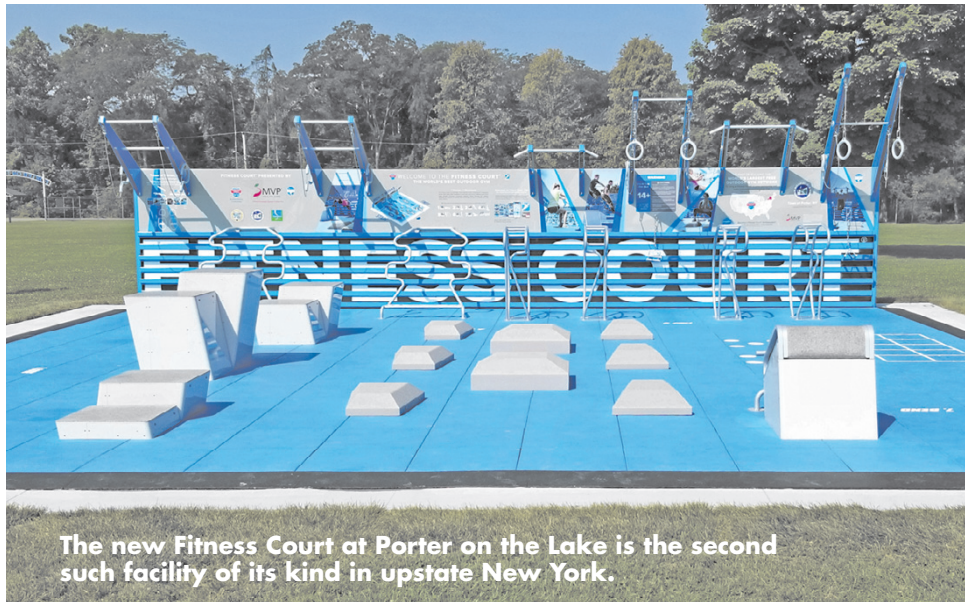


Fitness Court debuts at Porter on the Lake Park

Premier exercise facility among many improvements at site



The new Fitness Court at Porter on the Lake is the second such facility of its kind in upstate New York.

The Town of Porter cut the ribbon Wednesday for what could be best described as one the most technologically advanced outdoor exercise facilities of its kind.

Known as The Fitness Court, a project of the National Fitness Campaign, the new \$165,000 facility is described as “designed for adult of all ages and abilities” and offers “premier outdoor fitness classes and training programs to users.”

Supervisor John “Duffy” Johnston said, “Porter has partnered with the National Fitness Campaign and MVP Health to bring the best outdoor work gym to our community.”

Intended for users ages 14 and older, the Fitness Court features a seven-movement use program for all fitness levels. It can accommodate users from beginner to expert, and includes training features that could be “used for hundreds of exercise variations, providing opportunities for those beginning their fitness journey, to elite athletes, and of every user in between.”

The court also has a program-mable app that exercise enthusiasts can download on their phone and use as a digital coach during their workouts.

It is the second such exercise facility of its kind in upstate New York. A similar complex opened in 2022 in Greece.

The ribbon-cutting marked a second positive news announcement for Porter on the Lake this summer, following recent recognition by the National Wildlife Federation on creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat through NWF’s Garden for Wildlife movement.

NWF cited the town for creating “a great opportunity for residents and visitors to watch birds and butterflies” at the lakeside park, and praised the newly constructed nature/fitness trail.

“On the nature trail, you will notice a lot of new bird houses built by Eagle Scout Alexander Unversaw. Twenty different bird houses were built, including a Purple Martin condo,” NWF stated.

In addition, the town improved its beachfront areas with the plantings of 25 butterfly bushes and 25 beery bushes at POTL. Installed by A-1 Landscape, the plantings will not only stop erosion, but also add to the wildlife food offerings. Also new are seven benches

along the trail and waterfront for viewing wildlife in the park.

“We are very proud to partner with The National Wildlife Federation on this project,” Johnston said.

Of the new Fitness Court, he noted, “It did not cost the town any money.”

Johnston said ongoing improvements at POTL include a new, \$140,000 nature trail on the park’s south end; workout areas with push-up bars, pull-up bars and monkey bars; and four park benches at the lakefront.

“We’re doing good down here; I got a great board, great staff, and it looks absolutely beautiful down here,” Johnston said.

State officials, including Sen. Rob Ortt and assemblymen Angelo Morinello and Mike Norris, spoke highly of the cooperative work of many in helping to make POTL shine.

“This is a great use of Greenway monies right here in Niagara County,” Ortt said. “Your taxes go to Albany, but people often wonder, ‘What do I see of that?’ As legislators, we try to put that money back right in our communities. This is a great initiative. I want to thank MVP Health for their partnership.”

“We all know the importance of fitness. I want to thank my colleagues for supporting this.”

“This is why you live in Porter,” Ortt said as he presented a certificate of recognition to Johnston.

Morinello recalled the work at POTL since the town first acquired the lakeside parcel in the early-2000s.

“This used to be Hooker on the Lake,” he said. “I’m really excited about how this park is coming about.”

Morinello noted the improvements, which include the park gazebo; improved access to the water; and now the exercise facilities. “Greenway has been so instrumental, adding accouterments that benefit the entire area. We have so much that we can be thankful for; Porter has connected the dots” on this. “The saving of this as a natural habitat for wildlife, for the ecology, it’s the place to be.”

Greg Stevens, executive director of the Niagara River Greenway Commission, also spoke highly of the results: “I am so thankful to (Niagara County Legislator) Irene Myers and Duffy for what they do here.

“This is a wonderful addition

to a much-bigger plan that has been unfolding for the past 15 years in Niagara County. That is the Shoreline Trail coming from the south of Buffalo to this very point (at POTL). We chose this because of the work the Town of Porter was committed to doing here to make this a really attractive asset.”

He cited the collaboration between New York State Parks and New York Power Authority “that has allowed us to build the trail through every state park in Niagara County – from Niagara Falls, through Whirlpool, Devil’s Hole, Joe Davis, Fort Niagara and Four Mile. All of that connected trail will come out right here, as the northeast gateway of the Shoreline Trail system.

“We’re enhancing the amenities in the Town of Porter to create a regional asset that people will be coming to on their visit. It’s a strategic location. It’s great to see Greenway investments coming here.”

Myers said, “We have a vision of what we are going to do to

make this park even better. It’s a beautiful place. We’re going to try to do more ... hopefully a dock. A tiki hut for our canoes. It’s all from everyone’s help here.”

Johnston announced the newest plans for POTL: a pickle-ball court.

“This is a destination place; you can put your toes in Lake Erie, get on bike and ride to Lake Ontario,” he said.

Commenting on future improvements at the park, Johnston said. “We have 350 feet of shoreline that needs to be protected.”

He said the town intends to work with Congressman Brian Higgins on obtaining federal infrastructure improvement monies to install an L-shaped pier, perhaps a cove on the beach, “to not just protect our shoreline, but also enhance fisheries.”

The ribbon-cutting event concluded with demonstrations on the new Fitness Court equipment by visiting law enforcement, a skydiving appearance by Skydive the Falls, and photo opportunities.

“It’s here for us to enjoy; this is God’s country,” Myers said. “We’re putting this together for our Town of Porter, Niagara County, the whole world to enjoy.”

The new Fitness Court is available free of charge for visitors during normal operating hours.

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