

A Grand Opening!

Picatinny's

NEW AQUATIC PARK

Makes an

Early Splash

By BRIAN HEATON

“Aquatic Park 2000-WE DID IT!”

That is the slogan being echoed by officials of Picatinny Arsenal and Rockaway Township, N.J., after their historic partnership resulted in the building of the Army base's new Aquatic Park.

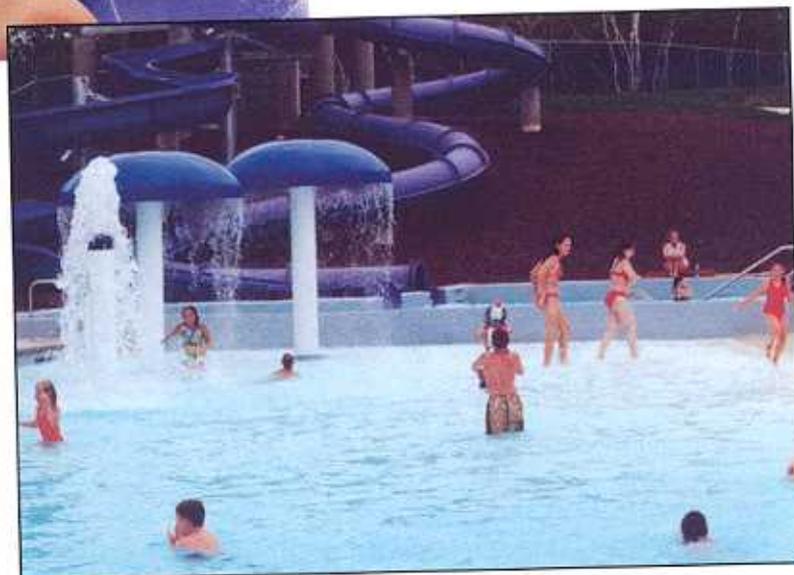
Opened on Memorial Day weekend, the \$3.9 million, 8.5-acre site was designed by Aquatic Development Group, based in Cohoes, N.Y., and built by Imperial Construction and Electric of Hillside, N.J.

The main leisure pool spans 12,700-sq. ft., and has six 25-meter lanes. The zero-depth entry leads out to a depth of five feet, although a section 12-feet deep was installed at the end of one of the lanes for SCUBA certification.

While diving is not permitted at the facility, the leisure pool has a number of fun activities. Included in this area are two “rain drops” where water can drop over swimmers, five gurgling springs, and two water blasters where patrons can shoot water at one another.

Thrill seekers at the park will not be disappointed either. Rising almost four stories high are the dual tube slides. Standing approximately 30-ft. tall, the slides measure 150 linear-ft. long. One slide is completely enclosed, while the other is open. Both twist and curve patrons down to the water.

For those looking for a nice relaxing day on the water, a



lazy river is also available. Using single and double person tubes, the 300 linear-ft. long river can hold a maximum of 92 people, and features a “rain drop” in the middle so riders can get soaked.

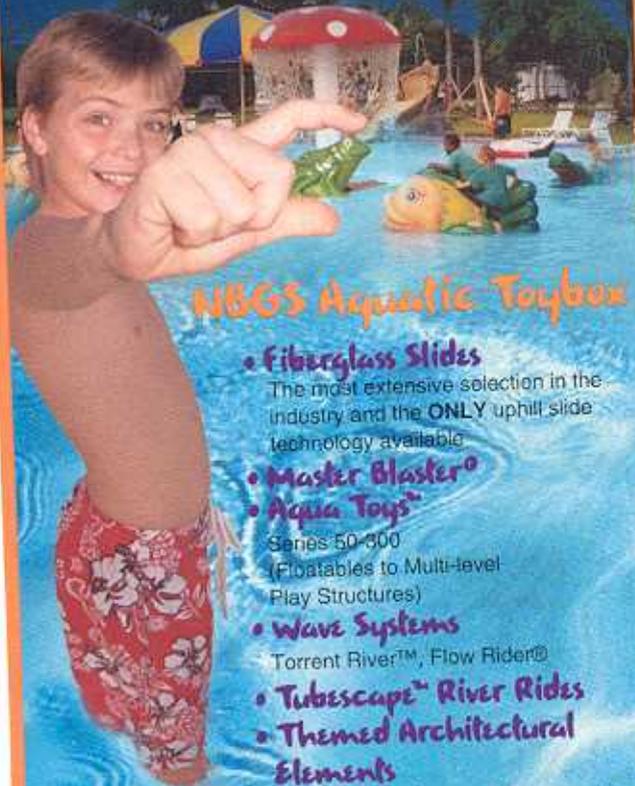
Young children also have a place at the new park. A 31-sq. ft. toddler activity area has a snail slide, aqua fountains, a waterfall, and a “tumblebucket” where water can be gently splashed on top of kids from an 18-ft. high perch.

