



The future of Maple Grove basketball and expanded community opportunities move from a drawing to reality early next year.

## Building Expansion Brings Basketball Bounty

Maple Grove Community Gymnasium expansion expected to open in early 2015.

AFTER TEN YEARS, THE PURSUIT OF ADDITIONAL GYM space by the Osseo Maple Grove Basketball Association is becoming a reality at Maple Grove Junior High School.

"In 2004, we were already sacrificing programs for space. It wasn't possible to have much of an off season due to space," says Todd Leyse, parent and former Osseo Maple Grove Basketball Association (OMGBA) president.

A building expansion at Maple Grove Junior High School will provide additional gym space as part of a partnership between the city of Maple Grove, Osseo Area Schools, and the Osseo Maple Grove Basketball Association. The \$8.1 million construction project began in the spring of 2014 and, despite a rainy construction season, will be completed in early 2015.

Once completed, the expansion will add an additional three basketball courts (configured to six practice courts) at the site. There will be a dedicated concession and commons area, spectator seating that is separate from the players, a community education office, additional restrooms, safety door and separate entrance. Air conditioning will be another feature of the new gyms.

The gyms are anticipated to open up availability for additional programming, including and beyond basketball, according to organizers. For example, if the school district isn't using the space during daytime hours, the separate entry allows for more recreation possibilities.

"We can offer daytime programming that doesn't currently exist, such as adult and senior exercise classes," says Mark Saari, Maple Grove superintendent of rec-

reation. Saari adds that, during the school day, this is a value from a city standpoint.

According to Jim Davison, OMGBA president, the school district has priority access to the new gyms until 5:30 p.m. each school day while priority access during the remaining days/times will be shared by OMGBA and the city of Maple Grove.

The city will pay 80 percent and OMGBA 20 percent of the construction cost. OMGBA will fund operational and staffing costs as well. The Osseo school district provided the land and will facilitate staffing scheduling.

"The new expansion is exciting," says Brian Siverson-Hall, ISD 279 executive director of community engagement, adding that buildings throughout the school district are used nearly year-round. "Anytime we have an opportunity to maximize space, it allows us to create more opportunities."

Until the building opens, OMGBA programming isn't anticipated to change drastically. For the second half of the 2014-2015 season, the impact will likely be more noticeable in practice time.

"A year from now, our hope will be that we will be able to right-size our basketball offerings between September and March for the community needs. That could mean adding programs, extending seasons," says Davison. "We haven't been able to meet the needs of the community for many years due to space. We and the community have had the desire; we just haven't been able to find a way to make it comfortable for existing programs."

"When you think of that, the organization [OMGBA] will need to raise funds," he continues. "Our intent is to have all OMGBA related activities in there during the basketball season (mid-September through mid-March). Outside of our regular season, that is where we're tasking ourselves with figuring out how to use it and to raise some money." As a result, OMGBA is looking at creating off-season opportunities, which could potentially include basketball clinics, camps, tournaments and leasing the space to help raise funds to pay for costs.

"It's exciting to see [Maple Grove Community Gymnasium] come to fruition. It will be a tremendous opportunity for the players and community," Leysa says. //

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