

Rink of dreams celebrates grand opening

By Lori Larsen

It has been a long three years of raising funds, collecting donations and promoting a dream, but the Kingman Recreation Association (KRA) and many volunteers' hard work paid off in a big "icy" way. On Saturday, Dec. 15, the Kingman Rink of Dreams held the grand opening and dedication of the brand new regulation sized outdoor ice rink and indoor facility.

The rink has been open for use since December 2017 and has already seen its share of activity.

KRA member Trent Kenyon spoke about how the rink is already being used. "We have had people inquire as to whether or not the rink is open for all areas around Kingman, and they have been bringing their children to take advantage of being able to get onto some ice and skate."

Kenyon commented that on his way home on Dec. 10, driving past the rink, he noted around nine vehicles in the rink parking lot and people out skating.

"The rink is most definitely being used."

Also, speaking on behalf of the Kingman Recreation Association, Dave Francis commented, "The Kingman Rink of Dreams has provided a reason for community involvement, not only for our community, but extended communities as well.

"The ice has been used almost every night by both young and older adults for games of shinny or skating."

Francis said seeing the rink being used is fulfilling a big part of what the dream for the rink was in the first place.

"Also, the historical Friday night skating party has once again been something people look forward to enjoying."

Francis has been on board since the beginning, assisting in organizing and completing the facility to now being involved in flooding and helping maintain the rink. "I was able to source a quality ice machine which makes for great ice."

Francis remarked that what he first envisioned when the project began is now coming true. "I am seeing young families and people becoming more involved. Also, the facility is being used in the summer for horse activity by groups such as the Kingman 4-H Bits and Spurs. We are pleased to have a year-round facility for everyone to be able to use."

Kenyon said that one of the happy results of building the Kingman Rink of Dreams is seeing community spirit blossoming, both within Kingman and from surrounding areas.

A community spirit that spoke volumes on Dec. 15, despite bitter winds, as a large crowd of people from Kingman, Camrose and surrounding areas came out to celebrate the new facility and a true sense of community.

Pastor Garfield opened the ceremonies with prayer followed by the singing of the National Anthem by a children's choir.

Members of the KRA filled the crowd in on the details of the project and thanked all sponsors, big and small, organizations and individuals. A plaque board located in the rink building recognizes the generosity of all sponsors and some sponsors are also displayed on rink board advertisements.

Member of the Alberta Rink Of Dreams (ROD) Society and a steward of children's well-being, Wilf Brooks has been a strong advocate and supporter of the Kingman Rink of Dreams since the beginning. "Alberta Rink of Dreams Society was built with the sole purpose of 'getting involved' with a goal of helping communities to help themselves in bringing back or

salvaging ODRs (Outdoor rinks) as multi-use community gathering places."

Brooks added that projects like the Kingman Rink and Equestrian Centre fit the ROD credo perfectly. "If we were able to help Kingman in some way achieve the 50 funders they needed and/or save a few dollars here or there, then that is what we are about."

The Kingman Rink of Dreams is more than just a rink. It has become the hub of the community, a place for children and adults to come and enjoy physical activity and fun and, with the addition of the post office, is a place for community members to meet, catch up and stay in touch.

"For as long ago as 100 years, communities have been building their hub around a rink and/or a ball diamond," remarked Brooks. "Then came the rink shack, as they are so fondly called, which gave way to community halls, which along with other recreational activities, became the hub of the community."

Brooks noted that not only sporting events but political events, bingo and other social activities drew community members in and created a true sense of togetherness. "I can guarantee you that the rink and/or ball diamond were what many communities were built around, whether in the country or the city.

"In Kingman, we (ROD society) learned more than we taught. The ROD is a fledging organization and Kingman was well along the way before we got involved."

On a final note, Brooks said that it is time again for people to get up, get out and get active and there is no better way to do that than a free skate on an amazing facility like the Kingman Rink of Dreams, that is so close to home. "Canada is about ice hockey and hot chocolate," remarked Brooks.



Lori Larsen, Camrose Booster
The Kingman Rink of Dream's official ribbon floated to the ice after a group of eager skaters skated through. Figure skaters wowed the crowd with their moves during the Kingman Rink of Dreams grand opening ceremonies.



Special guests MLA and UCP candidate Jackie Lovely and Camrose County councillor Greg Gillespie congratulated all involved in making this project come to fruition and commented on the sense of pride and fellowship projects like these bring to communities.

After the facility was officially dedicated, young skaters took to the ice in a ribbon cutting skate-off.

Once the ribbon hit the ice, the rink was ready to host the Tofield Figure Skating Club demonstration, after which a good old fashioned outdoor hockey game, refereed by Richard Schultz, took over the ice.

Concluding remarks and the Augustana Choir closed the official ceremonies.

As of the grand opening on Dec. 15, Kenyon reported that the project is nearly completed. "Basically the only thing left to do is to build bleachers under the overhang onto the rink on both sides of the exit doors from the building, which KRA hopes can be done through further donations."

Free use of the facility does depend on generous donations from users going forward to help with upkeep, maintenance of equipment and other expenses

such as flooding the ice.

For more information on the Kingman Rink of Dreams or to donate, visit the webpage at www.kingmancommunityhall.com.



Lori Larsen, Camrose Booster
Kingman Recreation Association member Trent Kenyon, left welcomes Camrose County councillor Greg Gillespie to speak during the grand opening of the Rink of Dreams.