

2012

VACo Achievement Awards



Dinwiddie Sports Complex

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Dinwiddie Sports Complex Summary

On a cool Friday night in May, in Dinwiddie County you can easily find 1,200 citizens in one place: The Dinwiddie Sports Complex. This would not have been the case a little over four (4) years ago, as the Dinwiddie Sports Complex was just a rendering on a piece of paper. The residents in Dinwiddie County needed a facility that could accommodate the needs of the growing number of youth recreational programs in the county that included softball, baseball, soccer, and football.

Dinwiddie Parks and Recreation, along with help provided by the county's maintenance department, Southside Virginia Community College, the Dinwiddie County Industrial Development Authority, the Titmus Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, and many other local county businesses, they were able to turn this rendering into a thirty-six (36) acre sports mecca. The complex currently houses all the local softball associations practices and games, many of the local baseball associations practices, the county's recreation youth football and cheerleading programs, the county's recreation youth soccer programs, and many local travel baseball and softball team practices. Along with these user groups, the local middle school held all of its baseball and softball home games at the complex in the spring of 2012. In the first two (2) months of the complex's first spring season (March and April 2012), over 11,800 residents have visited the complex and over 300 teams have practiced or played at the complex. These numbers are only expected to grow over the next few months and into the future.

Along with the positive response from the residents of the county, the complex has also helped in one other area: job creation. This includes a Park Services Manager and a Concessions Manager. The Dinwiddie Sports Complex has only been operational since June of 2011, and in a short time has already left its mark on the county. Softball and baseball tournaments, becoming a host site for major soccer tournaments, as well as remaining the home venue for the local associations, the complex only looks to be heading the right direction and will continue to be a proud landmark in Dinwiddie County.

VACo Achievement Award Presentation

Throughout the last seven years, there was a problem arising in Dinwiddie County; there were not enough quality, lit athletic fields in the County for youth baseball, softball, football, and soccer. Dinwiddie County was, and still is, a growing community that required more fields that were properly maintained and had adequate lighting for games and practices. The number of teams and players participating in youth sports in Dinwiddie had grown to such a high number, that the current field situation for the county would not be able to support the high volume of users. The fields that were being used at the time were maintained by various Ruritan Clubs and the associations' themselves, which had little to no experience in field maintenance. Furthermore, only a handful of these fields had adequate lighting and there were no lit recreational football or soccer specific fields in the county.

When the current Director of Parks and Recreation, Brian Mancini, was hired in January of 2007, his first assignment was to bring the Dinwiddie Sports Complex to fruition. Upon his hiring, Mr. Mancini was asked to revisit the conceptual drawings of the Dinwiddie Sports Complex and offer his insight into the project. The original plan called for four (4) youth baseball/softball fields, with one (1) of the ball fields being a regulation size baseball field. After viewing the initial plan, Mr. Mancini immediately added what is now the current football/soccer stadium to the project while still maintaining the integrity of the four (4) baseball/softball fields. By adding the football/soccer stadium to the project, Dinwiddie County would have the first recreational football/soccer stadium in the area. The Dinwiddie Sports Complex also gave Dinwiddie County a facility that could finally draw outside sports tournaments to the area which would increase tourism. The Dinwiddie Sports Complex represents the County of Dinwiddie the way it should, as an area leader in innovation and progress.

Dinwiddie County and Mr. Mancini faced several obstacles along the way while trying to complete the Dinwiddie Sports Complex. The first hurdle, and by far one of the biggest, was trying to complete the complex during an economic recession. While the funding for most Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) were being pulled or allocated elsewhere, Dinwiddie County's Board of Supervisors made the decision to continue to fund the project. This did not go without opposition for some county residents. To help gain support and provide guidance for the complex, a Sports Complex Committee was formed. The Committee was comprised of seven (7) Dinwiddie

County residents who were in favor of the project. These members were: David Barber, Tanya Hale, Keith Inge, David Lyle, Alan Massengill, John Puckett, and George Rapp. These members helped gain community support for the complex, provided input and direction on alternative ways to fund the project, and ensured that the complex would still meet the needs of the community that would be utilizing the facility. While trying to find creative ways to save on cost, the county had to make sure they stuck to the plan that was presented to the public. Cutting out any of the four (4) youth baseball/softball fields or the football/soccer stadium could have caused major problems with any of the associations that would inevitably use the complex. Each association and youth sport felt they needed additional space and the complex would solve their problems.

