

Das Rec opens for business

By Keri Heath

The Herald-Zeitung

The long-anticipated \$23.5 million city recreation center, Das Rec, officially opened Saturday, completing five years of community work and partnership on the center-point project of the 2013 bond program.

The 77,000-square-foot facility's opening kicked off with a ribbon cutting and inaugural splash in the competition pool by members of the New Braunfels High School and Landa Park Dolphins swim teams.

Open house events throughout the weekend showcased the facility's options with sample exercise classes, fitness demos and a dive-in movie. In addition, the ceremony unveiled a marker in the competition pool area honoring Bud Dallmann, founder of the New Braunfels Aquatic Club.

"This facility will serve our community so well for years to come," City Manager Robert Camareno said. "So many people were involved in not only dreaming this project, but working it through to fruition, making it a reality."

Das Rec, which includes investments from both the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation and New Braunfels Independent School District, boasts two full sized-gyms, a cardio and weight room, group exercise rooms and two pools. "Today is a momentous day in the history of our city as we cut the ribbon on one of the largest project the city has ever undertaken," Mayor Pro Tem Wayne Peters said. "This facility will serve the residents of New Braunfels for decades to come as a place for health, community, individual development and certainly fun."

Now, 6,241 people have signed up for Das Rec membership, according to Parks and Recreation Director Stacey Dicke.

"The opening weekend was a huge success," Dicke said. "The center was full of activity from opening until close. It was very fulfilling to see such a wide range of ages using all areas of Das Rec."

Families and individuals can still sign up for memberships with a 5 percent discount through Oct. 31 by walking into the facility.

On Saturday, many people came to Das Rec to try out the center's offerings and sign up for membership. When asked what he was looking forward to about the recreation center, Will Dorris said "really everything."

"That's why we're signing up because of the variety of things you can do, between the pool, the gym, the basketball courts," Dorris said.

Jessica McCall signed up before this weekend's open house, but attended the ribbon cutting.

"I think it's amazing," McCall said. "I love the fact that there's just lots of space. It feels nice and open and airy. The indoor pool is awesome. (My daughter) loves to go swimming and she wants to go swimming year round and now we can."

Das Rec's eight-lane competition pool also now serves as the NBISD swim team's home turf. Both this and the leisure pool are now the only indoor pools in New Braunfels.

“We can have meets here,” NBISD senior Isaac Barrera said. “It’s nice to have our own pool finally. Other teams can come swim with us so we’re not always traveling somewhere else.”

From Monday through Friday, Das Rec is open from 5 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Weekend hours extend from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The facility is located at 345 Landa Street. For more information about the facility, classes and memberships, visit www.dasrec.com.