

BUSINESS

WATERLOO CHRONICLE

Welcome to the club

Every amenity you can imagine at The Athletic Club's new \$14-million facility



The Athletic Club at The Boardwalk on Ira Needles had its official opening last Friday and featured an open house of the new 65,000-square foot facility that boasts a members' lounge and cafe (above), 600 pieces of equipment like lifecycles and unique classes like anti-gravity yoga.

BOB VRBANAC PHOTOS

By **BOB VRBANAC**
Chronicle Staff

Club membership has its privileges at Waterloo's newest health and fitness facility.

And there's something for every discerning club-goer in the new 65,000 square-foot space with more than 600 pieces of workout equipment, two pools and more than 150 group fitness classes per week.

The \$14 million Athletic Club had its official opening last Friday as local dignitaries joined club president Alan Quesnel to view the state of the art fitness facility built by Waterloo's Mel-loul-Blamey.

From water walls to a members' lounge and cafe with free Wi-Fi, it feels like a spa when you walk in the front doors. But there are two floors of workout rooms including a hot yoga room and an anti-gravity yoga room offering the public the latest in workout routines.

Quesnel said they were looking for a flagship market to go along with other signature prop-

erties The Athletic Club has built in locations like Ottawa.

"We found that there was a lack of real high quality clubs in Waterloo, and the economy locally was performing better than a lot of cities in Ontario," he said.

The region's reputation as a high-tech magnet with a strong diversified local economy had him looking at The Boardwalk development on Ira Needles as a perfect location to serve more than 300,000 potential customers.

"It's a great location with a lot of parking, and the deal felt right," said Quesnel. "We try to pride ourselves on being different from what a lot of fitness providers offer.

"A lot of times you walk into a club and it's just a big box with some showers and equipment. If you walk around this facility you'll know we spare no expense on the details including heated floors in the locker room."

And they've been strong out of the gate already signing up more than 3,000 members for a facility that boasts separate

women's workout areas and family spaces. There is also a Sky Studio allowing people to open the workout area to the outside and more than 120 staff to serve the public 24 hours a day Monday to Friday, and until 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

"There aren't many communities with two universities," said Quesnel. "We think we're an easy commute for 200,000 local residents."

The developers of The Boardwalk see The Athletic Club as another magnet to the westside development that is now two-thirds of the way towards completion.

The next stages are an 80,000 square-foot office development, and a fashion village that will complement the existing development on the site.

Paul Dietrich, one of the partners in the development, said the success of the Athletic Club will be enhanced by the mixed-use planning behind the million square-foot mega development.

"We do have a real good mixture," said Dietrich. "We have mixed use around the retail."





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