

NEW CURRITUCK Y OPENS



STAFF PHOTOS BY THOMAS J. TURNERY

Megan Wilaby, 13, works out on a treadmill on the opening day at the Currituck YMCA, Tuesday.

Users like YMCA's convenience, size

By WILLIAM F. WEST
Staff Writer

MAPLE — Dylan Chappelle enjoyed a dip in the pool at the new Currituck Family YMCA after running on the facility's circuitous blue-and-white track Tuesday afternoon.

Chappelle, a 17-year-old Currituck County High School student, was among hundreds of local residents to use the facility on its opening day. The "Y" opened Tuesday at 5:30 a.m.

"I like that track," Chappelle said.

Chappelle said he ran a mile in about seven minutes and 15 seconds on the indoor



Officials attend the ribbon cutting at the opening of the new Currituck YMCA, Tuesday.

path, which is on the second floor of the facility and also comes with views of adjacent farmland and forested areas.

Chappelle, who lives in the Shawboro area, also likes

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YMCA

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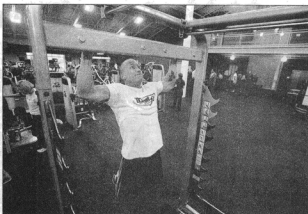
the convenience of the new YMCA, which is located along U.S. Highway 158 between Maple Road and the junction of U.S. 158 and N.C. 168 at Barco.

Chappelle said he had been driving about 15 to 20 minutes to the Albemarle Family YMCA in Elizabeth City. Now, he said, the drive to the Currituck Family YMCA takes about eight minutes.

"It's got a lot more equipment up in the weight room and a lot more room," he said.

Ground for the YMCA was broken in late October 2010 at the site where Currituck Parks & Recreation and the Currituck Senior Center facilities are also being developed. In addition, Virginia health care company Sentara has agreed to have a rehabilitation and sports medicine center in the facility.

Several users of the Currituck Family YMCA on Tuesday were impressed by the size of the new facility.



Jonathan Konecny works out in the gym at the Currituck YMCA on its opening day, Tuesday.

Megan Wilaby said, "I didn't think it was going to be this big. It's cool."

Wilaby, a 13-year-old student at Currituck County Middle School, was on a treadmill, as was her father, James, 44, who manages a restaurant at Kitty Hawk.

"Beautiful" and "gorgeous" were the words James Wilaby used in de-

scribing the YMCA.

"The equipment is so nice," he said, also noting he could watch television while exercising and use his portable media player.

The Wilabys, who live at Grandy, also are glad because they no longer have to drive to Elizabeth City, Nags Head or into Virginia to use a YMCA.

Bob Leonard, 55, a retiree from Currituck, said he had been driving at least 40 minutes to get to the Great Bridge Family YMCA in Chesapeake, Va. Now, he said, he is about 15 minutes from the Currituck Family YMCA.

While Leonard acknowledged the new facility would mean savings on gasoline

and more greenbacks in his wallet, he emphasized that, for him, "Time is more valuable than money."

Leonard had just finished using a machine designed to strengthen the knees.

When asked what he likes about the YMCA, he said the brightness and the openness.

"It's really a nice place to come and work out," he said.

Fred Romano was in the reception area at noon where a scheduled "soft opening" ceremony was held.

Romano, 69, was not in workout clothing, but he was wearing a cap and clothing readily showing he served in the Marines.

Asked what he liked about the YMCA, he said, "Everything," including the weight-lifting area so he can keep in shape.

Romano's wife, Betty, 65, also was impressed.

"I'm a country kid," she said. "I've never been to a Y before, so this is my first time."

She said she wants to use the track and also wants to take low-impact aerobics.

A moment earlier, the soft opening occurred to cheers, with Dean Mattix, director of the Currituck Family YMCA, saying, "There was even a car here at 4:30 in the morning."

"We've just been overwhelmed with a great response from the county," Mattix said.

"I think it brings a whole new dimension to Currituck County," Currituck Chamber President Josh Bass said. "And we are just so thrilled to have it."

"This is gorgeous," Currituck County Commission Chairman John Rorer said. Commissioner Paul O'Neal recalled the county had planned a stand-alone facility and set aside funds, but after finding out the price tag would be \$24 million, the county opted for a partnership with the YMCA.

The result was the facility being built at a cost of \$13.5 million.

"It's just been a long time coming," O'Neal said. "I'm just glad I'm here today to see it."

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