



Ryan Kersten/Index

Playground equipment at the intersection of Cottonwood and Florence Streets was replaced with new features last week. A gravel ramp allows for wheelchair access.

Park updates increase access

Playground's \$50,000 upgrade allows for wheelchair access and increases child safety

BY GRACE FREEMAN
Staff Reporter

Kirkville Parks and Recreation hired Burke Playground Equipment to replace Memorial Park's playground equipment last week. Construction and material of this new playground cost the city around \$50,000.

The old playground on the corner of Cottonwood and Florence Streets was dated and worn. Melanie Smith, Kirkville Assistant City Manager, said the playground had broken canopies and old impact material that met the safety standard but failed to meet handicap accessibility standards.

As part of the new playground's construction, Smith and the Lakes, Parks and Recreation Commission worked to find the best replacement impact material that is safer than pea gravel, which was used in the old playground.

"We had pea gravel, which is not handicap accessible so we went with the engineered wood fiber material because it is more handicap accessible," Smith said.

The wood fiber material absorbs impact when something hits it, so if a child were to fall down, the impact would be much less severe.

Lakes, Parks and Recreation Commission made the final decision on the construction company after researching purchasing and design options.

During the past two years, Parks and Recreation has poured sidewalks in the park, and a ramp will soon be added to the playground for better and safer accessibility.

"It's great that they are making the steps that they can make, like at Memorial Park," said Deborah Wohlters, Executive Director of Adair County SB40/De-

velopmental Disability Board. "The fully accessible ones are terribly expensive, and small steps in the right direction are always good news for the community."

Wohlters said that the new playgrounds are built with room to allow children in wheelchairs the ability to use the equipment and swings, giving them full access of the park.

The impact material, wood chips, at Memorial Park was replaced as well, which is a common trend through the nation right now, according to the Kaboom! Accessible Playground website.

Kaboom! is a national non-profit that empowers communities to build playgrounds, with a focus in building accessible playgrounds for children with disabilities, according to kaboom.org.

"By making the impact softer and making the things lower, it makes the playground safer," Wohlters said. "It makes it easier for [children with disabilities] to climb on . . . Those motor skills are going to grow the more they climb and play."

Memorial Park's ground area now covers a larger area for lower level features and should accommodate more children than the old equipment, Smith said.

Kirkville Parks and Recreation hopes the playground will be utilized more often, especially because there are more than 100 children with disabilities in Adair County, Wohlters said.

The playground has lower level access, but there aren't any solid panel features on it. It has more climbing capabilities, without traditional steps up to the playground itself.

City crews removed the old playground equipment previously this month to prepare the site for the new equipment. The construction took a little more than a week and the park now is open for play.

Parks and Recreation plans to reseed grass and add plants to improve the playground's appearance during the spring, Smith said.

Ryle Hall cuts final ribbon

BY HUONG TRAN
Staff Reporter

A ribbon-cutting event at Ryle Hall today is celebrating the building and the renovations completed this summer and will provide a history of Ryle.

Missouri Hall Director Zac Burden will speak about Ryle's history. John Gardner, director of the Office of Residence Life will speak about Ryle's renovations, and Senior Kailey Tyler will speak about her three years of experience living in the residence hall.

There will be guided tours of the building by Ryle residents from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.

"We really wanted this to be something special and we didn't want it to be a rushed event," Duckett said. "We wanted to be able to involve the community and involve the faculty and staff and give them opportunity to really come through and see Ryle alive and filled with students."

Tyler said this ribbon cutting event is planned by students and they think this is a good time celebrate because it looks beautiful in the Fall. He said they didn't want to interfere with events earlier in the Fall.

Ryle student advisor

Amy Lehnhoff said the event is open to all Kirkville community members.

The Ryle renovation is part of Truman State residence halls' \$90 million renovation schedule. According to the brochure for the ribbon cutting event, construction started with West Campus Suites in 2006. This was followed by the renovations of Missouri, Blanton-Nason-Brewer and Dobson halls in 2006, 2007 and 2008, respectively.

Ryle Hall Director Catie Duckett said this is the first year the new Ryle is completely open. This is the Ryle's second renovation, the first one occurring during the 1980s. All other halls were one-year projects, while Ryle's renovation was a two-year process that started in 2009 and allowed it to keep half the building open for residents. During the 2009-2010 academic year, the north side was closed and renovated while the south side was open. In 2010-2011, the north side was opened for residents and the south side for renovation was closed. The full renovation was completed at the end of this past summer.

"We really wanted this

to be something special and we didn't want it to be a rushed event," Duckett said. "We wanted to be able to involve the community and involve the faculty and staff and give them opportunity to really come through and see Ryle alive and filled with students."

Ryle was constructed in 1963 and opened during Fall 1963 with 285 rooms serving 613 residents. The hall originally was constructed as a residence for female students. Rooms were furnished in an Early-American style and painted in pastel colors. It is the second largest hall at Truman with 550 residents.

Tyler said it always feels like home.

Tyler said Ryle's popularity increased this past year, especially among upperclassmen who have room-choice priority.

"It does cost a little more to live here now, but I think it's more than worth the difference," Tyler said.

Ryle rates are the same as Blanton-Nason-Brewer at \$3,810, and both are the second most expensive residence hall after West Campus Suites, according to the housing rates 2011-2012 on the Residence Life website.

Students create wood sculptures



Lindsey Borgna/Index

Sophomore April Johnston stains a piece of wood outside Ophelia Parrish for a sculpture project in her Sculpture 1 class Nov. 14.

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