

Business

Merrimack Lodge Sign Installed In Time For Black Ice Pond Hockey

Concord's new state-of-the-art skate house, sponsored by the city's largest bank, is ready for use during the 10th annual event next week.

By Tony Schinella, Patch Staff
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Chris Brown, Tom Cimikoski, Linda Lorden, Matt Walsh, and Tom Aspell pose with the new Merrimack Lodge at White Park sign. (Courtesy)

CONCORD, NH — The last piece of a public-private partnership that led to the construction of a new \$1.15 million skate house at White Park has been installed. A new exterior sign for The Merrimack Lodge at White Park was posted recently on the location of the original skate house — and just in time for the 10th annual Black Ice Pond Hockey tournament, which begins Jan. 23. The sign is part of an at least 10-year naming rights agreement acquired by [Merrimack County Savings Bank for an \\$80,000 donation](#) toward the project.

The [Merrimack Lodge officially opened in June](#). The donation was used to offset part of a \$575,000 fundraising drive [needed to be raised by the public](#).

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Linda Lorden, the president of the bank, said she was "thrilled" to have it support the project.

"I have so many fond memories of sharing time with my family and friends in White Park," she said. "Giving back to our local community has always been central to the bank's mission."

The Merrimack Lodge replaced a 1950s ice and pool facility which deteriorated across many years of neglect with both structural and mold problems. It was closed in 2003. The city and public [worked for many years to come up](#) with a plan for a new skate house — which eventually led to the public-private partnership.

The Black Ice Pond Hockey Association also donated around \$108,000 with hundreds of thousands of dollars raised by businesses, families, and individuals. Pavers at \$500 to \$1,000 each were also purchased. Tens of thousands of dollars of in-kind donations, including construction, architecture, landscaping materials

and labor, and other items, were also donated to keep the cost to taxpayers as low as possible.

"(The bank's) contribution helped bring our vision to life so that many more residents and visitors can make the most of this wonderful park," said Chris Brown, the chairman of the skate house committee and Black Ice's board.

"They've always set the standard for corporate leadership."

The new sign sits on a large granite block cut and installed by Concord's historic Swenson Granite Company. The site was prepared by Tasker Landscaping, a company that also donated other services last year, with R&T Electric installing LED lights so the sign can be illuminated at night.

Not only does the new skate house serve the Black Ice Pond Hockey event and skaters — with a snack bar, outdoor fireplaces, restrooms, and skate rentals — but it can also be rented from the Concord Parks & Recreation Department for weddings, meetings, and other functions.

Weather permitting, the 2020 Black Ice Pond Hockey event will begin at 5 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23. Fireworks are scheduled for 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 24. The event wraps up at noon on Jan. 27. The tournament was revived 10 years ago in an organized capacity to celebrate tournaments, that have run off and on, in Concord, since 1883.

For more information about the tournament, visit [the organization's website](#). For rental information, visit the [department's website](#).

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