



Holding Court: Granite City Opens Pickleball Facility at Wilson Park

October 18 2019 7:00 AM



GRANITE CITY — Madison County officials were welcomed by Granite City Parks and Recreation District on Thursday at Wilson Park to check out the new pickleball courts.

“The pickleball courts turned out nice,” Chairman Kurt Prenzler said.

For those who don’t know the sport of pickleball, its been described as a mixture of badminton, tennis and Ping-Pong. It features paddles that are squatter and more rectangular than a typical tennis racquet, and a court that's more fun-sized — it takes up less than half the area of a tennis court, with a net that's just a bit shorter.

Granite City Park District received a \$150,590 grant from the county’s Park Enhancement Program (PEP) to install the six pickleball courts. The Park District also used PEP grant funding to help with other projects in Wilson Park such as lighting for a walk-way, walking trail renovation, portable baseball mound, expression swings and frame and ice skates for its outdoor ice skating rink.

The Park District also provided additional funding for the projects.

Prenzler said the PEP program is successful thanks to the taxpayers. In 2000, voters approved the 1/10th of one percent sales tax under the Illinois Metro-East Park and Recreation District Act, which is administered by Madison County’s Community Development Department, he said.

“Since the program’s establishment the funds have been used to improve parks and recreational facilities across the county,” Prenzler said. “These are all the things that enhance the quality of life for residents.”

Director of the Granite City Parks and Recreation District David C. Williams said that since the courts opened there have been plenty of people playing pickleball.

“Pickleball is a sport exploding nationwide,” Williams said.

The newly completed, regulation-size courts are adjacent to the tennis courts in Wilson Park on Benton Street.

“We converted two tennis courts into the six pickleball courts,” Williams said.

Beth Ravanelli of Granite City said the Park District did a beautiful job on the new courts. She said she enjoys meeting up with her high school friends for a match, or two.

“It’s such an easy game to play,” Ravanelli said.

Granite City County Board members Eric Foster, Mike Parkinson and Kristin Novacich-Koberna attended the event and watched as Ravanelli and others played, including the chairman.

“It’s really a lot of fun,” he said. “I can see where it could be a little addicting.”