

SOMETHING EXCITING FOR EVERYONE!

THE HUTCHINSON FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER FINISHES UP ITS FIRST SEASON WITH PLENTY TO CELEBRATE AND WITH NEW IDEAS ON HOW TO CONTINUE GROWING IN THE FUTURE.

BY MAGGIE SCHROEDER

The Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center accommodates 730 swimmers at any given time.

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he Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center opened its doors to the public on June 3rd, 2017. The facility

spans over 34,000 square feet and takes about 400,000 gallons of water to fill with water depth varying from zero to twelve feet. It accommodates 730 swimmers and is home to one of three water zip-lines in the state of Minnesota, a climbing wall, one-

and three-meter diving boards, an enclosed speed slide, an enclosed tube slide, an open body slide, a leisure river and a zero-depth area with several play features. The leisure area includes a six lane, 25-yard by five-lane 25-meter lap pool. The facility has outdoor lockers, updated locker rooms and three family changing rooms.

Finishing off the updates is the Shark Food concession stand serving a variety of hot and cold food, snacks and beverages with three party tents available for rent. There are over 100 lounge chairs and 7 shade umbrellas available for patron use.

BUILDING THE NEW AQUATIC CENTER

The planning process on the Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center started in 2013. Due to the fact that the original outdoor pool in Hutchinson was in need of updates and repairs, the City Council did a study to help develop discussion points on the future of the pool. After US Aquatics, located in Delano, Minn., gathered data, it was discovered that if the city were to make only the needed repairs to the facility, the cost would be \$1.275 million. In comparison, the estimated costs for total replacement would be around \$5.5 million. The council decided that further discussion was necessary and there were higher needs in the community at the time.

In May of 2015, conversations regarding what to do with the community pool started up again and the Council urged discussion on the option of building on the existing site.

Initially, the Council created a plan that had a budget of \$5 million. Initial design costs ranged from \$6.2 to \$6.6 million

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and the Council eventually created a budget of \$6 million for the project. Construction started in May of 2016 with demolition to the existing pool and infrastructure updates.

As with many projects, there were a few bumps in the road. Shortly after they poured the concrete for the new lap pool, the site received 8 inches of rain in less than 12 hours and the entire lap pool was found floating. Thankfully, project insurance covered the cost of rebuilding the lap pool and construction was completed on May 27th, 2017.

The project was completed without a tax levy increase or bond referendum. Funding for the waterpark came from a variety of city sources. One example is sponsorships of shade umbrellas by local businesses. If they sponsored an umbrella, they're logo or business name was printed on that umbrella for all patrons to see while using the waterpark providing advertising to reach 55,000+ patrons each summer.

A PLACE FOR LEARNING AND CONSERVATION

Thanks to the unique features at the aquatic center, life-guards certified through the facility are fully waterpark certified as they get the experience of backboard training on the slides and in the leisure river with the currents running. Along with that, the Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center is an ideal location for Red Cross Instructor academies. There is an indoor instructional area with all technology requirements and features required for all components of American Red Cross lifeguarding certifications.

A high priority of the City of Hutchinson was to incorporate as many eco-friendly features as possible into the waterpark. The plants are all naturally found in the area and require little maintenance. Most of the plants are in areas that typically receive water run-off reducing the need to water as frequently. The decision was made to use a Defender perlite system to filter the pools. It's advertised to save 1,468,800 more water than an average sand filter plus minimizing the amount of energy it takes to heat the recently backwashed water and reduce the amount of chemicals necessary to treat dirtier water.

In the facility's concession stand, all cups, lids, straws, nacho boats, napkins, pizza boxes and disposable utensils are biodegradable. The facility had to educate patrons on what was compostable and what wasn't, but it has been a huge success and there have been significant reductions in the amount of garbage disposed and in disposal costs.

GIVING GUESTS A HEALTHIER CHOICE

Not only did the center incorporate eco-friendly choices in the concession stand, the park's menu includes healthy choices as well. The City of Hutchinson chose to abide by the guidelines set forth by the state of Minnesota Department of Health which meant that a minimum of 50 percent of food products must be healthy options. The facility wanted to make sure they had options for people with all dietary needs.

Guests can choose from three ingredient



fruit smoothies with zero added sugar, frozen fruit bowls, string cheese, beef and turkey jerky, yogurt with colors and flavoring from natural sources and gluten free pizza. For birthday parties, the park contracts with a local bakery to get dairy and gluten free cupcakes, if requested. Another great option available to patrons is a snack-sack put together by one of the center's food suppliers that includes a 100 percent all natural juice and a bag of Goldfish snack crackers or a Goldfish grahams snack. The price point on this snack pack has made it a perfect choice for all families and also fit into the center's healthy offerings commitment.

