

# HOME NEWS TRIBUNE

NEWS THAT HITS HOME IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY

## “Little League bigger, better”

**Thursday, April 10, 2008.**  
**Shari Garretson, Reporter**

**PISCATAWAY:** It was an auspicious opening day for Piscataway’s Little League season; Crisp and sunny, instead of rainy as predicted; the live performance of the national anthem sounded good; and the new Little League Operations Building was officially opened for business Saturday.

Burned down two years ago when it was struck by lightening, the old building has been replaced by what Mayor Brian Wahler described as “a state-of-the-art complex.”

“We resurrected a phoenix here,” he said Saturday, as he got ready for a quick ceremony in front of the snack bar area.

Players Larry McCullum, 8, and Richard L. Wright, 9, held the ends of a glossy red ribbon stretched in front of a group of Township Council members and Little League officers while Wahler spoke for a few moments.

Then the mayor, wielding oversized scissors with gold handles and gleaming silver blades, snipped the ribbon, as excited players and their parents went about their business, finding their fields and stocking up on snacks for the games ahead.

Made of buff-colored corrugated metal set onto a natural stone veneer, the new building incorporates many elements suggested by representatives from the Little League executive board, the township Recreation Department, construction officials from the township and the mayor himself.

The project’s contractor was Jim Spratford of Security Structures in Basking Ridge.

The result is a building that is energy-efficient, economical, and accommodating to the various needs of Little League officials, players and parents.

A spacious, modern kitchen allowed 12 volunteers on Saturday to move easily from the stainless steel refrigerators and freezers, to the deep fryers, to the pizza and warming ovens. “This is a kitchen that most restaurants would envy,” Wahler said.

The equipment room has two sides of floor-to-ceiling “safety racking” metal shelves and rolling ladders, for storing uniforms and supplies. It also houses the on-demand hot water heater, which saves the expense of keeping a supply of water hot for the building’s faucets.

Whereas before, there were only two port-a-potties for public use, now there are toilets accessible from each area – kitchen, meeting room, and outside – 21 in all, counting the four urinals.

The waterless urinals will conserve between 8,000 and 10,000 gallons of water per year – per urinal, officials said.

Other conservation ideas are being considered for the future.

For instance, the roof is designed so that solar panels can be added, to store power for electricity. “You do draw a lot of juice at night with the lights,” said Wahler.

Other improvements include the newly paved walkway that connects the building and parking lot to all the fields, making it easy for parents to get wheelchair-bound children to their games with the Challenger team.

“We do our best around here to accommodate all the kids, no matter what their ability level,” said Wahler.

For Laura Stoddard, a team mom whose husband coaches her son’s team, the new building will be the center of her family’s life for the next few months. “Everyone looks forward to the season starting, everyone comes up here almost every night,” she said, watching a couple of the boys doing some friendly tussling while they wait for the games to start.

“The kids aren’t hanging around on the street. They come up here. They’re playing with each other.”

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