



October 29, 2008

Fresh activities for seniors

New addition at Buckner center offers the latest in fun, fitness

By Andrea Uhde

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There were Nintendo Wii games, cornhole competitions and dancing -- but this was no school event.

Oh no, this was all about Oldham County's seniors and their new entertainment options at the senior center in Buckner.

"Have you seen the exercise equipment?" Sherry Grider, 64, asked three other women during the grand opening of the center's 7,000-square-foot addition last week. "I'm talking bikes, a treadmill, everything. And they've got a huge gym."

As soon officials cut the ribbon outside the building, people were hopping on the exercise equipment and testing out a Wii bowling game.

"If you're gonna see anybody, this will be the place to come," said Grider, of Pewee Valley.

And she might just be right.

Several people I spoke with during the opening Friday said they rarely went to the senior center, but with the addition they'll be coming a lot more.

"I just live over here, so I might start coming here," said Tom Hicks, 74, who was trying out some of the cardio equipment.

The addition, which doubles the size of the center, has been years in the making, Judge-Executive Duane Murner said.

"This is a great tribute to the treasured population of our county" called seniors, he said.

The project began when officials realized the senior population was growing, and many of them were becoming more active, Murner said.

Oldham had an estimated 10,200 residents 55 and older in 2005, but that number is expected to rise to 26,182 by 2030.

And many of them may like their new options at the center: a basketball half-court with volleyball nets, a walking track, a workout room and space for classes including clogging.

In a small office, a physical therapist from Baptist Hospital Northeast will visit twice a week to assess any sports injuries.

The addition cost about \$900,000. A federal Community Development Block Grant will cover \$500,000 of that, and the county will pay the rest.

Starting this week, the center will be open until 7 p.m. weekdays, and people 55 and older can use it.

"We've progressed a lot," said Carolyn Smallwood of Crestwood, who is 71 and has been going to the senior center since it was in a small building in La Grange. It later moved to a space in the John W. Black Community Center in Buckner, and in 2000 seniors got their current building not far from the community center, off Ky. 393.

The Tri-County Community Action Agency runs that facility and will operate the new addition.

Some seniors also use the community center on Ky. 146 in La Grange, which also houses the City Hall offices. That center has YMCA activities, a gym and a walking track, along with some activity space.

Brenda Fox, with the Buckner senior center, said they'll have a variety of classes in the addition, and they're still looking for more ideas.

"Your ideas count, and we want to know what you want," she told the group Friday. "This is for you all."

I'm no senior, but here's my idea: A swing dance class. It's classic and beautiful, and I'm thinking Oldham's seniors would fit right in.



Photos by Andrea Uhde, The Courier-Journal

Treva Prather, 71, of La Grange played Wii Bowling, one of the new games in the senior addition.

Quick take:

Senior center

Where: 1015 Dispatchers Way, La Grange (Buckner area).

Information: 222-1349.



Tom Hicks, 74, of Buckner tested a piece of equipment in the addition's exercise room.

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