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Frisco Recreation & Aquatics Center
 photo by Chris Fritchie



the latest in table and electronic computer games, as well as an additional lounge area. And, since it is impossible to miss the large number of young children living in Frisco, a supervised child's recreation room will provide parents with childcare during workouts.

The indoor and outdoor water facilities encompass 40,000 square feet of aquatic elements. According to the City of Frisco website, the indoor aquatic area "will feature four different bodies of water including a large child-specific play pool with a robust interactive water structure, a flowing current channel with a vortex, a therapy pool, a large multipurpose pool capable of accommodating lap swimming, water aerobics and swim lessons and a large water slide." Two large classrooms will be available for birthday parties and classes. The outdoor water facility will include two water slides, a lazy river, a large interactive play area and a lagoon pool. Steve Walsh is facilities superintendent for Frisco. "The Frisco Recreation and Aquatics Center will be unlike any other facility in Frisco," explains Mr. Walsh. "The size, scope and, most importantly, the offerings available within the facility will be unparalleled."

What \$22 Million Will Buy

By Debbie Vallejo

WITH A PRICE TAG of \$22 million, Frisco's new Recreation and Aquatics Center is destined to provide residents with a facility different from anything else in the city. Frisco began planning for the new center in 2002 when citizens passed a bond including \$20 million for a new recreation center. The city added \$2 million from its general fund, bringing the grand total to \$22 million.

THE FACILITY

Located on Nancy Jane Lane near the intersection of Preston Road and Wade Boulevard, construction of the new Recreation and Aquatics Center makes

quite an impression. Thinking through the variety of future amenities makes it easy to imagine a familial paradise, a place where every member of the family will enjoy activities of his or her own choosing. The indoor component, measuring 100,000 square feet, will house two racquetball courts, two full-size gymnasiums, two dance or aerobic studios and two multipurpose classrooms. A large teen room will provide plenty of leisure time activities with movies, computers and a lounge. There's even an area to concentrate on homework for the teenager willing to forego the leisurely for the scholarly. A game room will contain

CREATING THE VISION

So, how did the city decide what to include in this new state-of-the-art facility? According to Mr. Walsh, a team approach was taken in the course of the decision-making. "Representatives from city leadership teams, including City Council, Parks and Recreation Board, Community Development Corporation and the Executive Management Team in the City Manager's office, traveled to multiple facilities to observe the latest trends," says Mr. Walsh. "In addition to the tours, the city formed a Planning & Programming sub-committee comprised of staff, city leaders and residents. This group discussed a wide variety of options and potential elements to be included

within the facility. Residents were also invited to participate in several public meetings held by the Parks and Recreation Board.”

Of course, any large facility requires a rather hefty budget to keep up day-to-day operations. “The annual operating budget will be approximately \$3.2 million,” explains Mr. Walsh. “This includes staffing and contractual and commodity expenditures. It is anticipated that approximately 75 percent of the operating budget will be supported by membership passes and program registration fees.” So, with an obvious need for funds to support such a large facility, what does the city charge the paying public for entrance? Can the city charge enough to cover expenses and at the same time avoid ‘pricing out’ many Frisco residents wanting to utilize the facility?

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THE FEES

The city hired PROS Consulting to provide a business plan for the Recreation and Aquatics Center. PROS Consulting evaluated operational costs, current trends in the area, projected staffing levels, demographic profiles, market conditions, revenue projections and both public and private market providers. Utilizing that information, PROS created a recommended fee structure that would allow the Recreation and Aquatics Center to reach 100 percent operating cost in three years. Two other alternatives were provided wherein operating expenses would be recovered in four and five years. The city staff took the recommendations before the council for consideration.

The first fee structure allowed residents to pay for partial use of the facility (recreation center only) or for all-access (including both recreation and aquatics). PROS’s first recommendation set the annual Rec Center fee for an adult

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photo by Chris Fritchie

says. “To that end, I believe that the fees that were approved were done so in an effort to provide a good value for individuals and families alike.”

Mayor Mike Simpson takes the city council’s responsibility to the public seriously. “The input from citizens said the fees were out of line,” explains Mayor Simpson. “So we listened. We took the lowest scenario and worked with it even more to create a reasonable and equitable rate for full use of the facility.”

Mayor Simpson feels the new fee structure provides citizens with a quality facility at a great price point. “Look at what you get for \$50 a month. Take that \$50 and go to another water park and you’ll pay much more,” says Mayor Simpson. “Here in Frisco a family will pay \$50 a month for everyone, no matter how many family members they have.”

The city will begin a kick-off campaign to announce the opening of the Center in the fall. “As part of the campaign residents will have the opportunity to become a founding member,” says Mr. Walsh. “Incentives will be available for those interested in becoming a member prior to the actual opening of the facility.” The opening is currently on track for sometime in October.

BENEFITS BEYOND RECREATION

Community benefit from the facility reaches beyond mere recreational use. The Frisco Recreation and Aquatics Center will provide more than 200 part and full-time jobs for the community. Employment opportunities at the new facility include special events staff, administration and management, child-care, personal trainers, fitness instructors, lifeguards and much more.

The fees that were approved were done in an effort to provide a good value for individuals and families.

The vision city officials have for the facility is all-inclusive, allowing for a large range of utility for a wide variety of individuals at a reasonable price. “One of the most exciting things about opening the Recreation and Aquatic Center is the ability to provide such a wide variety of recreational programming for the residents of Frisco,” explains Mr. Walsh. “Our programming and services will provide for youth and adults alike throughout the year.” The city plans to open two more facilities in the future. What each facility holds will depend on current needs and trends in the area, but if the first installment is any indication of coming attractions, the next facility should be rather amazing.

Debbie Vallejo is a freelance writer living in Frisco.

Table information provided by City of Frisco

Pass Type		Rec Center Fee Structure		All-Access Fee Structure	
		Residents	Non-Residents	Resident	Non-Residents
Daily Admission	Youth	\$6			
	Adult	\$8			
Monthly Pass	Youth	\$17	\$26	\$23	\$35
	Senior	\$20	\$30	\$28	\$42
	Adult	\$25	\$38	\$35	\$53
	Family	\$50	\$75	\$60	\$90
Annual Pass	Youth	\$170	\$260	\$230	\$350
	Senior	\$200	\$300	\$280	\$420
	Adult	\$250	\$380	\$350	\$530
	Family	\$480	\$750	\$600	\$900