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New operator, new additions at Fairfield skating rink

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By Eric Robinette

Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD — A longtime skating rink in Fairfield looks forward to more customers rolling in now that a regional chain has taken over operations.

Earlier this month, the company Skate America took control of the venue at 1260 Hicks Ave. It was once known simply as "The Rink" but was most recently called Tri-Skateland. Skate America owns rinks in Grove City, Ohio; Lafayette and Indianapolis, Ind.; and Crest Hill, Ill., according to the company's website.

"We bought it and painted it in a weekend, got the floor repaired and made a lot of changes as quick as we could for the grand opening," said Lee Moore, the manager of the rink. New additions include a bounce house, additional games, and a ticket redemption center, in which customers exchange tickets for items including piggy banks and toys.

The new venue will operate on a set schedule, Moore said. It will be open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, with admission ranging from \$3 to \$7. Sundays offer unlimited pizza to all visitors, included in general admission. One feature the rink offers is a "safety skate" device for kids and beginners, much like a walker.

Business has been slow so far, Moore said, because Skate America hasn't advertised much while building up its staff, Moore said. Skate America employs eight people now and is looking for more. One of those employees is Cora Brown of Fairfield.

"I hope it gets big, because I'm a rink rat. I've always been in a rink. I've grown up in them. It would be nice to see this place pumping again," she said.

Parents who came to Skate America with their kids on Tuesday were glad to see the rink up and running. Tracy Browder of Fairfield skated there in the late 70s and early 80s.

"I like it here. We come here with Fairfield South (Elementary) — we have their skating parties once a month, so I've been coming for a while with my son," she said.

Kristina Hoyle of Fairfield said, "I think it's pretty cool. I came here as a kid, so I think it's fun to come back with my kids."

Moore said the future of the rink "will definitely be a breath of fresh air, there's no doubt about that," Moore said. "We want people to say, 'Wow, that was a big change.'"

HOW TO GO

What: Skate America Fairfield

When: 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Fridays; 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Saturdays; 12:30 to 6:30 p.m. Sundays

Where: 1260 Hicks Boulevard, Fairfield

Cost: \$3 to \$7