Feedback the park has received this year has been incredibly helpful and allowed the staff to try out a rotating menu. Pepperoni, sausage and cheese pizza along with hotdogs were offered on a daily basis, but the facility also offered hamburgers and walking tacos on a rotation. The center utilized Facebook and word of mouth advertising to inform patrons of when these items would be available. On the 4th of July, the park created a red, white and blue menu offering red, white and blue smoothies, fruit bowls and slushies.

Another priority of the Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center was keeping safety in mind at all times. The facility's three-meter board is equipped with a SafeDive platform, which is a state of the art platform with custom railing safety modifications along with a platform that extends four feet over the water almost eliminating the chance of a diver falling anywhere other than into the water. Another unique safety feature of the park's dive tower and pedestrian bridge is the RecStep treads are designed to have a longer lasting tread with a built in anti-slip system that will not delaminate. These stairs are more durable and require minimal maintenance. Both SafeDive and RecStep



The center hosts a variety of activities including birthday parties and company summer picnics.

were provided by Recreation by Lemmie Jones.

The Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center hosts a variety of activities throughout the summer. They were home to over 30 birthday parties, a private party for a company summer picnic with their employees and families, a fundraiser swim-a-thon raising over \$10,000 supporting the local swimming club, morning and evening fitness swim time Monday through Friday that allows patrons to utilize the current in the leisure river along with the lap pool and Aqua Zumba classes.

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The Hutchinson Family Aquatic Center also hosted a unique introductory swimming lesson teaching families of little ones how to safely use the features at the park along with equipping them with basic skills to get their children ready for swim lessons.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Since this was the first year the Hutchinson Family Aquatic center was open, the park's management team focused first on discovering how to best operate the facility and then looked for ways to improve for the future.

Plans are already underway for

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HUTCHINSON FAMILY AQUATIC CENTER

900 HARRINGTON STREET SW
HUTCHINSON, MN 55350

[HTTP://WWW.HUTCHINSONPRCE.COM/
AQUATIC-CENTER/](http://www.hutchinsonprce.com/aquatic-center/)

OWNERS:
CITY OF HUTCHINSON, MINNESOTA

ADMISSION PRICES:
\$6 BEFORE 5:00 P.M. / \$5 AFTER 5:00 P.M.

DATES OPEN:
JUNE-AUGUST

SIZE/ACRES:
34,000 SQUARE FEET

CAPACITY:
730 BATHERS

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:
SEASONAL: 107

CLIENTELE
(PERCENT LOCAL VS. TOURIST):
CITY RESIDENTS

The new facility
opened on June
3, 2017.



SUPPLIERS

DEVELOPMENT/DESIGN: US AQUATICS
CONSULTANTS: US AQUATICS
CONSTRUCTION: GLOBAL SPECIALTY CONTRACTORS INC.; ZACH BRAZIER (PROJECT MANAGER); HASSLEN CONSTRUCTION
CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT: SIGNATURE AQUATICS
WATERSLIDES: FIBRART / RECREATION BY LEMMIE JONES LLC
RAFT/TUBES/MATS: ZEBEC; FIBRART / RECREATION BY LEMMIE JONES LLC
AQUATIC ZIP LINE COMPONENTS: FIBRART / RECREATION BY LEMMIE JONES LLC
3-METER DIVE TOWER & ZIP LINE COLUMNS: FIBRART / RECREATION BY LEMMIE JONES LLC
1-METER DIVE TOWER: SR SMITH
CHILDREN'S TOT SLIDE: FIBRART / RECREATION BY LEMMIE JONES LLC
FURNITURE: RECREATION SUPPLY COMPANY
CHILDREN'S EQUIPMENT: AQUATIX
POOL AND/OR DECK COATINGS: GLOBAL SPECIALTY CONTRACTORS INC.; PROMAINTEANCE
FILTRATION EQUIPMENT: NEPTUNE-BENSON PUMPS; AURORA PUMPS
CHEMICAL: BECS; HAWKINS CHEMICAL
CHEMICAL CONTROLLERS: BECS
SHADE SYSTEM: SUN PORTS
ADMISSION SYSTEM: MAXGALAXY
FOOD/EQUIPMENT: SYSCO; KWIK TRIP; COKE



Next year, the park plans to add swim times for swimmers age 6 and under.

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improvements in the center's offerings for the 2018 season. There was a high demand for evening fitness swim time along with some adult-only (18+) swim time at the park.

To better serve the needs of patrons, the center is partnering with local group homes to provide opportunity for wheel chair bound swimmers to use the facility when it is less busy and there is more room for them to use their chairs in the water.

The center also will be offering sensory-friendly swim time with limited use of aquatic features to minimize excess stimulation along with special swimming time for swimmers ages 6 and under to enjoy the aquatic center with their caregivers in a less busy environment. Other improvements that the center is considering is offering high back or Adirondack style chairs to accommodate the needs of patrons who have difficulty sitting on low chaise style lounge chairs. •