

Multi-purpose sports facility comes to downtown Kingsport

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KINGSPORT - The old Holston Builders Supply downtown warehouse used to be crammed with building materials that filled out homes and other structures shaping modern Kingsport.

Now it's being filled up with energy.

Now the 30,000-square-foot East Main Street location has been given an extreme indoor makeover to become TNT Sportsplex, a new multi-purpose sports facility complete with four high school-regulation hardwood basketball courts and a vision to serve the Kingsport area a number of different ways.



In coming up with the idea to redevelop the warehouse, owners Michael Thomas, and Mark and Shanna Tincher had kids who played travel sports in out-of-town tournaments.

“We were traveling anywhere from the Christiansburg/Roanoke (Virginia) area to High Point, North Carolina, and seeing all the facilities they had. We felt like there was a need for this in the Tri-Cities,” said Thomas, who previously served as a managing broker of a local real estate firm.

“While traveling with my kids to different tournaments over the years, it became evident Kingsport needed a venue specifically designed to cater to athletes in our region,” Mark Tincher said. “Choosing the right location was paramount. The city of Kingsport was extremely supportive of our decision to bring the project to the downtown area. Not only will the location provide easy access from I-26, but we anticipate this will bring lots of new business to existing downtown restaurants and stores”

Shanna Tincher said she's taken a leave of absence as a dental hygienist to help run the facility. Husband Mark works full time as an Eastman Chemical Co. employee.

The owners hosted their first basketball tournament last weekend — the “Tri-Cities Youth Shootout” — a three-day event with 55 teams playing 99 games. And they are hosting another 55-team basketball tourney this weekend.

In addition to basketball tourneys, they hope to do events with indoor soccer, volleyball, wrestling, corporate outings and birthday parties. They will also rent courts out by the hour for practice space. And they have concessions inside the building.

This summer, they want to host youth camps, three-on-three basketball tournaments and even wiffleball games.

And they are attempting to sell tournament sponsorships, court logos and wall advertising banners inside the building.

Their two-hour drive drawing area runs from Knoxville, to Eastern Kentucky, to Southwest Virginia and to Western North Carolina.

But the owners also said they are talking to the city of Kingsport about its youth league needs, and have signed a contract with the Kingsport Convention and Visitors Bureau, which has a never-ending yearlong effort to land sports activities and fill up hotel rooms. The owners are also getting marketing support from the Downtown Kingsport Association.

What's unique about the facility, said Shanna Tincher, is it has four hardwood courts with seating for 140 spectators per court under one roof.

"Instead of having a tournament move from gym to gym to gym, this is one-stop shopping," she pointed out. "People can head out the door and walk down the street for meals and shopping. ... The (downtown) merchants last week were reporting they were seeing more traffic in stores and restaurants which is what we want for the downtown area."

The owners did not want to disclose how much they have invested in the facility.

"It's a lot," Shanna Tincher said.

Thomas added: "Needless to say, we have quite a bit in it."

For more, go to www.TNTSportsplex.com.