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Pocatello's new Mountain View Event Center stays busy

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Cars line the parking lot at the Mountain View Event Center, 1567 Way to Grace in Pocatello, for the first annual Battle of the Northwest youth wrestling tournament Saturday.

POCATELLO — The new Mountain View Event Center has been busy.

The center has been able to fill its schedule with primary tenants — or organizations that book gym space for extended periods of time — during the week.

During weekends, the center — known as the MEC — has hosted several events at its location at 1567 Way to Grace in Pocatello. These include Idaho Prep Basketball youth tournaments, America On Stage and Aspire Dance Pro dance competitions, and a Lewis Clark Trader gun show.

On Saturday, the MEC hosted the first annual Battle of the Northwest youth wrestling tournament.

“We’re trying to fill the schedule during the week,” said Shelton Robinson, operations manager at the MEC. “Our ultimate goal during the weekend is to bring in two-day weekend events that are going to put people in hotel beds, and we’ve done a good job of that basically every weekend so far.”

The MEC has had a pretty full schedule since its opening back in January. Now, with club teams’ seasons beginning to wind down, those primary tenants spots are opening up, and the MEC has plenty of time and space available during the summer.

And it’s already being filled. Robinson said a club basketball team recently booked a chunk of time through the summer, as has a volleyball team.

More space, however, is still available.

“It’s really cheap court time and a good place to go,” Robinson said. “It’s \$25 an hour to become a primary tenant.”

For individuals just wanting to use the MEC for a pickup game of basketball, volleyball or pickleball, the MEC is available for them, too.

Open gym times are posted on the facility's website, meceventcenter.com, at the beginning of every month. It's \$5 per person to use the open gym. Or for folks that know they'll use the gym multiple times, a \$30, 10-use punch card is available. For youths ages 14 and under, open gym is \$2 per use or \$15 for a punch card.

"There are still some people out in the community that don't know they can use the facility," Robinson said. "... If anybody wants to use it, they can get a hold of us."

The MEC was built and is operated using funds from a local hotel room tax paid by visitors staying in hotels. People coming to Pocatello from out of the area for events at the facility are helping pay for the MEC.

As the event center attracts more events, more visitors are staying in hotel beds, eating at local restaurants and shopping at local stores. And that provides more funds to take care of the center.

"It's a great plan that was put together, and auditorium districts have been very successful," Robinson said. "It's a nice circle of life for us."

Now that the MEC has about five months of experience being open, the Pocatello-Chubbuck Auditorium District is looking for ways to bring in more events.

Several events are already lined up this summer and heading into the fall. These include a basketball clinic hosted by the Idaho State women's basketball team in June, Campfire Youth Sports tournaments in the summer and fall, the Peg Peterson Volleyball Tournament in early September and the Snake River Comic Con in late September.

The center also hopes to dip its toes into bringing in comedians, concerts, trade shows, expos and other community events.

In the immediate future, though, the facility is available for a variety of different folks looking for a gym.

"This is our primary purpose," Robinson said. "We're going to do the best we can to work with your schedule, to get you in, and you're not going to get kicked out. ... We're going to go everything we can to accommodate everybody."