

Dallas will be home to new aquatics center

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Gaston Aquatics is leading a campaign to raise funds for a center at 642 W. Carpenter St. in Dallas, behind the Ingles supermarket and beside Carr Elementary School.

Donna Taylor, president of Gaston Aquatics, and treasurer Britton Tabor, who also heads the building committee, spoke about the project recently at a Belmont Rotary Club meeting. They said when the center opens, Gaston County will have the only public 50-meter pool west of Charlotte in North Carolina. That's important because swim teams from other counties will then be coming here for competitions instead of local swimmers going to other counties.

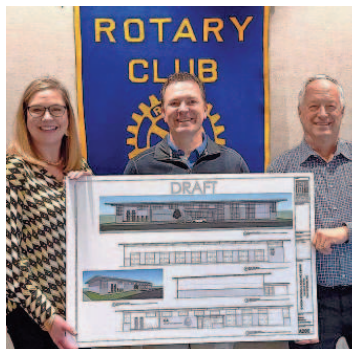
According to the presentation, the benefits of the proposed 34,000-square-foot aquatics center to be built in Dallas include:

- Saving lives by teaching children and adults to swim
- Providing for aquatic rehabilitation therapy
- Water rescue training for emergency personnel
- Adaptive aquatics for exceptional students
- Providing a local venue for competitive swimmers
- Boosting the local economy by bringing swimmers and their families here for competitions

Tourism officials say a swim meet, which usually takes place from Thursday through Sunday, results in \$465,000 to \$625,000 in direct spending per event for hotel stays, food and other expenses for hundreds of swimmers and their families, resulting in a major boost for local businesses.

Without a 50-meter pool in the county, the Gaston Gators Swim Club has been forced to take two major

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Gaston Aquatics President Donna Taylor and Treasurer Britton Tabor, center, are seen with Rotarian Ken Pahon holding schematics of the future aquatics center. PHOTO PROVIDED BY TED HALL

Aquatics

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meets it hosts each year to the Lake Norman area.

“We must stop this leakage to our friends north of us and direct it where it belongs – benefitting our own,” said Gaston County Director of Travel and Tourism Michael Applegate in a Gaston Aquatics campaign brochure.

Gaston County Director of Economic Development Donny Hicks agreed.

“The proposed aquatics center will be a key asset for business recruitment in Gaston County,” he said.

In addition to the large competition pool, the center also will have a smaller, warm-water programming pool, said Taylor.

That pool will have a zero-degree entry for swim classes, therapy and aquatics safety instruction, in addition to submersible treadmills and bicycles. Other features of the aquatics center include elevated seating for 1,200 spectators, clinical rooms, a weight room and a hospitality suite.

Taylor concluded her presentation

in tears of joy as she showed a video in which 57-year-old Pastor Rodney Freeman gave his testimony to the positive impacts of recently graduating from the adult learn-to-swim program after having been afraid all of his life of putting his head under water.

Naming rights and other sponsorship opportunities are available to support the aquatics center.

For more information, go to gastonaquatics.org or send an email to gastonaquatics@gmail.com.

About Rotary: Rotary is an international service organization with 1.4 million members in more than 200 countries. “Service Above Self” is the Rotary motto. Rotarians work together to promote peace, fight disease, support education, grow local economies and protect the environment.

Belmont Rotary Club, which will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2025, meets for lunch and a program on local topics each Wednesday, 12:30 - 1:30 p.m., at the Home2 Suites by Hilton in Belmont. Guests interested in learning more about local businesses and issues and how Rotary serves the community are welcome. For more information, visit www.belmontrotaryclub.com.