

# Wood River Recreation Center Opens

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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**WOOD RIVER** - The new Wood River recreation center is officially open.

Wood River officials and community members celebrated the opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and open house on Saturday, Feb. 17, 2024. Attendees could tour the facility and enjoy the basketball, volleyball and pickleball courts, an indoor walking track, a gymnastics room and more.

“This project was always, in my mind, meant to be a very positive thing for Wood River and the surrounding communities,” said Parks and Recreation Director Jason Woody. “We will provide over 40 part-time jobs, giving high school and college kids the chance to learn to work in a public setting and giving retirees an opportunity to stay in the workforce. The rec center will bring thousands of people to Wood River, and those folks will patronize local businesses and restaurants in the community. It will give our kids a

sense of pride to have a place like this to keep them out of trouble and help kids stay on a path to success.”

Woody explained that 60% of the money that funded the rec center came from a 1% sales tax in the City of Wood River, which generated over \$7M for large-scale projects like the rec center. The rest of the money came from a \$2.5M Park and Recreational Facility Construction Grant (PARC) through the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. Wood River was one of four applicants that received the full \$2.5M from the PARC grant in 2019.

Wood River Mayor Tom Stalcup thanked Woody, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Pat Minogue, Recreation Supervisor Dickson Wong and the rest of the department for their “tireless efforts” to build the new rec center.

“This has been a long-awaited day for Wood River,” Stalcup said. “With the work of the past administration and with the Rec Department and all the citizens involved, we come to this day.”

Woody encouraged attendees to check out the new facility. The recreation center is located at 633 N. Wood River Avenue in Wood River. For more information about the center or the Wood River Parks and Recreation Department, visit their [official website at WRParks.org](http://WRParks.org) or their [Facebook page](#).

“We’ve been working really hard and went through a lot of uphill battles to get to this point,” Woody added. “I’m just excited, and I can’t wait for people to come in, specifically kids, and see their smiling faces when they come to see this place. I think they’re going to be really impressed and excited to use it, excited to take advantage of it for years to come.”