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City crews work on a portion of the new Leete Park located by the South Fire Station on Pine Street. Courtesy photo

By GISEELLE ARREDONDO

• Leader & Times

Leete Park, located next to the Liberal's south Fire Department, is currently under construction and rapidly rising.

The park will be completed by the end of this year with the exception of the two soccer fields.

“We need to overseed the soccer fields again this fall so we will probably not have the soccer fields open ‘til next year,” Parks Director Bill Houk said. “But hopefully, the playground and all the rest of the equipment will be in. I got all the playground equipment sitting in the back here ready to go as soon as I get time to go put it in.”

There's so much room for activities.



Leete will include two basketball courts, which have already been put in, two baseball fields, two soccer fields, one volleyball court, the playground, exercise equipment, a splash park and restrooms, which will resemble those of Light Park.

“That’s a lot of activity, and the playground equipment that we are putting in is not like your normal swings. It’s more stuff that will make you work out, like hanging and climbing,” Houk said. “And of course, the exercise equipment there had to be the same as the one we got here at north Blue Bonnet by the batting cages.”

Cars passing by can already see Leete’s parking lot taking shape.

“Where you mostly see dirt and weeds, that’d be the parking lot,” Houk said.

The two soccer fields will be located on both sides of the parking lot.

“It’s hard to visualize, unless you know what you are looking for,” he said. “And 90 percent of the work is done by city staff. We don’t subcontract a lot of it, so it saves a lot of money.”

The splash park will be like a mini waterfall.

“It will have little sprayers. It’s not big. It will be maybe 30 feet by 30 feet. It will have an activator and the kids can just go out there and turn it on. It will be a lot of fun for kids, and; It’s free so it doesn’t cost anything,” he said. “We are trying to get to the kids at the south end of town who can’t get up to the water park, so they can go get a little wet.”

There is not a huge focus on trees for Leete.

“There’s going to be some trees, but because of it mainly being soccer and baseball, there won’t be a whole lot,” he said. “We don’t want to interfere with soccer and baseball. There will be beautification, and trees will be kind of minor in this park.”

However, trees will be planted along the south side of the park to serve as a wind block.

“You can’t have a lot of trees around the splash park because the leaves will get in there and plug it up,” he said.

After Leete is completed, other renovations will continue with other parks in Liberal.

The list includes Mahuran park, Mary Frame, Oliver Brown, Country Club Park and Country Club East.

These projects will deal with small things, such as beautification, playground equipment, sidewalks, new restrooms, baseball backstops and small shelters.

The city is in the process of putting a water fountain in Mary Frame.

Mary Frame will have a spray park added, which will be the same as the splash park being put in Leete Park.

“We are hoping to start on Mary Frame next year,” Houk said.

There is a plan to add spray parks to other parks as well.

“It’s kind of experimental. We get the one put in at Leete Park and if it works out well, then we are going to keep adding them on,” he said.

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