Another challenge for the project was the timeframe that the complex needed to be completed under. Dinwiddie County was selected as the host site for the 2011 Dixie Softball District Tournament which was going to start on June 24, 2011. This tournament would be comprised of thirty-seven (37) teams throughout the state of Virginia and would bring approximately 5,000 patrons to the Dinwiddie community over the course of the week long tournament. With the original ground-breaking of the 36 acre complex not starting until early 2007, this left Dinwiddie County with a little more than three and a half (3 ½) years to complete the project. Once this first tournament was on the schedule, there was no turning back for Dinwiddie County, and the complex had to be completed by the June 24, 2011 date. Funding, along with the time constraints and opposition from residents who did not see the positives of what the complex could do for the county provided many challenges to the project.

In early 2008, construction of the Dinwiddie Sports Complex began. Dinwiddie County partnered with Southside Virginia Community College in a way that allowed the school to do the entire field leveling and grading. The cost to the county for this service was very minimal, as the county only had to pay the fuel cost associated with the heavy machinery used during this work. The school used the project as a form of classroom instruction, and Dinwiddie County was able to find an innovative way to save some money. Along with the Southside Virginia Community College, Dinwiddie County worked hand-in-hand with the Dinwiddie County Industrial Development Authority, the Titmus Foundation, and the local Chamber of Commerce to make sure the Dinwiddie Sports Complex met the needs of the local residents and businesses.

Many of the amenities you see at the complex today were done by local businesses and/or done “in-house” through the county’s own maintenance department. Fencing, brickwork, the concrete concourse, painting, and signage were all handled by local companies or the county’s maintenance department. The Parks and Recreation Department handled the installation of the windscreen and fence top on all four (4) of the baseball/softball fields and the football/soccer stadium. The projects that were done by the county’s maintenance department and the Parks and Recreation Department were an effective way to save money on labor and installation costs.

As it was mentioned previously, financing the Dinwiddie Sports Complex was a major hurdle. The project was originally put into the CIP Fund during a time of economic boom. The original cost of the facility was estimated at \$3.5 million and was to be completed in a few short years. Once the economy started to turn and counties were looking to make cuts, Dinwiddie County was no exception to this issue. While the Board of Supervisors was still steadfast on funding the project, they did acknowledge that some cost did need to be cut back and not all aspects of the complex would be contracted out making certain projects “in-house” jobs. Since the Southside Virginia Community College was doing the leveling and grading of the fields for such little cost and were using the project as a teaching tool, they operated on a much slower schedule than most companies would while doing the same job. This challenge slowed down the pace of the project. However, while the leveling and grading was being completed, the county continued to push through the rest of the project while trying to find the most cost efficient ways to complete certain jobs. The Board of Supervisors would not be approving any additional money to the project other than what was allocated from the start. As the economy grew worse, the Board of Supervisors did not waver, and continued to support the project. When the complex was completed in June of 2011, the total cost of the complex was \$3.4 million, which was slightly less than the original \$3.5 million that was allocated for the project. This was extremely difficult to do as with most projects of this size, you find that the end cost is much higher than the originally planned cost.

