

WORLD WATERPARK™

The Official Magazine of the World Waterpark Association

Keeping Everyone Happy, Healthy & Active At Das Rec

New Braunfels, Texas, U.S.A.

Keepin' it Splashy!

At Sutherland Leisure Centre Water Fun Park in Sutherland, NSW, Australia

The Evolution of VIP Areas

Italy's Zoomarine takes VIP packaging and services to the next level

Rolling The Dice On Fun

Paradise Island at Pioneer Park goes for the win in Commerce City, Colorado, U.S.A.



KEEPING EVERYONE HAPPY, HEALTHY & ACTIVE AT DAS REC

Opened in July 2018, New Braunfels' newest recreation center, Das Rec, is already exceeding expectations for membership and cost recovery.

BY STACEY DICKE & KELSEY HEIDEN

Das Rec is home to a 20,000-square-foot gym and 7,300 square feet of cardio and fitness equipment.



N

ew Braunfels, Texas was established in 1845 by German immigrants. And while it may not be as well-known as its neighbors of San Antonio and Austin, it has been one of the nation's fastest growing cities for the past five years. The suburb of 80,000 residents is home to two rivers, museums, Wurstfest (a ten day salute to sausage) and many attrac-

tions that make this city a tourist destination.

As the site of two pristine Texas rivers, the Comal River and the Guadalupe River, the city has a long history of water recreation. This includes the famous City Tube Chute, created in the late 1970s as a thrilling water ride via inner tubes on the Comal River. Over 250,000 tubers float this attraction each year. The Tube Chute hosts a cardboard boat race annually to see which vessel captures the fastest time through the rapids.

Nearby Landa Park boasts a 1-million-gallon spring fed pool that has refreshed visitors since 1898. Almost 90,000 guests play in this attraction each summer. The park is also home to Landa Lake and Comal Springs, both fed from the Edwards Aquifer. Park attractions include nature trails, paddle boats, a miniature train, a golf course and sites for picnicking and celebrations.

In May 2013, residents of New Braunfels, Texas passed an \$86 million bond referendum that included \$20 million for parks and recreation. This was the first parks and recreation bond passed for the community since 1968. The successful 2013 parks bond

included the following items: \$2.5 million for a sports complex land purchase, \$1 million for a neighborhood park development and \$16 million for construction of a new recreation center.

LAUNCHING A NEW RECREATION CENTER FOR NEW BRAUNFELS RESIDENTS

The City partnered with Brinkley, Sargent, Wigginton (BSW) Architects, a Dallas-based firm, to design the new recreation center. Input from residents was sought through numerous stakeholder input meetings. City staff wanted to ensure the benefits of the building had reach through the entire community (including the school district, YMCA, senior center and others). Following an early presentation to the City Council on the conceptual design of the center, city officials made the unlikely decision to figure out how to expand the building, rather than scaling it back as so often happens in the construction market. The forward-thinking officials wanted to add an indoor competition pool and second gymnasium.

The New Braunfels Independent School District and the New Braunfels Economic Development Corporation both came forward as major contributors to the new facility adding \$2.5 million and \$5.8 million respectively to the construction budget. The facility broke ground in October 2016 and held a grand opening in July 2018. The facility name of Das Rec, which means "The Rec" in German, was selected by a community survey. Along with the 25-meter, 8-lane competition pool, the facility also boasts two full

The facility name of Das Rec, which means "The Rec" in German, was selected by a community survey.





The recreation center features a waterslide which takes riders outside of the building before returning them inside to a catch pool at the end.

sized gymnasiums, indoor track, multi-purpose rooms, group exercise room, child watch area, fitness floor, two birthday party rooms and an indoor leisure pool.

Parks and Recreation staff worked early during the design process with St. Louis-based Counsilman-Hunsaker to establish a business plan and determine cost recovery goals. Ultimately, the City Council adopted a business model and membership rates that would support a 90 percent cost recovery goal. At the end of year one operations, the facility is on track to finish out at 120 percent cost recovery. After six months of operation, Das Rec has just over 14,000 members, well above the original projections.

The early success of the facility has been dependent on providing high quality equipment and programs, delivering outstanding customer service and being responsive to member feedback. The 7,000-square-foot fitness floor features top of the line equipment from Precor, Cybex and others. One of the most popular pieces for those seeking health improvement is the functional training circuit by Escape. This unit provides flexibility and creativity for instructors to devise challenging and fun circuits for the members.

