

20-minute practice followed by a 45-minute game. Games will be in the evenings. T-shirts and schedules will be distributed at the first game. In a typical year, about 125 kids participate.

Youth Coach-Pitch baseball

■ This coed league is for 5- and 6-year-olds who have at least completed kindergarten. The cost for registration is \$50 if registered by April 23 for an eight-week schedule. The fee is \$55 if registered after that time. Children have a one-hour practice per week and one game per week. T-shirts and schedules will be distributed at the first practice. Games will be in the evenings. Typically, about 100 kids participate each year.

While COVID-19 forced the parks department to close the door on its summer programming last year, Schwanke said he is confident the city can provide a safe environment for kids to have fun this year.

“We really need to get back to having some sense of normalcy,” he said. “Not having anything for last summer for kids really, really hurt. That’s been our main driving force just to do whatever we can on our end to try and get activities back into the community for kids.”

With a full slate of activities on top for the coming months, Schwanke said there is plenty for families to look forward to.

“The biggest thing I look forward to is just hoping that we can do what we can to make sure that we give kids an experience over the summer,” he said.

Nickerson

Located just 10 minutes from Nickerson is an exciting, high-flying zip line experience ready to make its return this spring.

The Soaring Hawk Zip Line Tour opened in March 2018 at Camp Crossed Arrows near Nickerson. The \$200,000 project features five lines that send zippers over the wooded ravines and rolling hills of the Elkhorn River valley north of Fremont.

The zip line tour was the first multiline course in the state and has seen a steady stream of visitors up until the COVID-19 pandemic. Between all five lines of the course, which steadily increase in height, riders can zip across more than 2,000 feet of Nebraska scenery.



COURTESY PHOTO

Families walk through a pumpkin patch at Camp Fontanelle in 2019.

Rob Anderson, challenge course manager for the Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska Council, said the experience takes around two hours on average.

“It is a neat way to experience all the different parts of the camp,” he said.

Like many businesses, Anderson said the tour lost momentum during the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We completely shut down,” he said. “We didn’t come back until the latter part of last summer when we developed some COVID-friendly procedures to keep both participants and our staff safe.”

Reopening last summer provided a chance for the tour to get back on its feet, but Anderson said traffic was slow throughout the season. Now, he said Soaring Hawk is looking to regain its momentum this summer.

“We’re hoping to regain our momentum and really get things going again this year,” he said. “Full speed.”

Anderson said the course was meant to ease people into ziplining. He said other ziplining platforms use 80-foot platforms as takeoff points. At Soaring Hawk, the land is used to ease riders from platform to platform.

“I purposely made it so that it is user friendly for those people who are a little hesitant,” he said. “You build on that experience as you go.”

He said those same people who were initially hesitant quickly find themselves more confident in themselves as the course pro-

gresses. That, along with a course that Anderson said was “overbuilt for safety,” makes for an exciting new experience for first-time zippers.

“It’s extremely satisfying and we can see these people come out and expand their comfort zone a little bit,” he said. “That’s what we’re all about. That’s what we strive for and we enjoy that as instructors.”

Shannon Peterson, marketing director for Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska, said the introduction of the Soaring Hawk Zip Line Tour has helped bring new tourism to Camp Crossed Arrows.

“It’s a professionally pulled together zipline tour, so that’s pretty exciting and exhilarating,” she said. “More and more people will continue to use it and then see the other amenities our camps have and either get their girls involved with Girl Scouts or try out some of our other amenities.”

As for the upcoming season, Peterson said she is ready to see girls return to camps and tourists begin experiencing the sights and experiences Camp Crossed Arrows has to offer.

“It was such a hard summer without camps and without the zip line tour,” she said. “I think people are going to be really excited to get out and do things.”

Camp Fontanelle

There is plenty to look forward to for children and families at Camp Fontanelle during the course of the summer and fall season.

Summer camp is set to kick

off in just over two months and newly appointed Site Director Ryan Siver is ready to bring back safe summer programming for kids across the area.

Camp Fontanelle is just four miles from Nickerson.

The camp allows for several camping options for kids throughout the summer, including day camp and residential camp. Siver said families can also participate in virtual camp if they don’t feel safe returning to in-person programming yet.

“I think it’s just the excitement of being able to host in-person camps again this summer with all the things we’ve learned in the past year to make sure everything’s safe,” Siver said. “I’m just really, really excited to be starting something new.”

Siver said the camp also plans to host its corn maze and pumpkin patch during the coming eight-week fall season.

As a parent of four children, Siver said he is ready to have his children be given the opportunity to make new friends during the course of summer camps. He said that sentiment is true among many parents.

“I think there’s a lot of parents who are ready, as long as it is done safely, to go back to having a normal summer of activities,” he said. “I think a lot of it will be based on policies and procedures enacted so that the parents know that the activities they are doing are safe.”

Should parents have any concerns about procedures implemented at the camp, Siver said to simply call and staff will be happy to walk them through current protocols and answer any questions.

“I think that’s the important thing, that parents can just see how we do it and be able to talk with us about all those things and answer their questions,” he said. “I think that’s really important.”

Siver officially stepped into the role of site director on April 1. In the short time that he’s been in the position, the welcome from the community and camp has been strong.

“I’m just really excited and really looking forward to getting to work and getting to know the people around here and just making those relationships and those connections with people who have lived here for a long time.”