

Making sawdust? Remember woodshop's motto: 'If you make a mess, clean it up please'

By Jolene Guzman The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — LeRoy Rempel said there has been talk of opening a hobby center — a woodshop — at Dallas Retirement Village (DRV) for not just years, but decades.

He said his brother worked in maintenance at DRV years ago and tried to establish a center, but there was never enough space.

"They've wanted one for years, but they never had a location," said Rempel, a DRV resident.

This month, that's changed, thanks to donations and the tireless effort of Rempel and fellow DRV resident Russ Thommen.

Recently, the DRV health service center was remodeled, adding a classroom for DRV's certified nurse's assistant classes. That left a modular building empty that DRV leaders thought might be perfect for the longawaited "hobby center."

From that point, Thom men and Rempel went to work setting it up. Lifelong woodworkers, they were a perfect fit for the job.

making sawdust since we were young bucks," Rempel said to Thommen, smiling. Rempel and Thommen's

first focus with the center



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer LeRoy Rempel, left, and Russ Thommen were instrumental in setting up Dallas Retirement Village's hobby center.

was safety. Once all the tools were in place, they marked center rule that no one uses

"You and I have been safety zones with black and yellow tape. They made it a power tools while working alone in the shop.

The center is neatly or-

ganized and clearly marked, The center has a wide vaa sign of the care they took riety of tools and is open to all DRV residents capable of in setting it up. Rempel alone put in about 140 hours using the equipment. working in the center since "There's just about all the

the project started in May. woodworking tools you "My wife said it felt like I would find in a regular went back to work," he said. woodshop," Rempel said.

"It's just an ideal set up," Thommen added.

Many of the tools were donated, Thommen said, estimating people gave \$1,500 in equipment to the center. DRV's maintenance department also provided new

tools for the shop.

DRV hosted a grand opening on July 1, and Thommen and Rempel held an orientation after that, explaining safety and courtesy rules like cleaning up after use. Since then, 30 people have used the shop and some have already claimed a cabinet to store their projects.

Both regular volunteers they also take shifts driving a golf cart transporting people from building to building on DRV's campus — Thommen and Rempel like to stay busy. They said the hobby center adds one more way for residents to do just that.

"You can't just sit in your rocking chair all day," Rempel said.

The pair has plans for improving the center and upgrading the equipment when they can. They want to install more cabinets for frequent users and build a "finishing room" where people can paint or apply finish in

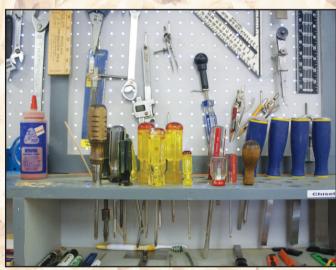
properly ventilated area. "So far, it's gone ove well," Thommen said. "We anticipate more will use it as people come and go."

You will likely catch the two of them in the center working on projects — even Rempel, who has a shop in his garage.

"It's not essential, but it is nice," Thommen said.



Tools are labeled and have a place in the hobby center.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer Donations of tools helped get the center up and running.



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