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Skate park taking shape

By JUSTINE FREDERIKSEN The Daily Journal

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City asking users to be patient as crews complete their work

Skateboarders in Ukiah and beyond should get a first-class skate park for Christmas this year -- the problem will be keeping them from unwrapping it beforehand.

"We are asking people to respect the park and let us finish it for them," said Guy Mills, project and grant administrator for the city of Ukiah, standing at the site of the Ukiah Skate Park Tuesday morning as crews were forming the walls and ramps with shotcrete -- concrete that is "shot" through a hose.

"It is really starting to take shape, and it looks very skateable," Mills said, explaining that the site has already proved irresistible to some. "It looks like we had some skaters here last night."

Contractor George Zadrozny of Geocon Engineering, Inc., said his crews were making great progress on the park, despite the high temperatures the past few days.

"It's been rough -- my guys have been working Saturdays to get this done in time," Zadrozny said, adding that the surrounding community has been very supportive. "They bring us Gatorade and water. We're loving it."

Geocon Engineering is based in San Diego and specializes in building skate parks, but the park will definitely reflect the Ukiah community.

"It will be 100 percent unique," said park architect Zack Wormhoudt, explaining that numerous community meetings were held over several years to identify exactly what local skaters wanted in their park.

"It will have street-skating

elements, such as stairs, ledges, ramps, benches and railings, along with what are called transition elements: pools, bowls, quarter-pipes, half-pipes, and snake runs," said Wormhoudt, adding that the park will have plenty to offer skaters of all skill levels.

"With concrete, just about any shape is possible," he said, adding that parks made of concrete require just about "zero maintenance" and should last a lifetime.

"It'll be here forever," he said, explaining that his father built a concrete skate park in Santa Cruz in 1974 that is still heavily used. By building a concrete park, Wormhoudt said the city is demonstrating "an understanding of how important a skate park can be to a community.

"It can be a destination for the whole family," particularly since it is near other recreational facilities such as Low Gap Park, he said.

Zadrozny said the park is "ahead of schedule and on-budget," and he expects it to be "about 75 percent complete by the end of the week."

Mills said the grand opening will likely not be until mid-December, however, and in the meantime, about \$75,000 still needs to be raised -- \$50,000 for the restroom facility and \$25,000 for the parking lot improvements.

"Our goal is repave the parking lot (for Low Gap



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Park) and make it one big parking lot," he said.

Mills said the next meeting on the skate park project is scheduled for noon on Oct. 12, in the Ukiah City Annex building, conference room 5. Topics discussed will be the material, labor needed to complete the restroom and parking lot, and the grand opening ceremony.

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