

Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Teen Center Expansion A Go

Construction will begin on expansion of the Niles Teen Center early next month after representatives of Home Depot last week came through with a commitment to perform the work.

Work will begin on Sunday, June 7 to expand the center by 1,001 sq. ft. and will take about two weeks, said Assistant Village Manager Steve Vinezeano. The center will reopen in time for its annual popular "lock in" event.

"The original plan was to ask (Home Depot) for the minimum to make it work, then they asked 'what else do you need?' If it wasn't for them coming through two years ago and now, and Wal-Mart, I don't know if this would have happened," said Vinezeano.

Wal-Mart recently gave the village a \$2,500 grant for improvements at the teen center.

Two years ago, Home Depot also contributed labor and materials for another teen center renovation.

The new teen center will feature a computer lab and satellite branch of the Niles Public Library.

Niles Trustee Kim Biederman said Wal-Mart and Home Depot filled a financial hole left when a major grant fell through earlier this year.

"We've accomplished what we would have been able to with the grant," said Biederman.

Additional space will cost \$5,637 per year in increased rent that is in the current budget.

Attendance has almost tripled in the last year since Teen Center Director Mark Williams made an active effort to reach out to area schools.