The two indoor pools are chief attractions at Das Rec. The leisure pool includes three lap lanes, a current channel, a children's play structure and a waterslide that loops from inside the building to outside the building and back in again. Maintained at 86 degrees, the leisure pool is popular for aqua fitness, swim lessons and recreational play.

Special events are also a big hit including dive-in movies, mermaid parties and aqua egg hunts. The competition pool is home to the New Braunfels High School Unicorn Swim Team as part of a partnership agreement between the ISD and the City. The Unicorn Swim Team practices at Das Rec twice a day during the school year. The team is elated to be swimming in a state-of-the-art pool complete with timing system, Unicorn record board and private changing rooms for team members. In addition to the high school team, Das Rec hosts a popular masters swim program and a citywide year-round competitive swim team.

On the dry side of the facility, sports programs such as basketball and volleyball leagues keep members active and busy. The gymnasium has eight pickleball courts that are used daily by avid and eager pickleball enthusiasts. Group

At the end of year one operations, the facility is on track to finish out at 120 percent cost recovery.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34



DAS REC

345 LANDA STREET, NEW BRAUNFELS, TX 78130

WWW.DASREC.COM

OWNERS: CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS

ADMISSION PRICES:

ADULT MEMBERSHIPS RESIDENT: \$35 PER MONTH / NON-RESIDENT: \$42 PER MONTH
FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS RESIDENT: \$57 PER MONTH / NON-RESIDENT: \$69 PER MONTH

DATES OPEN: YEAR-ROUND, MONDAY-SUNDAY

SIZE/ACRES: 77,000 SQUARE FEET / 8 ACRE SITE

FUTURE EXPANSION PLANS: PLANS FOR ADDITIONAL 78 PARKING SPACES UNDERWAY

STAFF RETENTION PROGRAMS OR IN-SERVICE PROGRAMS:
STAFF RECOGNITION PROGRAM CALLED "BRING THE WOW!"





SUPPLIERS



DEVELOPMENT/DESIGN: BRINKLEY SARGENT WIGGINTON ARCHITECTS

CONSULTANTS: COUNSILMAN-HUNSAKER

CONSTRUCTION: BYRNE CONSTRUCTION

THEMING: AMMO GROUP

WATERSLIDES: SPLASHTACULAR

FITNESS EQUIPMENT: CYBEX; PRECOR;
ESCAPE OCTAGON

CHILDREN'S INTERACTIVE PLAY STRUCTURE:
VORTEX USA

FURNITURE: WILSON OFFICE INTERIORS

LOCKERS: SUMMIT LOCKERS

POOL AND/OR DECK COATINGS: DIAMOND SAFETY CONCEPTS

FILTRATION EQUIPMENT: AQUIONICS (UV); NEPTUNE-BENSON (SAND)

PUMPS: AURORA SUPPLY CO.; TECHTOP

CHEMICAL: ACCUTAB

CHEMICAL CONTROLLERS: CHEMTROL

ADMISSION SYSTEM: RECTRAC

DAS REC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

exercise classes take place throughout the day and along with childcare, are included in the cost of the monthly membership.

Staff are the secret to success for a facility this active and busy. With on-going training, the Das Rec team is committed to keeping members happy and returning often. Managers implemented an employee recognition program with the theme of "Bringing the WOW Factor!" that has motivated and empowered the 157 part-time employees to be resourceful, innovative and responsive. Social media posts recognizing the monthly staff awards have received some of the highest responses ever.

Das Rec has taken the historic German community by storm and is working to change lives for the better through improved health, social engagement and innovative programming. Das "awesome" is the best description for this 77,000 square feet of fun! •



STACEY DICKE HAS BEEN THE PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR IN NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS SINCE 2004. A GRADUATE OF TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY, SHE HAS MORE THAN 25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE MANAGING PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

AND FACILITIES. DICKE IS AN NRPA MEMBER, CAPRA COMMISSIONER AND A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PARK AND RECREATION ADMINISTRATORS. SHE IS ALSO A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE TEXAS RECREATION AND PARK SOCIETY.



KELSEY HEIDEN IS THE MANAGER OF DAS REC, NEW BRAUNFELS RECREATION CENTER. A GRADUATE OF TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY, SHE HAS OVER 13 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD. HEIDEN IS A CERTIFIED PARKS AND RECREATION PROFESSIONAL, AN NRPA MEMBER AND MEMBER OF THE TEXAS RECREATION AND PARK SOCIETY.

Staff are the secret to success for a facility this active and busy. With on-going training, the Das Rec team is committed to keeping members happy and returning often.

