

Newly smooth and challenging Pier Park skateboard facility opens Oct. 14

By Charity Prater

There are roughly 30,000 skateboarders in Portland with only one major skatepark for all of them to battle over: the Burnside skatepark. That's why approximately 1,000 people are expected to be at the Pier Park Skatepark kick-off opening on Saturday, Oct. 14.

Tom Miller, a 34-year-old skater and skateboarding advocate, says, "Burnside Skatepark is the equivalent to having one tennis court and thousands of tennis players."

The old Pier Park facility was a product of poor construction and

design. It was designed and created by thoughtful people with little knowledge of what skateboarders need. The park was wavy, unsmooth and proved dangerous to those who rode it.

The creators of the Burnside skatepark, Dreamland, designed the new Pier Park Skatepark. Those attending the event expect the best ramps and the smoothest curves to rank no different than glass.

"This new park is designed for both street skaters and bull skaters," says Tom. "It accommodates all skill levels in its 11,000-square foot design."

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SKATEPARK

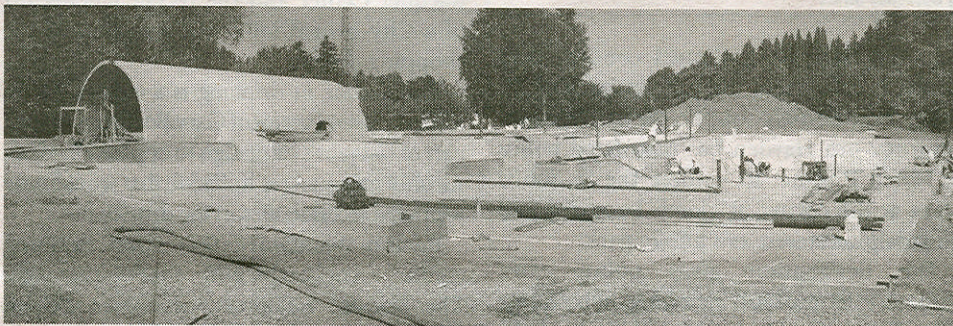
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Dave Arpin is the manager at the Urban Soul Skate Shop, located only a mile away from the Pier Park Skatepark. “We are doubling our inventory and preparing for the boost in business this park will be creating,” he says.

Dave will also be at the kick-off event, snapping photos that will be donated to Skaters for Portland Skateparks (SPS), a local nonprofit geared to ending stereotypes about skateboarders and creating more public parks to skate in. The shop will also have their own skate team at the event.

“The new park will be a great place for kids to go and improve their skating,” says Sarah Burgess, a volunteer for SPS and a skater as well. “Kids need a place to go where they will be occupied and enjoy their time. Without something that inspires them, kids look for something else to do, possibly something bad. At this park there will be riders of all ages and abilities to mentor each other. It is a positive environment where it nurtures all of us to grow as individuals.”

Sarah started skateboarding four years ago. As a beginner, she would constantly fall and hurt herself. “Back then I wondered why people would do this,” she says.



■ Doesn't look like much. But come Oct 14 this will be one of the nation's best skateparks. PHOTO BY DAVE ARPIN

Sarah didn't fall in love with the sport until she first went to the old Pier Park skatepark and learned how to roll down a transition.

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“I fell in love,” Sarah emphasizes. “Now I can't stay away from it. I love skating.”

The new park will give bikers, BMXers and skaters a chance to learn and practice in a well-built new park. The park also will increase funds for the local community, help

area businesses, and clean up Pier Park by consistently attracting a large crowd of people. It will also be a free place for kids to spend their time learning or improving their sport.

To make the park even more appealing, a cover is in the future plans. The mounts have been put in place and now everyone is just waiting for the funding.

The kick off day will include free apparel, stickers and boards. Nike will be sponsoring the event along with Willamette Week. Nike's professional skateboarding team will be entertaining the crowds. Tons of vendors and local companies will make an appearance as well. The event is expected to be a Wall Ride.

Details at www.pdxskaters.org.