Youngsville Sports Complex to host grand opening

Saturday event to honor town's citizens

By Katie de la Rosa

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Although it opened more than two weeks ago, the Youngsville Sports Complex is set to throw its grand opening Saturday, complete with music, a fun jump and face painting.

Festivities will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the official ceremony, in which Mayor Wilson Viator will honor the complex's 45 founding sponsors, starting at 10 a.m. Sports teams from local youth sports associations are scheduled to play at the 70-acre, $15.5 million facility, but that depends on the state of the fields, which were underwater during much of the week's storms.

If the fields are deemed playable, Youngsville Director of Parks and Recreation Tim Robichaux said Viator and the city council members will throw out the first pitch.

"Hopefully, the rain will allow us to fully celebrate," Robichaux said.

The ribbon-cutting will take place at the main pavilion, between the baseball fields and the tennis courts. Viator said he has not been able to watch a game there yet, but he said he will Saturday if he can. He is familiar with the complex, though, as he "went every day during construction."

"I know that thing inside and out," Viator said, laughing.

Robichaux said he expects, weather permitting, "a big attendance" at the grand opening, to which Youngsville CEO Rick Garner said local dignitaries, like area legislators, were invited to attend. But Garner said he wants to honor his town's citizens the most.

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In 2011, Youngsville voters passed a 1-cent sales tax that helped fund the complex. Since then, Garner said, their input and support has been "invaluable," as they flocked to pitch ideas.

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Director Tim Robichaux and programs manager Andre Boudreaux take measurements before painting the first and third baselines on a softball field at the Youngsville Sports Complex.

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"They propose plans we completely overlooked," Garner said, "like areas for emergency vehicles and even more additional parking."

The sports complex has already hosted two baseball tournaments so far. Two weeks ago, the facility — it has nine baseball and four softball fields "that can be made into any kind of field for any kind of sport," Garner said."

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Director Tim Robichaux and programs manager Andre Boudreaux take measurements before painting the first and third base lines on a softball field at the Youngsville Sports Complex.

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Robichaux said — hosted its first one, which brought in 54 teams, some from neighboring states. The tournament the following week welcomed 34 in-state teams.

The general public has been using the complex, as well. Robichaux said he has noticed more and more people using the 10-court tennis facility and the one-mile health and fitness trail. These amenities are major upgrades to what used to be Youngsville's only recreational area, Foster Park, a 16-acre, two-baseball field facility off Fourth Street.

Foster Park is not used much anymore, especially with the sports complex opening, Robichaux said. By"practices there sometimes, but most of the older children practice and play at Arceneaux Park in Broussard.

Young Industries Inc., the manufacturer that donated the land for the sports complex, owns the park, but Lafayette Consolidated Government is leasing it until 2025, Robichaux said. Foster will remain open, but he said he expects much of its remaining traffic to migrate to the complex.

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