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TOP STORY

Area 59 tests out summer hours, fun days; closing to public for Camporee

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Layton Schubert, 12, gets help from Jacob Decker as kids in a “Rockets and Other Flying Things” summer camp build rockets Thursday, July 14, 2022 at Area 59 in Gillette.

News Record Photo/Ed Glazar

Gillette College's Area 59 has updated its summer hours and will kick off a new summer program this week. Along with other organizations in Gillette, the maker space will close to the public Aug. 6-9, 2024, for kids and adults with the International Pathfinders Camporee to use.

From Memorial Day through about Labor Day, the space's hours have changed to open from 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Regular hours were previously 10 a.m to 7 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday.

Ellen Peterson, Area 59 director, said the hours Monday will replace the hours typically open on Saturday. Staff will test out the summer evening hours to see if visitors are coming in to use the equipment. If there aren't many takers, doors could close a little earlier.

Starting Friday, Peterson said a new program, Fun Fridays, will begin for rising second through sixth graders. The short kid camp lasts about 90 minutes and runs from 10-11:30 a.m. Dates include this Friday and June 23, July 7 and 21 and Aug. 4. Cost is \$10.

The idea for the program came after a mother who homeschools her children asked if there was something like it. Peterson said staff then put the program together somewhat in conjunction with the Rec Center's free open swims for kids.

"(Parents) can drop in here from 10-11:30 a.m., have a picnic at Dalbey Memorial Park and then check in at the Rec Center," Peterson said. "That's a whole day spent wearing out the kids and it only costs about \$10."

Those wanting to do the kids day activity can drop in, pay the \$10, create the activity for the day and then be on their merry way. Some of the activities include playing with sumo wrestling robots that bump the other outside of a ring, 3-D printing a name tag and laser cutting a bird house.

Peterson said there's room for about 10 kids at a time who would work with staff that aren't instructing the summer camps.

"We're just going to try it and see if there's interest," she said.

She added that those interested in trying out the free four-week Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Achievers Program that runs from June 26 through July 21 can still register online. There is space for about 75 more students.

The camp offers hands-on experiences and projects for rising students in grades 6-8 interested in all aspects of technology. The camp meets from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday for the four weeks it's in session.

Closed for Camporee

Along with the Rec Center and Energy Capital Sports Complex, Area 59 will close to the public Aug. 6-9, 2024, to help kids create pins and adults learn more about drones.

"In the group, it's similar to Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts where they earn merit badges," Peterson said. "We'll be making pins with a Gillette or Wyoming theme that they can then swap with others they speak to."

The pins are something of mementos the students exchange when they meet someone from somewhere else. They might meet someone and then introduce themselves before swapping a pin to keep the memory alive.

Students also will learn about Photoshop and how to edit digital photography that will be made into either luggage or backpack tags. At the same time, their teachers will learn about drone technology.

Peterson said one of the honor pins students can earn through the Camporee group is based on drone flying but some of the teachers don't feel comfortable teaching the art. The training will allow instructors to teach the tech and in turn allow students to earn the pins.

More Information

Those interested in registering for the Fun Fridays, Area 59 summer camps or free Verizon summer camp can do so online at area-59.com. Those with questions can also call Ellen Peterson at 681-6135.

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