In any recreational setting, socializing with fellow patrons is a significant part of daily activity. Catering to this need, the facility has a large deck and snack bar section, spanning a combined 23,600-sq. ft.

Here, 500 lounge and 100 straight-back chairs are set up for people to relax in the sun and for parents to watch over their children. The snack bar has a separate area for seating.

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including five 20-foot funbrellas that keep swimmers cool and comfortable while eating.

Overall, park officials have been amazed with the reaction of visitors. "It's been very surprising," said Lee Moreau, chief of Community and Family Activities at Picatinny. "The park is the toast and talk of the town. Some of the customers said that it's hard to believe it's on a military installation."

The comments from Rockaway visitors echoed the sentiments from the Picatinny community. According to John Inglesino, the mayor of Rockaway Township, citizens have not stopped raving about the facility.

"People are euphoric over it," he said. "I've never seen so many happy people in one place. The aquatic park has exceeded expectations and although I have received numerous thank-you calls, the real credit goes to the designers."

While the park has been immensely popular, getting it open for business presented some stressful moments early on. Two weeks before the scheduled grand opening, bad weather caused many on base to start doubting the park would open on time.

"With 14 days left before we opened, it rained 12 of them," Moreau remembered. "It made everyone jittery. As it turns out, Imperial decided to cover the lap pool and painted the interior, and although everyone was betting against them, they came through for us."

According to Karen Kazanchy, the aquatic park's manager, getting the staff organized and ready for the opening was an initial challenge.

"Prior to opening, my main focus was hiring and training the staff," she said. "Putting together the S.O.P. (standard operation procedures) for the park was also top priority."

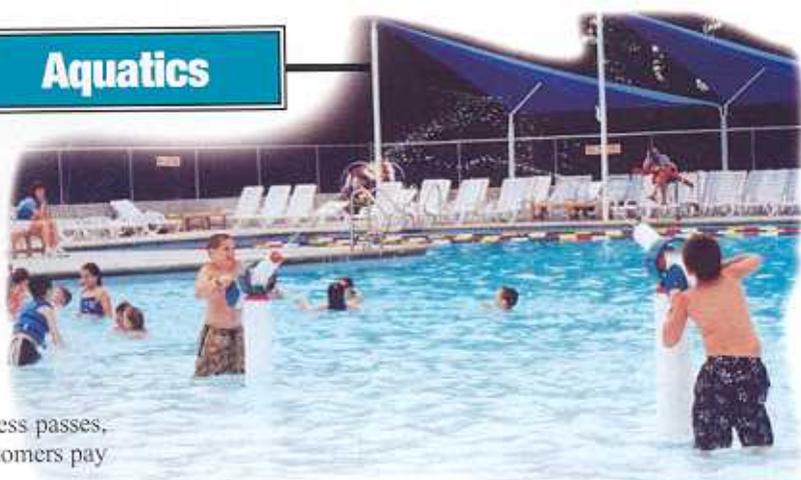
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The aquatic park is open seven days a week, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., and memberships to the park were sold to both the Picatinny and Rockaway communities.

The facility is sold out for the season, with 250 passes sold to Picatinny Arsenal members and 650 to residents of Rockaway Township.

"We put more money into the project and got less passes, but our pricing philosophy is that our partnered customers pay

