

Pool season nears as weather heats up

Aquatic center prepping for summer swim season

By **JADE MCDOWELL**
Staff Writer

Hot weather has people itching to hit the pool, but they'll have to wait at least a couple more weeks.

Although the weather is ripe for swimming, lifeguards have to finish up their school year, pools need repainted and water slides buffed before municipal aquatic centers are ready to open for the season.

"There's a lot of cleaning up we have to do," Hermiston parks and recreation director Larry Fetter said.

Hermiston's aquatic center opens June 10. A long checklist of items, from boiler inspections to a software upgrade for the pool's chemical control system, have already allowed the center's lap swimming pool to be filled. It took 12 hours to fill the pool from a fire hose, but three days to warm it up to a comfortable temperature.

On the multi-use pool side, crumbling tiles have been replaced with a new cement lip, but the pool still needs power-washed and repainted, and the water slides need some work too. Layers of dust, which are particularly bad this year due to construction at Good Shepherd Medical Center next door, have to be scrubbed away.



EO FILE PHOTO

Poolgoers enjoy lazy river current portion of the Hermiston Family Aquatic Center in June, 2015.

"Sometimes we get a year, sometimes we get two years out of the paint," Fetter said. "On the slides, calcium deposits form and slow it down, so you have to buff them out, then like with a car you wax them and get them speed-racer ready."

He said city employee Brian Fricke has done much of the work to get the pool ready for use.

The concessions stand also has to be readied. Fetter said this year the people who run the Tiki Hut outside the spray park will also run the pool's concessions stand, adding a selection of shaved ice to the stand's traditional fare.

Meanwhile Brandon Artz, the city's new rec-

reation director, has been busy coordinating training for 33 new lifeguards and 15 returning ones. Employees must go through a 25-hour course of CPR, first aid and rescue techniques for unconscious and "active" victims, including being able to dive down to the bottom of the deep end and pull an unconscious adult to the surface.

"It's a pretty intensive four days," Artz said.

This year most classes took place at Blue Mountain Community College's pool, but next year Hermiston is looking to move employee trainings over to Boardman's new pool set to open July 2, since BMCC's pool may not reopen

again after its summer maintenance closure on June 2.

Once the four-day training course is over, employees are constantly being tested through ongoing inservice training, including test drills during the work day where lifeguards have to jump in and rescue dummies thrown into the pool.

"It's not just a one-time training, it's an ongoing measure of their preparedness," Artz said.

Some lifeguards are returning from college, but the majority are high school students. Either way, the pool can't open until they're done with school, which is why it opens on June 10 this year. There are still a few spots left for swim lessons, but they're filling up fast.

Hermiston Family Aquatic Center

Open: June 10 to Aug. 27
Public swim: Preseason June 10-16 3:10 to 8 p.m. then regular season 1:10 to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 11:10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

Rates: \$4 for children under 13 and active military members, \$5 for teenagers and seniors, \$6 for adults and \$20 for families.

Season passes: \$50 youth and seniors, \$60 adults, \$150 families

Additional information: For swim lessons, cabana rentals and other information visit hermistonpool.com.

Boardman Pool and Recreation Center

Open: July 2
Hours: 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturdays and noon to 7 p.m. on Sundays

Rates: Toddlers free, ages 4-18 \$4, adults \$5, seniors \$4.50

Season Passes: Monthly and yearly passes to the pool and recreation center are available

Additional information: The pool and recreation center will have a grand opening celebration from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on July 1. Call Boardman parks and recreation at 541-481-7217 for more information.

Willow Creek Water Park (Heppner)

Open: June 10
Public swim: 1-8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1-5 p.m. on Sundays

Rates: \$2 for ages 0-4 and senior citizens, \$3 for ages 5-17, \$4 for adults, \$14 for families

Season Passes: \$75 for an individual and \$140 per family

Additional information: The pool will close on days cooler than 65 degrees or when there are fewer than 6 swimmers. Visit willowcreekpd.com/water-park for more information.

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