

BMX park debuts Friday

30,000-square-foot facility said to be largest in U.S.

Published online on Wednesday, Jul. 01, 2009

By Nick Giannandrea / The Fresno Bee

Fresno will unveil Mosqueda Bike Park -- touted as the largest concrete BMX freestyle facility in the country -- during festivities Friday involving local riders, city officials and two top professionals.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony -- led by Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin -- starts at 1 p.m. at the Mosqueda Community Center, 4670 E. Butler Ave.

That will be followed by a BMX freestyle demonstration by Red Bull professionals Kevin Robinson and Daniel Dhers at 1:30 p.m. Robinson holds the BMX high-air world record at 27 feet, and Dhers is a two-time X Games gold medalist.

After the professional demonstration, a freestyle contest -- with \$1,800 in cash prizes to the top five riders sponsored by Herb Bauer -- is scheduled for 3 p.m. and an open jam session is from 5-9 p.m.

"The sky's the limit," said Ryan Garcia, action sports supervisor for the Fresno PARCS Department and a competitive BMX rider. "That's why we designed the park aggressively so if we want to bring in the high-caliber riders, we can bring them in and they can enjoy the terrain and they can do all the normal tricks you'd see them do on TV."

The park was crafted in part by local BMX riders, who shared their ideas during a pair of community meetings with Zack Wormhoudt, of Wormhoudt Inc., who designs bike and skate parks. Local riders made model obstacles out of clay and Wormhoudt put the most popular pieces together like a puzzle.

What they all came up with is a 30,000-square-foot facility said to be the largest in the country. Fresno PARCS community-relations manager Heather Heinks said the next biggest park in the country, to her knowledge, is a 26,000-square-foot facility in Blackjack, Ariz.

The marquee attraction at Mosqueda Bike Park is its 19-foot cradle, which essentially is a concrete half ball that skilled riders can go upside down on. There's also a 9-foot dropoff into the park and a series of table-top jumps called a rhythm section.

"It's amazing," Garcia said. "It's smooth. It's fast. It's challenging for advanced riders and good for beginning riders, too, with the smaller bowls that transition so you can work your way down into the deeper part of the bowls."

The park cost \$1.7 million, with the funding groundwork laid more than four years ago, before the economy plunged.

In September 2005, Fresno PARCS learned it would get a \$600,000 grant through the 2002 Resources Bond Act (Proposition 40). The department provided a \$200,000 match and the balance came through a \$35 million Impact Fee Bond issued in June 2008 that funded 19 projects.