

Pooling Our Resources

Sadly, the Allen Memorial Pool did not open this summer. No swim lessons. No pool parties. No water fun. The 50-year old pool is in disrepair, and the cost to fix it was not reasonable, leaving local families high and dry this past summer.

The Parks and Recreation Department has been hard at work to fill the void left by the empty pool. The solution? An aquatics park that is sure to make a huge splash.

The dream that Parks and Rec has created includes a zero-entry zone, a lazy river, a family water slide, cabanas, and more. Of course, the traditional diving well and a swimming area are included too.

The funding to make this dream a reality includes several sources. Grants and a bond will be a part of the puzzle. A food and beverage tax will also play a large part.

While no one likes the idea of more taxes, it's important to put this particular tax in perspective. This is a 1-cent levy on every dollar spent on prepared food or beverage. In other words, ready-to-eat foods served with napkins and/or utensils qualify for the tax. That means when you purchase a \$5 value meal at McDonald's, the F&B tax is 5 cents. If you order a \$50 steak at a local eatery, 50 cents will go toward the aquatic center.

A food and beverage tax can realistically pay for a large percent of the aquatic center. That's because the 26,000 travelers passing through Decatur County daily will contribute to F&B tax funds when they grab a coffee or a bite to eat while passing through.

Many surrounding counties throughout Indiana already have a F&B tax to support specific projects. If you've eaten in Indianapolis or Nashville recently, you've paid F&B tax on your food bill to help quality-of-life projects in those communities.

The F&B tax is designed specifically for the aquatic center—a project that will add to the quality of local life and bring visitors to our community. This type of tax also puts the spending power in the hands of the consumer—it is not a forced tax like an income or property tax. It also has an end date—it will be in effect for 20 years.

A food and beverage tax for Decatur County has been approved by the state legislature and will soon be up for a vote on the local level. For more information about the proposed food and beverage tax, contact Decatur County Parks & Recreation at 812-663-8284, or visit comeswimwithus.com.