

Roaming Around Reidsville

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Many of my columns in *Eden's Own Journal* seem to center around Parks & Recreation. The reason is very simple. Our Parks & Recreation Department has been very busy in the past few years, working on a variety of current projects as well as planning toward for the future.

One part of our Parks & Recreation Department that I haven't focused on as of yet is our Teen Center located at 506 Sprinkle Street. The Teen Center first opened beside the Sanitary Restaurant on Piedmont Street before the City purchased and updated its present location. Opening in October of 2004, the center serves area youth ages 10-16. The Center originally was established by grants from the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission and the Reidsville Area Foundation. The facility provided its clientele with a safe place to go to do homework or play games. It also offered different programming and homework assistance, among other things.

In recent years the Teen Center has refreshed its appearance. The interior of the building has been repainted and the landscaping updated. But it hasn't only been the physical building that has been revamped.



YOUTH ATTENDING the January session of the new STEM Fusion Program at the Reidsville Teen Center engaged in several hands-on activities involving drones, at left, and put together models using candy, below. Sessions continue on the second Saturday of the month through May.



Parks & Rec staff also have re-evaluated the Teen Center's purpose and sought to increase the offerings it provides to its membership. More than just a place to play games, the Teen Center has also been the site of programs designed to help not only the child but also their entire family. For example, "Budgeting 101" was created in 2017 to help youth learn how to handle finances responsibly, and parents were encouraged to come to the sessions and benefit from the knowledge imparted by financial experts. Such programs also help prepare the youth for life. The Center's "Road to Success" series stressed career readiness and planning.

One of its most recent programs is something you might be interested in for your child. The STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Fusion Program seeks to engage youth through these four fields by giving them the opportunity to take part in project-based learning activities, according to the City's Recreation Programs Supervisor Quintin Robertson.

As Robertson noted, "We understand that every kid isn't athletic, so we wanted to create a structured learning program that would push the level of knowledge our youth are receiving. After brainstorming and researching, we created and established lessons through drone aviation, coding, robotics, architecture and more."

By stressing these activities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the program helps prepare future generations to be successful in these types of careers, Robertson stressed. The skills gained from the STEM Fusion program can help participants as they are deciding what career path they want to follow. Each lesson centers on some key concepts: ingenuity and creativity; experimentation; problem-solving; knowledge application; and team building.

Interested in finding out more about the STEM Fusion Program? It currently meets every second Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. until 12 noon at the Reidsville Teen Center on Sprinkle Street. The program is free to youth aged 13-16. Missed the first lesson in January? No problem. You can attend any of the programs that will continue through May of 2020. For more information, call the Teen Center at 336-634-0574.

Ongoing Baseball and Girls Softball Registration.

Registration is under way for North Carolina Dixie Youth Spring Leagues in Reidsville, continuing until March 2. You can sign up your child for Girls Softball (ages 4-15), Boys Baseball (ages 4-15) and Co-Ed T-Ball (ages 4-6). Rec Staff is excited to be offering Girls Softball again after several years without it. Cost is \$15 for City residents and \$20 for non-City residents. Registration can be done at the Parks & Recreation Department, 201 N. Washington Avenue, or you can log in at <http://activenet.active.com/reidsvillerec> and register. On February 29, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m., a Baseball/Softball Skills Camp and Player Evaluation will be hosted by the Reidsville Luckies at Jaycee Ballpark. On March 9, Team Drafts will be held at Jaycee Park with a tentative season start date of March 23.

Other Upcoming Events in February

- **Saturday, February 8: Youth Waterfowl Day** is set at Lake Reidsville from 4 a.m. until dusk. The event is open to youth 17 and under. Call 336-349-4738 for more details.
- **Friday, February 28:** It's your last chance to register for **Reidsville Rec Basketball League** play for ages 13-15. Cost is \$20 for City residents and \$40 for those outside the City. Call the Rec Department at 336-349-1090 for more details.
- **Coming in March:** On **Saturday, March 7, Casino Night** will be held at the Reidsville Event Center in downtown Reidsville. The event benefits the Reidsville Downtown Corporation and the Reidsville Chamber of Commerce. The doors open at 6 p.m. with the Casino starting at 7 p.m. and ending at 10 p.m., at which time attendees can bid on prizes with their "casino play money" winnings. Tickets are \$25 in advance either online at Eventbrite, through Facebook or at the Chamber of Commerce, 140 South Scales Street.