

## **Rochester Ballpark**

In March of 2014, there was a community meeting to discuss the possibility of rebuilding the Rochester Ballpark that had been virtually nonexistent since the early 80s. The meeting was geared towards the possibility of applying for funds through grants. Community members turned out in record numbers which showed us early on that it would be a great thing for our community. As the meeting progressed, the interest from the residents only got higher. They requested we forgo the possibility of getting a grant and work together as a community to have fundraisers, use our local people to help, and secure help from various sources. So that was the path we chose.

The city of Greenville, KY, was dismantling a ballpark and agreed to donate the bleachers, light poles and lights, fence, dugout benches, gates, and some other items; Muhlenberg County job corps did the initial field prep; Pennyrile set our poles and the TVA retirees did all the electrical work for the lights and the scoreboard. BVI so graciously paid for the expense for the lighting and also paid for the scoreboard. We had so many people contribute their time and money to make this dream come true for our residents.

We had our opening day on May 14, 2016. As it did take 2 years to get to our opening day, it was a pleasant journey that brought a lot of people together. We could not have done it without help from our community, surrounding communities and so many others.

On our opening day, we started off with the signing of the national anthem from a local 6 year old girl. We also recognized all those who contributed in any way to the ballpark. We had an old timers games for those who had played on the field. There were a lot of ball stories shared with the ones who used to play. We then had kid's games, 2 boys and 2 girls' games. In the afternoon we had a throw together coed game for our young residents.

We do have what we call our memory fence where people buy a plaque in honor or memory of someone who played on the field. This has been really successful and we have had a lot of compliments. We also sold advertising signs to local businesses to help support our operating expenses.

We have put a playground area at the ballpark which was sponsored in part by our local Ladies League. This too has been a huge success with all the kids.

During the last 4 months, we have hosted 3 youth tournaments; various fundraising coed tournaments, and we try to have coed throw together games twice a month (one Friday night and one Sunday evening) and then whiffle ball or softball for the youth after the Sunday afternoon throw together.

For our future plans, we have a coed tournament for our county baseball team and one for the softball team; and the weekend before Halloween, we are having a "Scream on the Green" coed tournament with a trunk or treat for all the kids.

This being our first season to be open has been way beyond our expectations. As in any project, we are looking ahead how to improve and add to our beautiful ballpark.

We also have a Facebook page so people can look to see what is going on at the ballpark. We are currently booked up through Oct 29 this year which will be the end of our season and already have people wanting to book for next year. This has been such a huge success and has brought our small community together in as this is a place our residents come to visit with each other, watch their kids and grandkids play and has been an economic boost to our local businesses.

We cannot thank those enough who helped make this possible.

**Quotes:**

A visitor from Scottsville was saying they have never been to a nice park where there was such a nice ballfield and all the shade around.

Resident Sue Hammers: This brings back lots of memories and I have heard nothing but good things from people who used to play here and how thankful they are to see it back so their grandchildren can play on the same field they did when they were young.

We have heard a lot of good comments about the ballpark; older residents telling of when they played and how they love seeing their children and grandchildren play on the same field they did.