The Dinwiddie Sports Complex also boasts a state-of-the-art lighting system installed and maintained by Musco Lighting. These lights have the capability of being controlled via computer, on-site or off-site. While you can still turn the lights on and off manually, the computer system can track when a light is about to burn out, what

user groups are using the lights and how often they are using it, and allows you to see reports on said usage. Each field at the complex is equipped with Musco Lighting as well as a wireless scoreboard and public address system. The Dinwiddie County Sports Complex has become the athletic facility within the area that other communities are looking to model their future facilities after. In addition, it has also pushed the surrounding counties to review and improve their current athletic facilities in an attempt to better serve their communities. Currently, there are several surrounding counties that are looking at how to build something similar to the facility here in Dinwiddie County, which would house their youth athletic programs.

When the Dinwiddie Sports Complex was completed in the summer of 2011, it immediately had an impact on the Dinwiddie Parks and Recreation Department and the local community. Through hard work and effective management practices, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to operate and maintain the multi-million dollar facility primarily with its current staff. However, the Parks and Recreation Department was able to add one additional full-time employee, who became the Park Services Manager. Additional part-time money was allocated to the complex so that the Park Services Manager would have the resources to hire his own staff to help maintain the fields and facility, as well as, allowing the Parks and Recreation Department to hire additional part-time employees to run and operate the concession stand. In less than a year of being operational, the complex provided approximately fifteen (15) new jobs that were primarily filled by local Dinwiddie residents. In the upcoming budget for the 2012-2013 fiscal year, additional money is being put toward part-time hours, so there will be even more jobs available by mid-summer. With the potential to host various events and tournaments, the Dinwiddie Sports Complex has also been a catalyst for the creation of a Sports Tourism program in the county.

As we move into our first full season of spring and summer sports at the Dinwiddie Sports Complex, most Dinwiddie County residents could not be happier with the project and the end results. Many local, retail businesses have also seen an impact in traffic and sales. The opening tournament last summer drew over 5,000 spectators and provided a wonderful site for thirty-seven (37) teams that participated in the 2011 Dixie Softball District Tournament. The revenue that was brought in from that tournament alone in the concession stand was close to \$25,000. This has made the concession stand self-sustainable and it now operates out of its own enterprise account. The current spring schedule is filled with as many as twenty-five (25) local youth baseball and

softball teams that will not only practice but play games at the complex. The complex has also become the home venue for the Dinwiddie Middle School Baseball and Softball teams, with each team playing eight (8) home games. Each one of these games easily drew upwards of 125 spectators, half of which were from outside the area. The Dinwiddie Sports Complex will also be hosting the 2012 Dixie Baseball Minors Regional Tournament (June 29-July 4) and the 2012 Dixie Softball Ponytails State Tournament (July 13-18) in the summer of 2012. Besides the baseball and softball teams using the complex, the Dinwiddie Parks and Recreation Department will be playing four (4) different age divisions of their soccer program at the football/soccer stadium under the lights. In the fall, the football/soccer stadium becomes the home venue for the Dinwiddie County Youth Football Program run by the Parks and Recreation Department. This past fall, the stadium was the chosen site for the Appomattox Recreational Youth Football League Championship Games held on a Saturday in November. Approximately 1,000 people attended this one-day event. The complex is currently being used seven (7) days a week by various sports groups and it looks to only be the start of some very busy spring, summer, and fall seasons to come. On any given Friday night in the spring time, over 1,200 patrons will visit the Dinwiddie Sports Complex to see their son, daughter, grandchild, niece, or nephew participate in youth soccer or softball games. This spring alone (March through April), over 11,800 patrons have visited the complex as well as being the host site for over 300 teams for various practices and games. These numbers only look to be growing over the next few years, as the Dinwiddie Sports Complex looks to become the host site for major soccer tournaments, softball and baseball tournaments, while still continuing to host the various local association's practices and games.

Appendix A



Above: View of the Sports Complex Press Box / Concession Stand from the upper parking lot.



