreation District, Taylors, S.C.

When Greenville County Recreation District decided to give one of its four pools a makeover, officials went for something fun. Greenville already had one indoor and three outdoor pools. What it needed was something completely different: a waterpark. After all, the closest one was more than 1½ hours away.

Apparently, residents couldn't have agreed more. After Discovery Island Waterpark was unveiled in 2005, the annual attendance numbers exploded from approximately 7,000 to 118,000 guests.

"Surveys showed us that as the aquatics community is changing, people want to see more entertainment value out of their facilities," Aquatics Director Beth Scheimann says.

And while the new influx of guests did mean more stress for Greenville's employees, it isn't anything they couldn't handle. Yes, staffers all attend biweekly in-service training, which covers topics such as scanning, rescues, back-boarding, customer service, CPR, first aid, policies and procedures, and computer software. Yes, they attend training through state agencies for health/environmental control and recreation/parks, and are certified in lifeguarding, first aid, CPR/PR, blood-borne pathogens, and AED. But the thing that really hones a lifeguard's skills is experience. And more than 60 percent of the GCRD staff members are returning veterans.

Scheimann says the secret is in the way she treats her staff. In the winter, she'll write each one a holiday letter, thanking them for their past services and letting them know there's an open spot if they want to return. At other times, she'll take a select few of her lifeguards to state competitions.

"You have to show interest in your employees year 'round, not just the months they're employed," Scheimann says. "That way, the job isn't only one they enjoy, but one where they feel part of a family, too." — *Danny Brown*



FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS: All lifeguards attend biweekly, in-service training • Aquatics director stays in communication with staff even during off-season

FEATURES: 1 indoor pool • 2 outdoor pools • 1 waterpark • 1 lakefront • 1 lazy river • 8 water slides • 3 diving wells • 1 diving board • 1 movable bulkhead • 1 water playground

PROGRAMMING: Learn-to-swim • Lifesaving • Water aerobics • Competitive swimming, Masters Swimming • Kayaking • Adaptive aquatics