

Lindale raises bar with new facilities

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Lindale ISD, as part of a \$42 million bond passed in 2009, constructed new baseball and softball facilities, which will open for use later this month. (Sarah A. Miller | Tyler Morning Telegraph)

“If you build it, he will come.”

— *Ray Liotta as Shoeless Joe Jackson in “Field of Dreams,” 1989*

LINDALE — The Lindale ISD did just that in regards to that famous quote with the exception that many fans will have the opportunity to enjoy two new baseball and softball venues.

The newly constructed fields will be dedicated in the coming weeks.

On Monday, a dedication ceremony will be held at the softball field at 5:30 p.m. before the Lady Eagles’ game with Robert E. Lee.

The baseball field will be dedicated on Monday, Feb. 27, at 6 p.m. when the Eagles meet Chapel Hill.

During each of the ceremonies, the teams will be introduced and Lindale ISD trustees will throw out the ceremonial first pitch, Maya Bethany, Communications Specialist with Lindale ISD, said in a release.

“We are very proud of our new baseball and softball complex,” LISD Superintendent Stan Surratt said in a statement. “The finished product is beautiful. It is certainly a venue Eagle fans, parents and community members will enjoy for many years.”

The fields are located just south of Robbie Surratt Field and the Lady Eagle softball diamond, the previous homes of the Lindale teams.

The baseball and softball complex was constructed as part of the \$42 million bond approved by voters in November 2009. A new baseball field and softball field were constructed while the existing baseball and softball fields were renovated to become practice fields, Lindale ISD deputy superintendent Jamie Holder and Lindale ISD athletic director Mike Meador said Wednesday during a tour of the new complex.

Construction on the \$3.6 million complex began in June 2011. The architects were Eubanks Harris Roberts Craig Architects Inc. of Tyler, while WRL General Contractors, Ltd., of Flint handled the construction.

Both of the new fields have enclosed bullpens, batting cages, new lighting, scoreboards and new dressing facilities. There are also public restrooms.

A new concession stand is between the two fields. Eagle fans will also enjoy covered seating and a state of the art sound system, Holder said. He said ideas were taken from a number of venues, with the covered seating much like Driller Park in Kilgore. Also, Prosper ISD and Sunnyvale ISD facilities were toured as well.

The softball stadium will seat 580 while the baseball stadium can hold 650, Holder said.

The baseball field is 325 feet down the lines and 375 in center. The softball field is 225 all the way around.

Holder noted the rich history of the Lindale softball (2004 state champion) and baseball teams as well as the top-notch Lindale youth sports programs.

The baseball field features a Hellas Matrix artificial playing surface. Lindale ISD is the only school district in East Texas to have this type of surface on a baseball field, Holder noted.

Renovations to the previous fields include new paint, fencing and netting. Improvements were also made to both dugouts. The gravel and rock of the previous parking area was replaced with a paved parking lot that has 65 spaces.

Also, Lindale ISD dug a new well for water for upkeep.

Lindale officials are also hopeful of attracting playoff games to both fields.

The public is invited to attend both ceremonies.

NOTES: To reach the new baseball and softball fields, exit east off U.S. Highway 69 onto Eagle Spirit Drive, just south of downtown Lindale. There are 65 parking spaces near the fields behind E.J. Moss Intermediate School. To reach that lot, turn right off Eagle Spirit Drive onto Brad Circle and follow the street and past the two fields to the parking lot. One can also go east on

Eagle Spirit Drive past the school and tennis courts and take a right on Pierce Street. then take a right on Brad Circle. ... The Tyler Junior College baseball team will play a doubleheader at the new field on Feb. 25 against Carl Albert (Okla.). ...At the Lindale tennis facility near the parks, a new classroom, coaches offices and concession area were added.

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