

New year-round vision for North Hastings Community Centre

By Chris Drost

Since taking over the sole responsibility for the North Hastings Community Centre, otherwise known as the arena, the Town of Bancroft has set its sights on a multi-year plan to turn it into a site with year-round use potential. This could include off-season (non-ice season) rentals for such things as dances, trade shows, and more.

“Last year, we invested in the complete rehabilitation of the tennis courts. This year, we are creating the community space and wellness centre as well as some capital repairs to other parts of the building. Part of the development is intended to promote more opportunities to use the facilities,” says general manager at the Town of Bancroft, Andra Kauffeldt.

“We are currently in the process of designing rental agreements, fee structures, etc. for the arena and will communicate them once they are confirmed,” adds Kauffeldt.

The construction on the upstairs space is continuing and work is expected to be completed by the end of April. This project is being funded through the Ontario Trillium Foundation to create a recreational space with a focus on programs for seniors and others in the community who would benefit from new opportunities for physical exercise and social engagement.

“We are working with several community partners to discuss programming needs. We have a draft rental agreement in place but are not going to release it until the space is ready to open,” explains Kauffeldt.

Once the space is open, the rental forms will be available on the town's website and by contacting the office. The rental process is expected to be consistent with the process currently in place for all the town's other community facilities. “Rates will be competitive but consistent with those charged for similar spaces by other organizations,” says Kauffeldt.

The plan is to have several rental options to choose from to meet the needs of multiple and diverse types of potential users. There has already been interest in using the space.

Pat Hoover is the manager of buildings and facilities for the Town of Bancroft, including the arena. Email inquiries about the arena can be sent to communitycentre@bancroft.ca

A grand opening is being planned for the near future, although the date will not be set until the construction upstairs at the arena has been completed.

Discussions are currently underway for determining an appropriate name for the new recreational/meeting space.