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## Donors pitch in to rebuild Playland in Latrobe

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By Joe Napsha

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Efforts to rebuild arson-damaged Playland at Latrobe's Legion Keener Park in April have received a big boost from a local contractor, as well as companies, trade schools and colleges, recreation officials said Thursday.

"It's incredible how many people are involved. This community is amazing how they responded to this," said Jeanne Ashley, executive director of the Latrobe-Unity Parks & Recreation Commission.

A rear section of the playground was damaged in an arson in June 2012 and was rebuilt in about a week, but it prompted officials to consider a complete overhaul of the 20-year-old wooden playground, which was built with volunteer labor.

To prepare the site for the new playground, the old playground was removed recently by J.J. Hauser & Sons Inc. of Unity, which volunteered its services, said Craig Shevrick, program director for the Latrobe-Unity Parks & Recreation Commission. Thirty truckloads of gravel and old wood was removed from the site and snow fence has been erected around the area for safety purposes, Shevrick said.

The new playground is being designed by Play by Design of Ithaca, N.Y., with inspiration from Latrobe area elementary school students.

Shevrick said he has received commitments from Kennametal Corp. of Unity, Triangle Tech of Greensburg and United Parcel Service of America Inc., which has a terminal in Unity, to provide volunteer workers during the playground building from April 23-28. St. Vincent College is seeking volunteers for the building phase, Shevrick said.

The recreation commission will need about 250 volunteers each day during the building phase, he said. Crews from J.J. Hauser will oversee the construction.

To cover the costs of the project, the parks and recreation commission has raised close to \$100,000, Shevrick said. It may not need to raise \$200,000 as initially projected because of the amount of contributions it has received, he added.

Joe Napsha is a staff writer for Trib Total Media. He can be reached at 724-836-5252 or [jnapsha@tribweb.com](mailto:jnapsha@tribweb.com).

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