

Carbondale Aquatics Center opens

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Swimmers enjoy the new Carbondale Aquatics Center on Saturday afternoon. Saturday's grand opening closes a chapter in the town's history in which it went two summer seasons without a municipal pool. The new aquatics center features a recreational pool, a six-lane lap pool, a climbing wall, a toddler shelf, a 16-person hot tub and a diving board. The center also is compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Jason Charme/Aspen Daily News

After two years without a public pool, Carbondale swimmers can jump back into the municipal water.

The new Carbondale Aquatics Center officially opened to the public on Saturday at noon, marking the return of a community asset and the start of a new chapter for aquatic recreation in town, according to a town news release.

The new facility replaces the John M. Fleet Pool, which served the community from 1979 to 2023. Designed by local architecture firm Land+Shelter, the aquatics center reflects both the character of Carbondale and the town's continued evolution, the release says.

"This project was truly a labor of love for our team, especially as a Carbondale-based firm," said Andi Korber, managing principal at Land+Shelter, in the release. "We wanted the aquatics center to feel connected to Main Street and designed spaces that are welcoming, functional and built for everyday community use, from swim lessons to birthday parties and summer gatherings. We're especially proud that it's the first all-electric aquatics facility in the region, and we can't wait for the community to experience it."

Built by AD Miller Services Inc., a Colorado-based construction company, the \$13.4 million center was funded through a combination of sources, including \$9 million in bonds and interest, \$2.3 million in town reserve funds and \$2.1 million raised from more than 500 individual donors, families, foundations, civic organizations and county and state grants.

The grand opening celebration included a donor preview from 10 a.m. to noon, followed by public pool hours from noon to 6 p.m. with a full day of activities, including a cannonball contest, hourly giveaways and family-friendly fun.

For Carbondale Parks and Recreation Director Eric Brendlinger, the opening marks the return of something essential.

"We went two seasons without a pool, and that was felt across the community," Brendlinger said in the release. "This facility brings back swim lessons, the Sopris Barracuda Swim Team, kayaking skills training, paddleboard yoga, traditions like the Fourth of July celebration and the simple ability to gather, cool off, and be active."

The aquatics center is the first all-electric aquatics facility in the region, powered by 100% renewable energy, eliminating the use of natural gas and aligning with Carbondale's long-term climate goals, the release notes.