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New roller rink to open Sunday

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EAST MOLINE -- Red, blue and green lights danced on the new, blue roller-rink floor of Skate City, QCA, as Xander Grandinetti Bradley, 6, Moline, watched with awe Wednesday.



Photo: Dan Videtich

Judy Bowser and Kyle Cord, co-managers of Skate City, QCA, are eager to open the new East Moline roller-skating rink on Sunday. Skate City is located at 1140 Avenue of the Cities, the former Sammy G's bowling alley.

"You like those lights, don't you?" co-manager Judy Bowser, 62, asked.

Co-manager Kyle Cord, 21, talked with Xander's mother, Kimberly Bradley, a health inspector for the city of East Moline, who had stopped by.

The new roller rink at 1140 Avenue of the Cities, in the former Sammy G's bowling alley, will open to the public Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m. Hours will be the same through Thursday. Dec. 31 will bring a New Year's Bash from 6 p.m. to 2 a.m., with all-you-can-eat pizza and a pop pig-out.

Ms. Bowser and her brother, Bud Johnston, were owners of Skateland at 4181 Kennedy Drive, East Moline, until it closed in May and then was torn down to make way for a new 54,000-square-foot Jewel-Osco store and Jewel Express gas station.

Dr. Dale Fehr, 43, who has an orthodontics practice in East Moline, bought the Sammy G's building in July because he wanted a safe, friendly and fun place for kids to hang out. Before Ms. Bowser auctioned off Skateland memorabilia, Dr. Fehr bought the skates, mirror balls and snack-bar equipment.

Ms. Bowser has been in the roller-rink business 30 years, but she took six months off after Skateland closed. "I sat home, twiddled my thumbs. I needed something to do," she said.

She and her brother advised Dr. Fehr about running a rink. "It gets in your blood, honey. And there's nothing you can do about it," she said.

Mr. Cord agreed. He was a Skateland floor guard when he was 16 and moved his way up to assistant manager. He said he's excited about people

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coming to the new rink.

Skate City's rink is modernized and offers more lights than Skateland did, he said. The snack bar will offer pizzas made right on site.

Ms. Bowser said she's looking forward to seeing the kids. Xander never has roller-skated before, and his mother said she's been waiting for Skate City to open.

Although tired from working long hours, Ms. Bowser still couldn't stand still. She said she's the fourth generation of her family to be in the roller-skating business. The first rink opened in Galesburg in 1928.

"If I didn't have the advice and counsel of Judy Bowser and Bud Johnston, I probably wouldn't have done this," Dr. Fehr said.

For more information about Skate City, call (309) 755-5219.

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