YOUNGSVILLE — The 70-acre, $15.4 million Youngsville Sports Complex will open in time to host youth baseball and tennis tournaments in mid- and late May, with a grand opening set for 10 a.m. May 31, officials say.

"We built this for all of Acadiana. We hope they come and enjoy it," Youngsville Mayor Wilson Viator said Friday while driving through the park.

Originally scheduled for completion in December, the opening has been delayed due to weather and issues with the nearby Acadiana Renaissance Charter Academy. Despite the delay, the park will be completed for $15.4 million, which is about $200,000 or 1.3 percent over projected costs, Viator said.

The mayor said the additional money was spent on such extras as more batting cages that were added during construction.

Youngsville voters in 2011 approved a 1-cent sales tax to pay for the park. The tax, which began to be levied one year ago, generates up to $2 million a year.

The Youngsville City Council on Wednesday approved accepting the project from prime contractor Trahan Construction, a company based in Lake Arthur, complex Director Tim Robichaux said.

"There's still some work we have to do, but we're going to be ready" for the May tournaments and grand opening, Robichaux said.

The work is being completed during a required 45-day lien period.

Trahan Construction work—See SPORTSCOMPLEX, page 4A
Dwayne Dore welds a scoreboard to its support beams in the outfield of one of the five baseball fields at the Youngsville Sports Complex on Friday afternoon. Acadiana Bottling Co. donated the scoreboards.

SPORTS COMPLEX

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ers continued painting and putting other finishing touches Friday at the park.

Viator rode around the complex Friday pointing out the features such as five baseball fields and four fast-pitch softball fields. Also, there are seven batting cages and warm-up bullpens for pitchers.

"Back in the '50s, I don't know if major leaguers were playing on that good a field," Viator said.

Viator said the five baseball fields are easily convertible to fast-pitch softball fields, so the complex can handle sizable tournaments.

One of the baseball fields includes a sign of things to come at the other fields: naming rights. Supreme Rice, of Crowley, was the first company to pay for naming rights for one field, Viator said. The city is seeking more companies to agree to pay $92,000 for a five-year contract to name one field, he said.

The lights on the ball fields have been tested for endurance, and park workers are now aiming the lights so just enough light falls on each part of the field, Robichaux said.

There are two-story pavilions, shops and concessions centering the ball fields, and a viewing area with big ceiling fans atop the second floor.

The same type pavilion centers 10 tennis courts with a bird's-eye viewing area on top and a pro shop on the first floor. Tennis professional Bill Bryan was hired in July to be the complex's tennis director.

Bryan also will coordinate tennis tournaments at the complex, which includes the one the weekend of May 31 and starting the same day as the grand opening. Bryan said Youngsville's role in the end-of-May tournament was to be a satellite site for the U.S. Tennis Association's state champion matches for players ages 9, 10, 17 and 18.

United States Specialty Sports Association, or USSSA Baseball, is holding a boys baseball tournament the weekend of May 17.

Also in May, Youngsville will begin Phase II of the Sports Complex, as workers start laying the foundation for the Youngsville Community Recreation Center and an accompanying parking lot.

The center will house the park's administrative offices, basketball courts and rooms for other functions. It will be constructed near where Savoy Road meets Chemin Metairie Parkway.

Bryan said tennis enthusiasts wanting to play will reserve a court for $6 an hour.

The estimated cost for Phase II $4.6 million, Viator said.

On the opposite side of the complex are six soccer fields. Alongside the fields is a pond, stocked with fish for those who bring their fishing gear.

There are now 979 parking slots in now-completed lots that lead to the three roadways surrounding the complex — Savoy Road, Chemin Metairie Parkway and Detente Road — making for a less congested exit when a big tournament is over, Viator said.

To feed visitors coming for tournaments, or Acadiana residents who stop by to jog or play tennis with friends, Youngsville is attracting more restaurants.

A mile or so from the park, behind McDonald's near the upscale Sugar Mill Pond development, a restaurant called the Hot Dawg Stop is opening. Other planned restaurants nearby include Taco Bell, Rotella's Pizza, Sonic and The Bon Temps Grill, which will feature Cajun cuisine.

"We wanted select food from Cajun Country for visitors," Viator said.