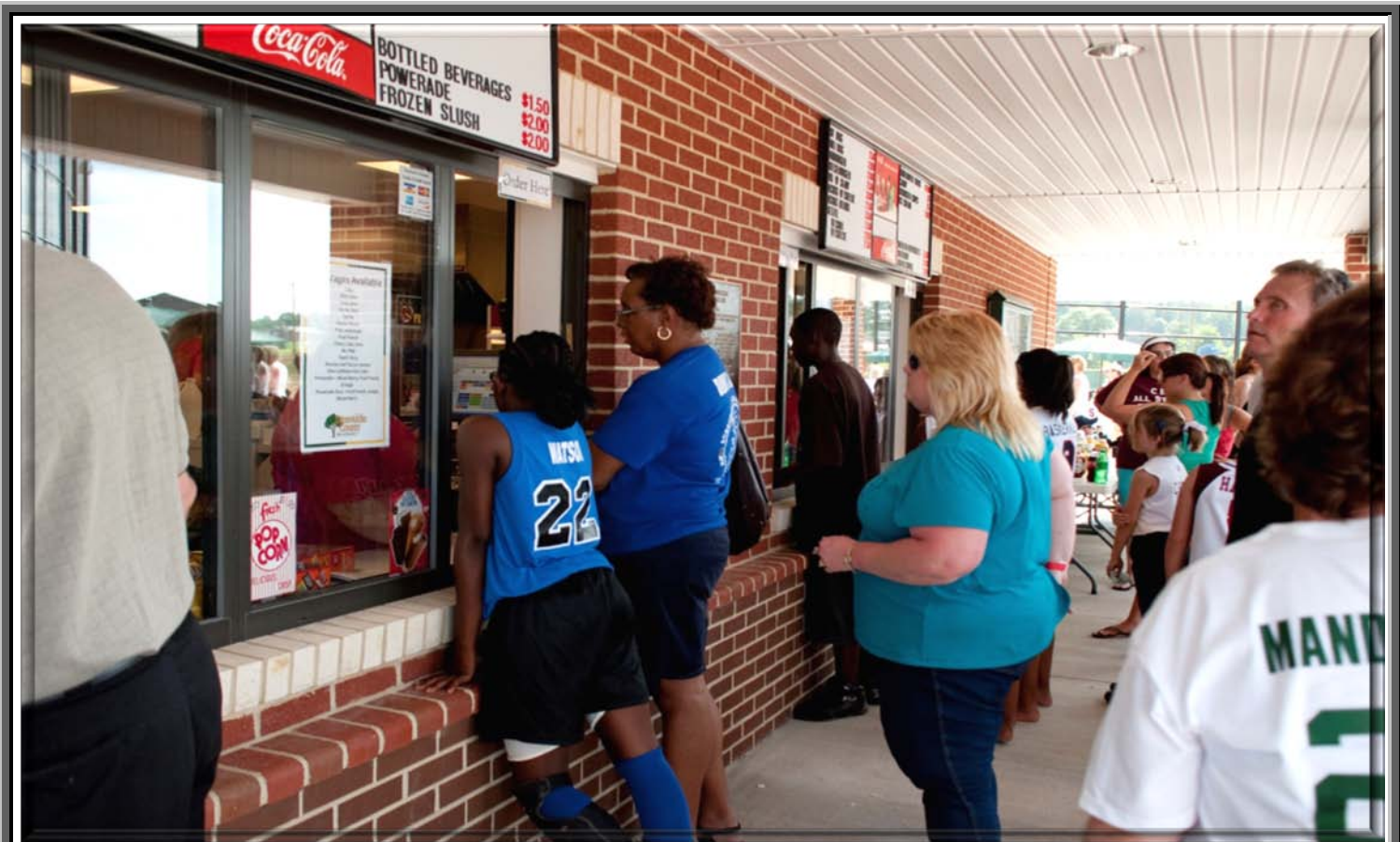
Left: Opening Day Image for the Dixie Girls' Softball Tournament June 2011.



