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National City Aquatic Center open

Center offers citizens aquatic-based recreation activities on the bay



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Will Drummond puts on a rowing demonstration for the community during Olympic Rowing Day at the National City Aquatic Center. *David Hodges*

NATIONAL CITY — The National City Aquatic Center has opened to the public, giving residents recreational access to the bay.

A grand opening of the center was celebrated with a ribbon cutting by local elected officials and the community on Saturday.

The 4,700-square-foot center is in the Port of San Diego's Pepper Park at the foot of Tidelands Avenue on San Diego Bay.

It gives residents and visitors an opportunity to use the bayfront for activities such as kayaking, rowing and as a venue for environmental education courses.

The center itself has views of the bay along with two multipurpose classrooms that can open into one large room; storefront/office space; locker rooms with showers and restrooms; boat and equipment storage; decorative lighting; and landscaping and public art.

It was designed by Safdie Rabines Architects and built by EC Constructors, Inc. Construction began in August 2013. The project was envisioned nearly a decade ago.

The center cost roughly \$5.3 million, \$4.4 million of which was set aside from the port's Capital Improvement Program. National City provided the remaining funds.

In February, council members voted to begin negotiating terms for an operating agreement with Southwestern College. Details are still being negotiated.

Southwestern College also manages operations at the Crown Cove Aquatic Center in Coronado.

Community Rowing of San Diego will operate out of the center throughout the summer and offer summer rowing camps for middle and high school students.

Hours are Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information call (619) 495-0701.

The Aquatic Center is at 3300 Goesno Place in National City.

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