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September 25, 2018

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ribbon-cutting for Renovated Easling Pool on September 29

Traverse City, MI – The Friends of Easling Pool and Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation invite the public to a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 12 noon on Saturday, September 29 to celebrate completion of renovations to Easling Pool at Grand Traverse County’s Civic Center Park. Saturday’s ribbon cutting ceremony will be followed by free open swim from noon to 4 p.m.

Thanks to generous support from individuals, businesses, and philanthropies, over \$750,000 was raised by the grassroots group Friends of Easling Pool to refurbish an almost 50-year-old facility, the first indoor public pool to serve the Grand Traverse region. “We are most grateful that over 450 donors made gifts to the Easling Pool Community Campaign, a sure sign of the breadth of support for this well-loved and well-used swimming pool,” says Bridget Thuente, president of Friends of Easling Pool. “Just three years ago, our pool was almost shuttered due to escalating costs and deteriorating infrastructure. Now, we are ready to serving our community’s health and water safety needs for the next 50 years.”

“This effort is a model for public-private park partnerships,” comments Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Director Kristine Erickson. “The Friends of Easling Pool, along with facility owner Grand Traverse County and pool operator Grand Traverse Bay YMCA, shared a vision of the future for this beloved community asset, one that clearly is supported by the region and beyond.”

Renovations include a new pool liner, ultraviolet water sanitizing system, new air-handling equipment, new decking, high-efficiency lighting, and updated locker rooms, all completed between July 1 and September 28. Grand Traverse County complemented the project with installation of a new roof for the Civic Center building, an additional investment of \$90,000, and approved allocating \$25,000 more for the pool improvements. Grand Traverse County Parks and Recreation Commissioners, stewards of the Civic Center and nine other County parks, also approved spending up to \$13,000 from Parks and Recreation’s fund balance to help offset expenditures.

“The pool has been a vibrant part of the Grand Traverse area for decades,” says Marty Easling, co-chair of the Easling Pool Community Campaign and son of Paul Easling, a local builder and community leader who was one of the first proponents of a community pool. The Easling Pool was built in 1970 with memorial gifts, donated material and labor to honor Paul.

In 2017, Easling Pool attracted a record 40,000 visits, up 60 percent from just two years earlier. Regular users include U.S Coast Guard rescue swimmers, Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District students, Traverse City Area Public Schools, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, and competitive and recreational swimmers of all ages.

On Monday, October 1, the Central Y’s operations (Easling Pool and fitness room) in the Civic Center will resume regular business hours.

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