Above: Opening Day Tournament June 2011. Dinwiddie County Parks & Recreation and the Sports Complex hosts the Dixie Girls' Softball District Tournament.



Left: Opening Day Image for the Dixie Girls' Softball Tournament June 2011.



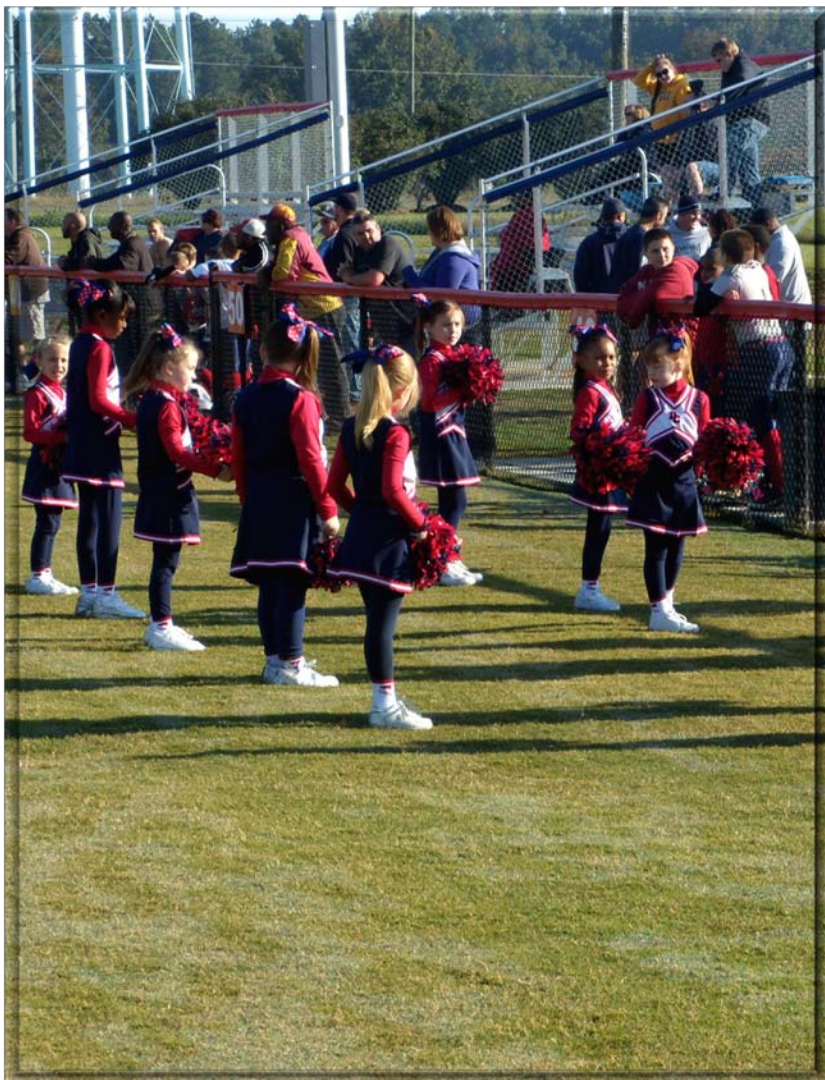
Above: Opening Day Tournament June 2011 at the Dinwiddie County Sports Complex Concession Stand.



Left: Opening Day Image for the Dixie Girls' Softball Tournament June 2011.



Above: Opening Day for Dinwiddie County Parks & Recreation's Youth Football program at the Dinwiddie Sports Complex.



Left: Opening Day for Dinwiddie County Parks & Recreation's Youth Cheerleading program at the Dinwiddie Sports Complex.



Above: Opening Day for Dinwiddie County Parks & Recreation’s Youth Soccer program at the Dinwiddie Sports Complex.



Left: Opening Day for Dinwiddie County Parks & Recreation’s Youth Soccer program at the Dinwiddie Sports Complex.