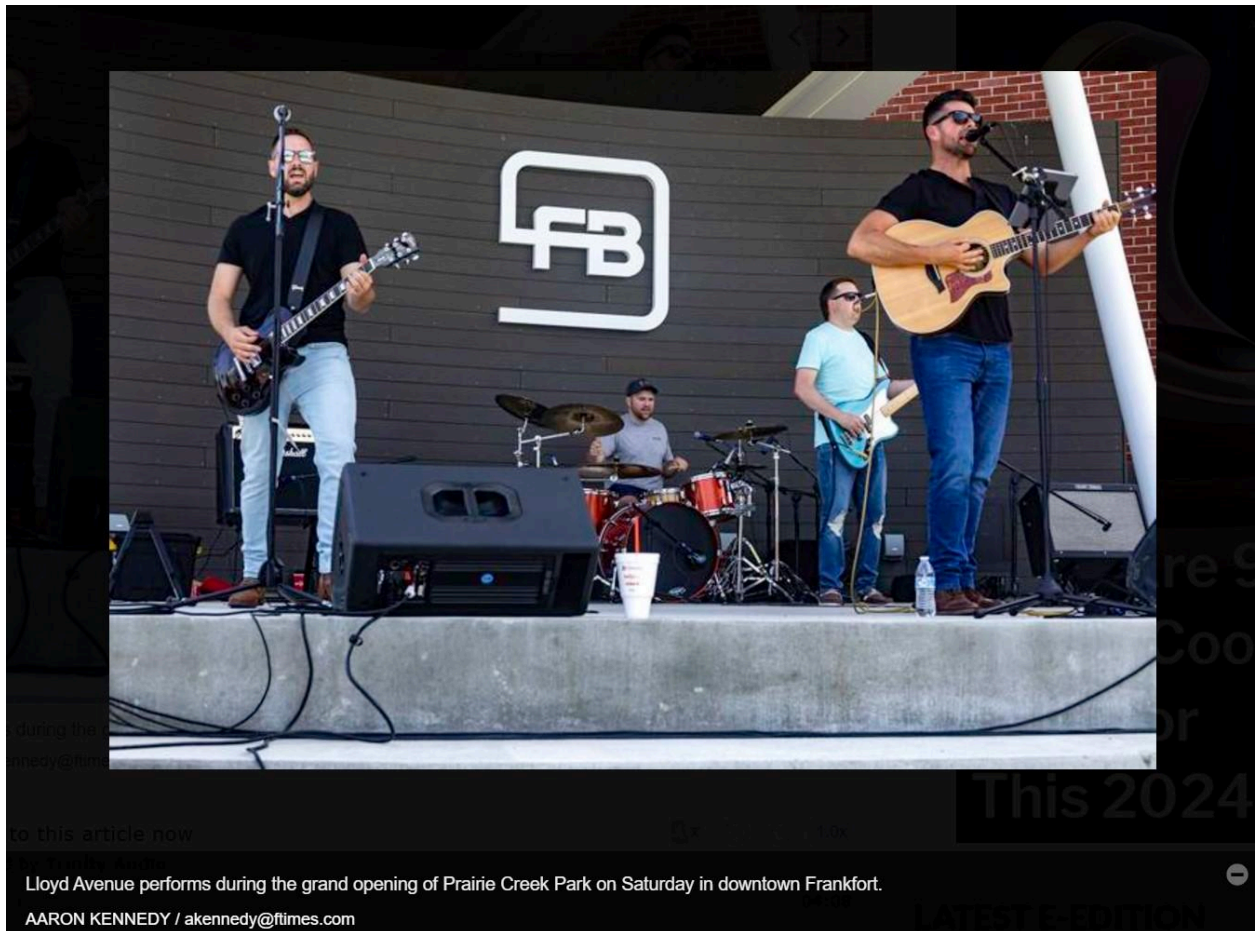


City celebrates Prairie Creek Park

By AARON KENNEDY
akennedy@ftimes.com

May 25, 2021



The long-awaited grand opening of Prairie Creek Park featured live music, food, drinks and, of course, the splash pad after a ribbon-cutting and reception Saturday in downtown Frankfort.

“It’s so exciting,” Mayor Judy Sheets said during the reception. “It is so good to see everybody out to celebrate the ribbon-cutting. This is very exciting for the City of Frankfort and the community. I am hoping that people will use this park a lot. There is so much, and we have so many great ideas planned. Kimberly (Black) at the Parks (Department) has been working hard on the concerts and a circus. But I also want people to use it every day. Come down here for your lunch, sit here, and the kids can play in the splash pad and the playground.”

The Prairie Creek Park project had been years in the making, so Sheets and everyone else present for the reception were thrilled to finally see it full of people.

“It is really neat,” she said. “It is huge. It didn’t seem that big when we were looking at it before. To have a crowd in here like this and still see all the ground available for other people is awesome. And I love the event center. It is perfect. I am hoping that people will rent it out for events or activities. There are so many things that you can do with this. It is very exciting.”

Parks Department Superintendent Bart Kraning knew of the project even before his hire, so he too was thrilled to see the arrival of the grand opening after the pandemic delayed it another year.

“I am very happy,” Kraning said. “I am excited. There is going to be a lot less stress in my life because we are finally open. So, I am pumped. We are having a good turnout, and I am very happy that people are already enjoying it.”

Kraning is looking forward to the many events the park will host.

“Lot of concerts,” he said. “Kimberly, the events coordinator for the city, she has been setting up events left and right. So, there is anything from movie nights that will occasionally be here, and they will also be at Veterans Park. We will have all kinds of concerts. I think, later in the year, there may even be a type of circus where they set everything up in one day, put on two shows and then tear everything back down. Obviously, the splash pad will be open seven days a week – 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.”

The city’s newest park will host the Hispanic Heritage Festival this fall.

“I think the entire Hispanic Heritage Festival is going to be surrounded by Prairie Creek Park,” Kraning said. “This is going to be the hub for it. Kimberly is already working on stuff that is months or even years down the road. She puts a lot of time into it.”

Once the reception and ribbon-cutting were over, the city opened the park with food catered for the reception by Shoup’s and sold outside the event center by several local vendors, drinks served out of the event center by Angry Donkey, and live performances by Lloyd Avenue, The Warrior Kings, and Endless Summer Band.

Officers from the Frankfort Police Department were on hand around to see FPD Captain Brady Sorrells playing lead guitar for Lloyd Avenue.

“There are a lot of people here, and now the bands are playing,” Police Chief Scott Shoemaker said during the start of the concert. “One of my captains is up here on the guitar, and our code enforcement officer, Jay Large, is on the sound, so it is a good day for us. A lot of our guys are a part of this. It is going to be a good afternoon.”

State Senator Brian Buchanan was among those who showed up for the grand opening.

“I think this is a great day for the city of Frankfort and the entire community,” Buchanan said.

“This park is a tremendous asset. I know a lot of people put a lot of time, effort and energy into making it happen. This is just a great day for the entire community. It’s a nice step forward for Frankfort. You know, Frankfort keeps taking steps forward to improve quality of life opportunities for its citizens. I am very excited to be here to be a part of the celebration and grand opening.”