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UPGRADES REVITALIZE HENNING PARK

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By Heather Rule

Henning City Park received some much-needed renovations through sponsorships, volunteer time and plenty of hard work. Some of the changes and upgrades include a rebuilt picnic shelter where the old bandstand used to sit, 20 new picnic tables scattered around the park and a facelift for the bathroom facility, complete with a community-painted mural on the outside. "It's suddenly become a more usable, family-friendly park where it used to be a little bit of an eyesore and not very functional," said Dan Broten, director of the Henning Landmark Center.

The artwork on the bathroom building is a four-sided, seasonal mural featuring images of Henning, “kind of a Henning postcard,” Broten said. The building, which has been there for more than 20



Volunteers create new art work in Henning Park.

years, was transformed from a plain, white building to a vibrant one, now featuring winter, fall and summer scenes with a postcard and “Welcome to Henning” painted on the building’s block. Each of the letters displays prominent Henning landmarks, like the Trinity church, water tower, baseball diamond and Henning Landmark Center.

Mike Helle, the city’s police chief, fire chief and Henning Rod & Gun Club president, got the ball rolling when it came to building the new picnic shelter. Money from the Rod & Gun Club and the non-profit group Henning Hope helped secure the materials, while local contractors and volunteers donated their time to complete the work. Sponsors paid for the picnic tables and had their business or group names engraved into the tables. The Shining Stars 4H club completed that project.

[The Henning Landmark Center](#) and a legacy fund grant brought an artist to town last summer who oversaw the community painting of the mural. Local students and adults from around the area all helped paint the mural. In all, more than 30 people helped out with the various projects, according to Helle.

"It's awesome to see the community support and people rallying together," Helle said. "I think that's a testament to small-town America."

Before the new additions, the park only had a couple of unsheltered picnic tables. Now not only is there an open-sided picnic shelter with power and space to host birthday parties or other events, but there are many more picnic tables throughout the park as well. The shelters are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Helle already has some park projects in mind for summer 2022, including handicap-accessible sidewalks. Students at Henning High School are also working on some park benches to be placed near the playground equipment. Helle said he also hopes to expand the 9-hole frisbee golf course at the park to an 18-hole course.

The city park has been around since the late 1800s when the Northern Pacific train first came through Henning. The updates to the park made it safer and more convenient for people to use, Broten said. "It's much more inviting than it used to be," Broten said.

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