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Haverford Reserves' recreation success story

Published: Friday, July 18, 2014

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HAVERFORD TWP. ---Assistant Township Manager/Parks and Recreation Director Tim Denny presented an overview of the Community Recreation and Environmental Center's first two years of operation when he addressed the board Monday.

CREC opened its doors in June 2012, offering residents a 35,000 square foot facility complete with indoor track, double gym, multi-purpose rooms, fitness center, environmental nature area, kitchen facilities, and more. Programs offer year-round activities for all ages.



Denny also pointed out that CREC has a multi-faceted mission. Goals include providing township-owned indoor space to serve a wide range of ages and recreational interests, while also taking advantage of Haverford Reserve's natural beauty, providing opportunities to improve residents' health, and serving as a learning center for environmental stewardship. Strengthening the township's social fabric and imparting a long-term positive economic impact are on the ambitious agenda as well.

Denny noted that to date, more than 13,000 total residents have participated in more than 1,500 hours of recreational programming.

And, in a marked change in Recreation Department users--historically parents with young

children--more than 2,000 residents over the age of 55 have registered for the walking track and Fitness Center, Denny said. Residents over 55 have become the department's "second largest constituency."

Additionally, over 500 residents have participated in adult basketball and volleyball. Of all residents registered to use the track and Fitness Center, over 60 percent are female, Denny noted.

CREC's indoor space has also been the scene of more than 450 rentals for parties, weddings, meetings and other events, including a recent 100th birthday celebration for a township resident, Denny said.

Over 225 hours of township business, such as police/EMS training and storm water workshops have been conducted at the facility, too.

Denny maintained the center has positively impacted real estate values and benefited local catering businesses, in addition to providing 25 permanent full-time/part-time jobs.

The project received \$1.5 million from the state's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program and \$300,000 from Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority, Denny said.

CREC operated on budget in 2013 and has remained on budget through June, he added.

And, true to its mission of environmental stewardship, CREC has successfully hosted field trips and nature programs that "make people aware of conservation practices," while providing healthful exercise out of doors.

A LEED Gold certified building, CREC is the recipient of the 2013 Green Parks Award, Land Ethics Award and Community Green Award.

"People are ecstatic about this facility" and say it "makes them proud to live in Haverford Township," Denny said, recounting positive comments he hears regularly from users. "It really is a wonderful thing that makes Haverford stand out," he said.

Commissioner Stephen D'Emilio described CREC as a "wonderful accomplishment" and thanked the many residents who helped bring the project to fruition.

For more information about CREC, visit www.haverfordtownship.com/parks.