

Sports spotlight

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Now in control of youth baseball, softball, soccer and basketball, McMinnville Civic Center is a one-stop shop for all athletics. The city believes the participation is still strong at McMinnville Civic Center, though it may not all be in baseball like it was in the past.

“We have spring baseball and softball, along with spring soccer. We have fall baseball and softball, which will run into basketball as it starts in the fall and goes into winter,” said Beard. “It’s to the point now where basketball runs all the way into baseball and then baseball runs all the way into basketball.”

“We’re about to have our skate park open up as well,” added McCord.

McCord has seen firsthand in his many years working in parks and recreation how so many choices can lure kids in multiple directions.

“When I was in Peachtree City, one thing that I saw being in this business and with my kids playing, hockey and lacrosse were the two fastest growing sports. Then I get here and find out we have rugby teams, which blew my mind,” said McCord.

In talks with parents, city officials have heard other sports options - AAU basketball, year-round travel teams - cited as reasons why their children have decided to eschew the summer baseball and softball leagues. Travel teams, a topic already covered in length in previous issues, have also been seen as drawing players away.

Beard hopes to lure people back, starting this fall.

“We’re going to offer some older leagues in the fall in hopes of bringing back teams. We want to work to bring back the love of the game,” said Beard.

The transition to running the baseball league hasn’t come without its share of obstacles, officials confirm. One thing which opened the eyes of organizers was when seasonal pay for umpires (In a January 26 ad in the *Standard*, the pay was scaled at \$12-18 an hour for umpires).

“We put out for seasonal pay on Facebook and got crucified because we pay umpires more than we do firemen. That spread like wildfire and we couldn’t back track,” said McCord. “Some people don’t understand, but one is seasonal and another is year-round.”

Parks and Recreation officials have considered outsourcing umpiring to assigners.

Another issue has been finding coaches. McCord noted that Parks and Recreation assistant director Justin Scott has had to coach and organize practices for 10-15 soccer teams at the start of the year while the league searched for coaches.

“Finding quality coaches - we’re having a hard time finding coaches who



Terry Beard took over as Parks and Recreation athletic director in 2016. Many coaches believe Beard has done a solid job trying to organize and run the city leagues.

want to put the time in. And it’s not because they don’t care, it’s because of time constraints,” said McCord.

Coaches are all volunteers, which was how the whole league was previously run.

The Warren County Youth Baseball and Softball Association still has many fans in the community, as

the league commissioners who volunteered endeared themselves to parents and kids alike.

Beard and McCord are not opposed to having volunteers come back who are there to help on a nightly basis. When asked if volunteers would be accepted, the answer was clear.

“Absolutely yes, by all means,” said McCord.

Southern Standard sports editor Jeffery Simmons can be reached at 473-2191.

Simmons Says

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The leagues mean a lot to me, and they do to a lot of people in this community as well. Those people, if they’re willing to volunteer their time graciously again, should be heard. I think they would be, from my talks with city officials.

Guys like Terry Mullican - who brought me a seven-page letter with ideas for league improvement - should be involved in the process. Same for Earl Partin, Jeff McGee, Don McBee and a whole lot more. City officials Terry Beard and Scott McCord, two men who I believe want to see the leagues thrive as well,

should be vital in the conversation as well.

More so, we need a new generation of baseball and softball fans to take up the mantle for the guys who were paving the way for us when we were kids. It’s our turn to give back.

All the minutia of issues facing the league now I believe could be ironed out if we had an army of volunteers, business owners and city officials united for one cause - saving youth baseball and softball.

Make no mistake, they need to be rescued. It’s just time all those carrying life preservers to get in the same room and on the same page.



Elect
Tommy Davenport
12 Dist. County Commissioner

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

ARLINGTON CHURCH OF CHRIST

2500 Faulkner Springs Road
McMinnville, TN 37110

July 15th - July 18th
7:00 pm - 8:15 pm

Theme: Western

TOPICS THE CLASSES WILL BE

Sunday Evening.....Outlaws Wanted by God
Monday Evening.....Jesus the "Rancher"
Tuesday Evening.....On the Trail Dangers
Wednesday Evening.....Rewards of Hard Work

ADULT SPEAKERS:

Sunday - Gary Hagar
Monday - Bill Boyd
Tuesday - Garland Robinson
Wednesday - Trent Key

Sunday Evening - Ice Cream Sundaes following services
Wednesday Evening - BBQ Meal before Services

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2 for \$3.00 28 oz. Gatorade

2 for \$4.44 all 16 oz. Energy Drinks

2 for \$2.22 32 oz. Powerade

2 for \$1.00 Mix & Match any 12 oz. can soda

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