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## Donation insures Regner stage

A \$150,000 contribution from West Bend Mutual Insurance Co. will pay for the construction of a roofed performance stage to complete the newly renovated entertainment area in Regner Park this spring.

John Duwell, West Bend Mutual Insurance Co.'s executive vice president and chief legal officer, made the announcement.

"We're very excited," said Craig Hoepfner, director of West Bend's Park, Recreation and Forestry Department. "This is something we've never had before. We're very grateful for their generous donation, and I'm sure the community will be, too."

Construction of the 48-foot-wide-by-34-foot-deep stage will begin in March and should be ready for use by Memorial Day weekend in May, Hoepfner said. The stage also will have plenty of electrical power, he said, which can be used throughout the entertainment area.

The stage will face southeast toward the pavilion and will be raised three to four feet. Its design will "blend well with the architecture of the recently completed renovations" in the entertainment area, he said. "It's going to be a fine finishing piece to that triangle and very functional."

It should cost less than \$200,000 to build, he said, and previous donations collected for Regner's renovations will be used to cover any expense over \$150,000.

The stage will join the renovated Kiwanis and Rotary Pavilion and expanded Marie and Orville Strachota Bandstand, which were part of \$1 million in publicly and privately funded renovations and improvements done at Regner last year to help celebrate the park's 75th anniversary.

With the pavilion's food and beverage facilities and both the pavilion and bandstand offering covered seating for up to 300, the new stage will complete the triad of facilities envisioned for the entertainment area, Hoepfner said.

The entertainment area will attract events for groups of 500 to 1,000.

The department also plans to replace the 75-year-old restrooms just to the north of the entertainment area this year, a \$200,000 project still waiting for final Common Council approval. The old restroom structure will be converted into a storage building for park gear, Hoepfner said.

West Bend Mutual will contribute \$75,000 this year and a matching amount in 2012 for the project, said Jim Schwalen, vice president of marketing for the local insurance firm.

"We really see Regner as a cornerstone for the recreation of the community," Schwalen said. "We just felt this stage was a great opportunity for us to step in and get involved. This project needed some good, strong corporate support. We really want to be there for the community."

Mayor Kristine Deiss said this was another example of the insurance company's contribution to the city. "West Bend Mutual has given so much to this community. I think it's utterly fantastic. Last year I wasn't sure we'd get someone to step up to the plate so quickly to finish this (entertainment area) project."

Monday, the Common Council approved a design service agreement with American Design and Build Inc. for the Regner stage project. The vote was 7-0. Alderman Ed Duquaine, owner of Duquaine Concrete and Masonry Inc., abstained from the vote. His company was involved in preliminary design work for the stage, he said, and worked with American Design and Build on the bandstand last year.

American Design and Build has volunteered time for the construction administration of the project.

"Obviously, we'll program (the stage) some, but it'll be open for rentals, too," Hoepfner said.

West Bend Mutual contributed \$10,000 to the Regner renovations last year.

"Obviously, West Bend is our community. Our corporate headquarters are right here in West Bend," Schwalen said. "We do want to give back to the community."