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Wagner Memorial Park Campground To Expand

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10A

Day, the Clay County Fair, the Fourth of July weekend, Potato Days and Labor Day.

Some residents came early in the spring and stayed the entire summer. Others were weekend campers. Then construction workers found out about it. Families or work groups booked camping spots for the entire summer.

The 28 campsites were always full and visitors to our city were being turned away. In 2023 that problem was partially alleviated when an additional 14 camp sites were established just north of the existing facilities. Much of that work was done "in-house" by members of the Barnesville Public Works crews.

The City of Barnesville was anticipating as much as a 10-year payback on this investment. The demand, however, far exceeded expectations. In less than two seasons the expansion had been paid for.

And an old problem had come back to haunt them. All of the sites were full nearly every night and campers were being turned away again.

Expansion within the confines



Arnold Wagner Memorial Park Campground has become a busy destination. Some years there are campers enjoying the park as early as March with April beginning to see a lot of traffic. In June, July and August, all of the full service sites are full and prospective campers have to be turned away. It is hoped that the planned expansion will meet the demand that has been developing.

north side of the tree line that now separates the campground from the Wagner farmland. As many of the trees as possible will be salvaged but there will have to be a few taken out to create walkways between the new and existing campsites.

These new camp sites to the north are expected to be dedicated to long term customers. That will free up space in the existing campground for weekend and temporary visitors.

Also in the plans are the establishment of playground equipment for the kids in the park. Camp manager Greg Cahoy made a big hit with the youngsters last summer when he brought out an inflatable bouncy house for their use.

There are also plans in the works for a second bathhouse to be built that would include a storm shelter and expansion of the sewer and water systems and a remodel and renovation of the existing bathhouse. A walking path along Whiskey Creek, running from the campground to Blue Eagle Park, is also being considered.

It's an ambitious plan but city leaders are expecting to have the new facilities up and operating before the July 4 holiday weekend this summer. Final specs are being drafted and bids are being called.

With no formal plans and no bids called yet, everything is a shot in the dark. But even with the donated land from the Wagners, the city could be looking at investing a couple hundred thousand dollars in the expansion of the Arnold Wagner Memorial Park Campgrounds.

If it works as well as the past investments, it will be a quick payback for the city, paid for by people who are not now residents of the community. After a few weekends here, they may decide to make Barnesville their permanent, year-around home.



Right now it's just an overgrown treeline and a cornfield. By the end of summer, nearly nine acres of this field will become an addition to the Arnold Wagner Memorial Campground. The land has been donated by the surviving Wagner siblings, Richard, Rosemary and Anita. There were no strings attached to the gift other than naming rights to the property in memory of their brother.

of the park was not practical. There was room to grow to the west but that would detract from the charm of the grassy park. Much of the grass would have to be eliminated to make room for more camp sites. Gone also would be a planned kids playground that was in the works.

City leaders took the matter to the Wagner family to see if any of their land might be available. The family was more than receptive. Not only was their land available, the family would donate it to the city if it was going to be used to expand the park named in honor of their brother.

Over the fall and winter the details of the property transfer were ironed out and the land is now officially deeded to the city. The only stipulation from the Wagners was the same as Ulrich and Marie had expressed. The land had to remain as part of the park named in honor of their brother.

The Wagners emphasized that their decision to gift the land to the City of Barnesville was rooted in trust. They believe the city has been a responsible steward of their family's land and will continue to honor its purpose for generations to come.

The agreement with the city notes that the 8.7 acres of land will "square up" with the present north boundary of the park. The land is being donated without any financial consideration. It is entirely a gift reflecting the family's ongoing commitment to Barnesville's growth and quality of life.

Details on the configuration of the park have not been adopted by the council yet. Right now, in very rough form, those plans call for somewhere around 24 new full service camp sites being established. These site will be located on the

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