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PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GREAT FALLS RECEIVES \$1M GIFT FOR NEW REC CENTER;
LAUNCHES \$3M CAMPAIGN.**

\$1.6M ALREADY SECURED AND OPENING IS SET FOR MAY 2024

GREAT FALLS, MT – Efforts to build a new community recreation center in Great Falls just got a big boost, thanks to a \$1M gift from SCHEELS. City officials announced the gift on Wednesday during a press conference to launch a fundraising effort to fully fund and equip the new recreation center. The campaign also will fund access scholarships for families who need support to gain membership.

“The City of Great Falls has long been committed to providing our neighbors with quality public amenities that fuel our quality of life,” said Bob Kelly, the city’s mayor. “The new recreation center is proof of that.”

Construction is already underway on the 45,000 square foot recreation center located at Lions Park on 10th Ave. S. The facility cost is significantly covered thanks to \$10 million in city-backed bonds and a \$10 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense. The grant solidifies a partnership with Malmstrom AFB to assist with their water training needs, as well as providing a facility that family members can enjoy.



The recreation center also fills a void in public recreation options caused by the 2018 closure of the city's public indoor pool. The new full-scale rec center and aquatics facility is a first for the community.

"Building the new recreation center is a once-in-a-lifetime chance to create generation spanning impact for the Great Falls community," said Steve Herrig, the city's parks and recreation director.

Once complete, the new rec center will include both fitness and indoor aquatics amenities including an indoor leisure pool and a lap pool, multi-court gym, elevated track, fitness areas, child watch, and community areas.

"Aim High Big Sky" is a \$3 million campaign to fund alternates, aquatic, recreation, and fitness equipment. Funds will also be used to provide rec center access for residents in need.

Already, \$1.6 million has been secured, including the SCHEELS contribution.

"SCHEELS is committed to making a positive impact on the communities we serve," said Tim Kubetz, leader of the Scheels store in Great Falls. "Our support of the rec center is our way of expressing our appreciation for the Great Falls community, and our belief in the health and well-being of our neighbors."

The SCHEELS gift is one of the largest single contributions the City of Great Falls has received. To honor this generosity, the new rec center will be named "SCHEELS Aim High Big Sky."

While the campaign is off to a strong start, another \$1.4 million is needed to keep the rec center project on track for a May 2024 opening.

"Our community deserves to have public amenities that foster health and well-being for all and reflect the quality of our community," said Herrig. "This campaign is the way we will make



that happen, with support from all those who believe in Great Falls.”

For more information or to support the campaign for the Scheels Aim High Big Sky Recreation Center, contact Chase Rose, (406) 580-4328, chase.rose@bannackgroup.com.

About the City of Great Falls & the Scheels Aim High Big Sky Recreation Center – Located in north central Montana, the City of Great Falls boasts a population of about 60,000. It is home to 2 colleges and Malmstrom AFB and is bisected by the Missouri River. The city’s only indoor public pool closed in 2018. In 2021, construction began on a new community recreation center. It is slated to open in May 2024, pending full funding of a \$3 million fundraising campaign. The City of Great Falls website can be found at: <https://greatfallsmt.net>

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