

More than 200 in pool to swim opening day



By Jan Schultz

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A “visionary” effort by two governmental entities and Imperial’s residents were key to the opening of a new pool and bathhouse/lockerroom complex in Imperial.

Those were among the comments from School Supt. Matt Fisher at grand opening and dedication ceremonies Sunday afternoon at the pool complex.

Imperial Mayor Annie Longan said she remembered when a bond issue for the new pool failed in 1996.

“Now, I’m glad it didn’t because the pool facility, the location for the children is so much better than the location we probably would have chosen in ‘96,” Longan said.

The city of Imperial and Chase County Schools, through an interlocal agreement, cooperated on construction of the facility, which came to fruition last weekend.

Supt. Fisher said the city council and school board members were “visionary enough” to work together on the project. He estimated that the cooperation saved school district taxpayers half a million dollars.

Three years ago, the school was proceeding on finishing its athletic facility, while at the same time, the city was working on pool plans.

By cooperating on construction, Supt. Fisher said they were able to build the bleacher seating, the lights and the lockerroom for the same cost as what lockerrooms would have been if built by the school separately.

With this facility, both the schools’ football/track patrons and users of the pool share the lockerrooms, concession stand and parking lot areas.

Mayor Longan noted that passage of the city sales tax in 2006 happened because many people helped educate the public on what it would be used for.

“And, how it would definitely improve our community,” she said.

“I look forward to years and years of enjoyment.”

The sales tax dollars earmarked for community projects are being used to pay off the city’s bonds issued for their part of the pool project costs.

Mayor Longan also recognized city park board members for all of their work, and introduced Pool Manager Michelle Wilson. She, in turn, introduced her lifeguards for the summer and Asst. Pool Manager Levi Wooden.

Park board member Dianne Way also recognized those organizations that provided funds to purchase the benches and tables outside the pool area. The project was initiated as a challenge by the Imperial Rotary Club.

Other donors included the Imperial Lions Club, Eagles and Auxiliary, Chase County Tourism,

Imperial Education Association, Imperial Chamber of Commerce, Knights of Columbus-Imperial and the Nebraska State Troopers.

With the ceremonies concluded, Supt. Fisher and Mayor Longan made the first splashes in the pool, jumping off the diving board and into the water.

The first youngsters who hit the water were Garret Thompson and Jacob Christensen.

Pool Manager Wilson reported that 205 were registered for the first day of swimming in the new pool.

“It was good, there were lots of kids,” she said.

Wilson added that it’s nice to have a new facility and everything is running well.

Several youth groups provided food booths prior to the grand opening ceremonies.

Planners for Sunday’s grand opening/dedication picked a great day. While it was windy, the sun was out most of the afternoon.

On Monday and Tuesday, however, the pool was unable to open due to rain and cool temperatures.

Winners of various swim-related prizes, provided by the Chamber, included Kale Gockley, Ron Moritz, Jane Lenner, Cheryl Swanson, Claire Kuenne, Sydney Vetter, Kim Wiest, Trace Terryberry, Abby Lopez, Aria McNair, Kaitlyn Hood, Jared Wrentschler, Ali McNair, Kate Colson, Tayvin Lutz, Regina Barnes and David Almanza.

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