

GREENFIELD



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

A skater heads up and down the vertical wall at the grand opening of the Greenfield Skate Park on Wednesday. Visit recorder.com to view additional photos.

Local skaters ready to shred

Skate park holds grand opening celebration

By **DOMENIC POLI**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — The fruition of a project that has been grinding ahead slowly for 13 years was celebrated Wednesday afternoon with the grand opening of the Greenfield Skate Park.

Skateboarders, bike riders, rollerbladers and scooter riders of all ages converged on the 10,000-square-foot concrete park at 71 Chapman St. for some test runs, while Recreation Director Christy Moore and Mayor Roxann Wedegartner praised the community effort that was needed to get construction rolling last fall.

“This is an amazing day, an awesome day — rad!” Wedegartner said. “I might be dating myself a little bit on that one.”

Wedegartner said Moore

had been pushing for this project for years and it ultimately became a reality thanks to \$200,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money combined with financial contributions from a state Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant and an appropriation through Greenfield’s Capital Improvement Program. The project also received significant donations from the late Lewis Scott, the Greenfield Kiwanis Club, Greening Greenfield, the

Friends of Greenfield Recreation, and fundraising efforts of the skating community.

Dozens of people zipped around the park’s street-style elements — including ramps, stairs, rails, hubbas, a pier seven, a flip bank and a vert wall — and participated in the thrills, chills and spills that come with the action sport. The park was designed by Pillar Design Studios and constructed by Mountain View Landscapes,

SEE **SKATE PARK** A8

Greenfield celebrates skate park opening

SKATE PARK FROM A1

with Artisan Skateparks.

Easthampton resident Noah Halpern-McManus, of the independent Skate Jawn magazine, said Wednesday was his second time at the facility. He said he visited a couple weeks ago when kids were in school. Although the grand opening celebration was held to coincide with National Go Skateboarding Day, the park itself opened to the public in late May.

"It's great," the 34-year-old said while taking a breather. "It's got enough of everything. ... It's got a bank to curb, it's got quarter pipes, it's got stairs. Yeah, it checks out."

He said the new facility — which also boasts a shade structure, benches, a water fountain with a refill station and a Lyra solar-powered charging station — is worth the drive from Hampshire County.

"Easthampton's dragging their feet on getting a skate park built," he said, adding that the closest one to his home is in Northampton. "But that's a pile of garbage. It's not a real skate park whatsoever."

Fellow boarder Divante Clark, of Springfield, called the park phenomenal.

"Best one around, honestly," he said. "It's not my local park, personally. It's not my closest. It's pretty out of the way for me, but it's still worth coming. It's worth the



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore high-fives Casey Burke, 11, of Greenfield, at the grand opening of the Greenfield Skate Park on Wednesday.

travel.

"For every skate park, as a skater, we ... distinguish them not only [on] where they are, but kind of by the colors, too," the 19-year-old added. "I'd say the bright colors of this park probably makes it one of the best."

During her remarks, Wedegartner explained skateboarding started more or less in the 1950s and exploded in popularity in the next decade. She said there were 200 skate parks in the United States by 1978 —

the same year Greenfield held its first skateboarding competition on Olive Street. That park, the mayor said, had to be closed and torn down in 2010.

Moore said it warmed her heart to see Wednesday's turnout.

"It's a beautiful day and there's a lot of people here just enjoying this brand-new facility," she said before mentioning a skate park's significance in a community. "It's an opportunity for people to socialize, from all ages. They're all

learning from each other. It's a social hub for people. And it doesn't matter your age, doesn't matter your gender, doesn't matter where you're from. I mean, look at how many people are out here. That speaks for itself.

"I am very pleased with it," she continued. "I'm very proud of this facility and what we've accomplished."

Reach Domenic Poli at: dpoli@recorder.com or 413-930-4120.