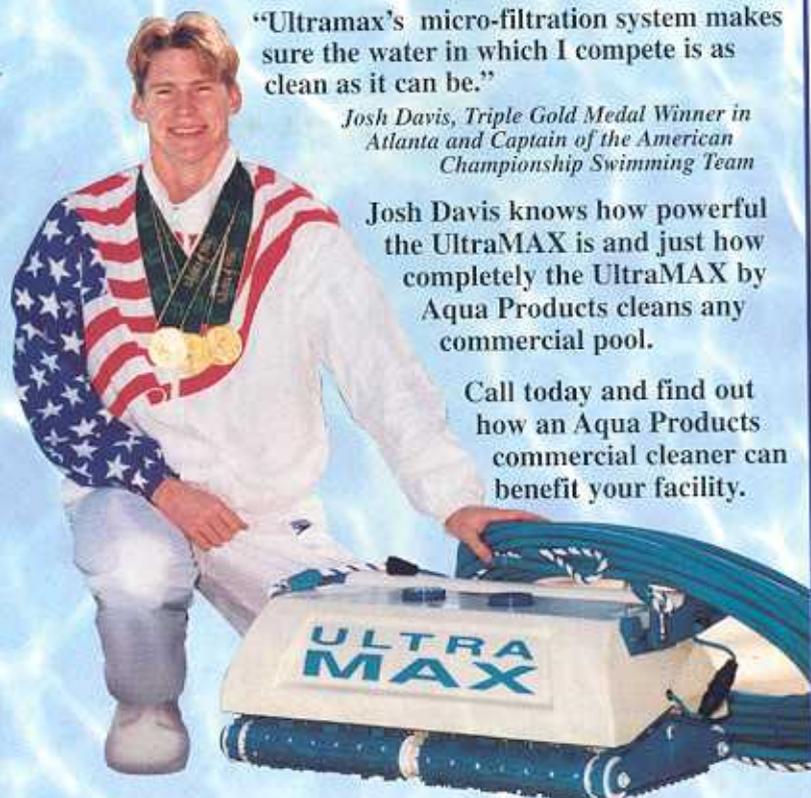
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Snap shot:

PICATINNY ARSENAL AQUATIC PARK

Size: 8.5 acres **Cost:** \$3.9 million
Design: Aquatic Development Group
Construction: Imperial Construction and Electric

Entrance Fees

Picatinny residents/employees

Guest Fee - \$7 per person

Daily Fee (for active duty patrons assigned/attached to Picatinny) - \$3

SEASON PASS

NCO (single) - \$75
 NCO (family) - \$100
 Officer (single) - \$100
 Officer (family) - \$125
 Civilian (single) - \$125
 Civilian (family) - \$150
 DoD Contractor (single) - \$150
 DoD Contractor (family) - \$175

Rockaway Township Residents

SEASON PASS

Charter Membership (first 500 families) - \$150 (with \$375 annual dues)
 Regular Membership (resident/family) - \$425
 Regular Membership (non-resident/family) - \$485
 Regular Membership (single) - \$225

Equipment Roster

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NBGS International: 1 Seashell Slide, 3 Waterdrop Play Structures

ProSlide: 1 Adventure Cross Water Tubing Ride, 1 Adventure Clear Water Body Sliding Ride, 1 Adventure Black Water Body Sliding Ride

two times the government rate," Moreau explained.

"However, because people are moving in and out of Picatinny all the time, we do permit those moving in to the community to purchase season passes."

Park History

The agreement between the two governmental entities for the building of the park was reached as a result of the lack of adequate recreational aquatic facilities at Picatinny and in Rockaway.

The pact continued a tradition of sharing facilities at the arsenal with the local community, as recreational fields, a fitness center, and the old pool had been used jointly for years.

Joseph Fiorilla, director of Parks, Recreation, and Senior Services for Rockaway Township, told *Government Recreation & Fitness* last July that a brochure was mailed to the citizens of Rockaway explaining the idea for the new aquatic park.

Prior to a Rockaway Township council meeting held two years ago, 500 families contributed a deposit on the facility, setting the stage for its construction. With the park now up and running, making the partnership work on such a grand scale is a continuing challenge for both parties.

"It looks great in theory, but we have to make it work in practice," Moreau said. "The goal is to provide both communities with a state-of-the-art park for the next 30 years."

Inglesino encouraged using the past and present Picatinny/Rockaway partnerships as models to other military installations for the future.

"This concept should be developed and encouraged throughout the military," he said. "It is much more economical, and bases can raise funds by working with local communities to improve lives."

"We are pleased to be the so-called 'guinea pig' for this type of agreement, and have had a lot of success."

Future Additions

While the park is enjoying some early success, officials on base are planning for ways to improve it in the future.

"Well, in the initial design of the park, we wanted a third tube slide," Moreau recalled. "The infrastructure is there for it, but we need to purchase

the slide itself. Maybe in two to three years we'll have the money needed to buy it."

Parking is an issue the staff is still a bit unsettled about. Although 290 parking spaces are available, the lots were almost full in late May and early June.

"The park is right in the middle of a military neighborhood, so the parking demand is slightly lower because those people can walk," Moreau said. "However, when school is out, and the weather gets nicer, the lots will be completely full. We're not at maximum yet, but it's getting there, so

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Aquatics



extra parking may be a need in the future."

On the creative side, the official name of the park will also be determined in the future. Simply called "The Aquatic Park," Moreau stated that a suggestion program would be set up for the naming of the facility based on customer experiences from the summer.

"It's really amazing how popular this place is already," he boasted. "People drive by just to look. It's really something."

—GRF

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