

Currituck, YMCA, builder mark 'topping out' of Y

Facility on target to open in December

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BARCO — Dwarfed by a mass of steel, concrete and cinder block, an evergreen tree sits atop Currituck's new YMCA/Community Center in Barco.

The new splotch of green marks a construction milestone.

On Tuesday, workers paused to celebrate the completion of the structure's supporting framework. Harry Davis, president of Sussex Development Corp., said the "topping out" ceremony and lunch marked all that had been accomplished since construction began on the YMCA/Community Center four and a half months ago.

Construction workers, Currituck County and YMCA officials and the developer gathered in what will be the county's 10,000-square-foot multi-purpose gym. Next door is a new



STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS J. TURNERY

William George, chief operating officer of the YMCA of South Hampton Roads, talks to construction workers building the Currituck YMCA-Community Center in Barco, Tuesday.

senior center that includes game rooms, an arts and craft center, kitchen and a dining room.

A YMCA facility will be connected to the county building by a main entrance. The YMCA will

include an indoor track, indoor pool, outdoor splash park and pool, exercise rooms, work-out equipment, and indoor playground. Virginia health care company Sentara has also agreed to open a reha-

bilitation and sports medicine center in the facility.

For now, the pool is a pit surrounded by yellow construction tape, and the only walls are steel supports.

"We are finished with everything that keeps it

standing," said Danielle Hagan, project engineer for Sussex, who was conducting tours of the 76,000-square-foot facility. "Everything else just makes it beautiful."

The finishing touches are still months away. Officials are aiming for a December opening.

This week, about 70 construction workers were on the job each day. The number may go up to 100 when it's time to install the windows, Davis said.

"Getting to this point today has been an extreme effort," Davis told workers during a brief ceremony after lunch. "This event celebrates your efforts to get us to where we are today."

Billy George, chief operating officer for the YMCA of South Hampton Roads, praised Currituck County for partnering in the project. The county has agreed to pay for the \$13.5 million building and the YMCA will manage user-paid operations at the facility.

"I believe working to-

gether works," said George, who added the community would benefit from the effort.

Currituck Commissioner John Rorer agreed the new facility "will improve the quality of life and well-being of citizens here."

Rorer noted the YMCA/Community Center is part of a much larger plan for the Maple area, including ball fields, a commerce park and expanded airport.

After the brief speeches, the construction crew went back to work and guests toured the facility.

Don Jones, YMCA senior vice president for project management, pointed out several "wow spots" during one of those tours. The open entrance with a mural, to be designed by the Currituck Arts Council, will be one of those "wow spots," he said.

Another "wow spot" will be an indoor track circling the perimeter of the upstairs with outdoor views of farms, scenic landscaping and future athletic fields, he said.