

YSU breaks ground for center

BY CHRISTINA POE &
ELIZABETH TABAK
The Jambar

Gray skies and drizzling rain did not stop the ground-breaking of the Youngstown State University John S. and Doris M. Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center.

Monday afternoon, students, trustees, administrators and faculty crowded into the front lobby of Beeghly Center to witness what most speakers deemed a historic day.

The music of YSU's Marching Pride band blasted



Chuck Rogers / The Jambar

REC CENTER:University President David Sweet breaks ground for the Doris M. Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center with YSU students Monday.

See CENTER, page 6

Beeghly Center, setting a festive tone for the event as trustees and administrators took their place at the front of the room.

Two dirt-filled wooden troughs stood next to the podium. Gold shovels embossed with the words "Andrews Wellness and Recreation groundbreaking, April 19, 2004" were stuck in the dirt, and blue prints surrounded them.

Spectators listened as YSU's Chief Development Officer Paul McFadden, University President David Sweet, Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center Campaign co-chairs Douglas McKay and Gregory Ridler, Andrews Recreation and Wellness Center director Jack Rigney and student committee chairwoman Carla Macali spoke at the event.

McFadden thanked community benefactors, the YSU Board of Trustees and the student committee that worked to create the recreation and wellness center. He explained that the dedication of those in the YSU community has made possible the construction of the \$12.1 million facility set to open fall 2005.

"This is a symbol of the commitment of the people of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley," McFadden said.

Sweet spoke of the same commitment as he described the struggle of the students to bring forth the plans for the recreation center.

"The students were the driving force behind the effort," Sweet said. "It was their dream."

Sweet also reminded the audience that the university is still just short of their funding goal for the university, saying that individuals "can't lose sight of the funding gap."

Currently, the campaign has raised \$11.47 million from approximately 530 benefactors contributing private funds for the recreation center.

The donation of \$2 million came from the John S. and Doris M. Andrews trust fund, the namesakes of the recreation center.

Ridler spoke on the history of the center's namesakes.

Ridler said the Andrews were pillars of business and charity in the Youngstown community and significant contributors to the growth of YSU.

"John and Doris realized the importance of the university not only on its students, but on the entire Mahoning Valley," Ridler said. "That is what makes this groundbreaking all the more special."

Looking down on the ceremony from a stairway, Human Performance and Exercise Science Professor Gordon Longmuir smiled on the buzzing activity on the floor below.

Longmuir spoke of the benefits that he saw for the students, such as keeping them full of activity and adding more activities within the university. He also said it is an accomplishment that the university should be proud of.

"People laughed and thought this would never happen and here we are," Longmuir said.

Vice President of Student Affairs Cynthia Anderson said the center is the result of the dedication of a few students.

"This student committee is one of the most active I've ever had the privilege to work with," Anderson said. "They've set a great example of setting students' sights high."

Student committee member Melissa Nero said the project is overdue and she is glad the university would finally be providing students with a place where they can exercise and have fun with their friends.

Sophomore Crystal Duncan agreed and said the groundbreaking marked the beginning of something that would bring the entire Mahoning Valley together.

"It's such a good, positive thing," Duncan said. "It will bring YSU great publicity and will really unite the campus and the community for the better."

Call Christina Poe at (330) 941-3523.

Call Elizabeth Tabak at (330) 941-1989.