

Belleair Beach celebrates new digs

By MELISSA LATTMAN

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BELLEAIR BEACH – The city of Belleair Beach celebrated the opening of its new \$3.9 million community center with a ribbon cutting and open house on Oct. 22.

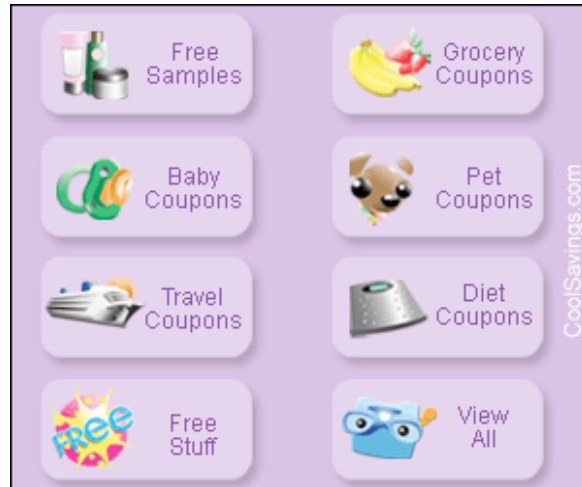
The City Council gathered on the top step with community members behind them to cut the festive green ribbon roped across the entry staircase. After posing for photos the celebration continued in the spacious new council chambers, which also can serve as a function room.

The new 10,000-square-foot building replaces the now demolished 50-year-old Belleair Beach City Hall.

The new community center has a large gathering room with a water view through floor-length windows and an adjacent terrace. The council chambers can be divided into two separate function rooms, if desired. The other side of the building has city government offices. The space includes individual offices, a conference room, break room, computer server room, and storage spaces. People

socialized in the council room and took informal building tours.

Mayor Lynn Rives thanked the vision and leadership of the original 2001 building committee. Resident Burt Cutler chaired the original building committee. Without him this building would not be here, Rives said.



A grid of eight purple coupon buttons with various icons and text. The buttons are: 'Free Samples' (with a bottle icon), 'Grocery Coupons' (with a banana icon), 'Baby Coupons' (with a baby carriage icon), 'Pet Coupons' (with a dog icon), 'Travel Coupons' (with a plane icon), 'Diet Coupons' (with a diet scale icon), 'Free Stuff' (with a 'Free' sticker icon), and 'View All' (with a blue robot icon). A vertical watermark 'CoolSavings.com' is on the right side.



Photo by MELISSA LATTMAN

Belleair Beach city officials and supporters attend to official ribbon-cutting duties at the new community center.

"We formed a committee to get public approval (for a new building). We needed a new building; on a rainy night we would have eight buckets catching water and there was nothing we could do with the structure to fix the problem," Cutler said.

Another member of the original building committee, Jim Corrigan, shared his excitement over the new building. Waterproof, safe storage of records was an important consideration, he said. Corrigan said he was very impressed with the new building and liked how things they had envisioned were in the new structure.

"We wanted a water view and a divided council room because sometimes you don't need a full room," he said.

The original 2001 building steering committee included Skip Chittenden, Corrigan, Cutler, Rudy Davis, Herbert Hayes, Paula Paxton, Cindy Peters, and Dick Williams, Rives said.

Rives gave Councilor Rob Baldwin a bronze plaque of appreciation for his time and expertise on helping manage the project.

"It was a great project. Everybody worked well together. We had a super contractor. (The new building) is a big change from the garage. It's very satisfying. It's a nice legacy. The building will be here for the next 50 years," Baldwin said.

Rives recognized Harvard Jolly Architects and Honors Contractors. The construction of the building, completed in September, took 14 months.

Resident Brenda Lafon said she was impressed with the layout of the council chambers room and the way it facilitates communications.

"Government is very interactive. Its very exciting to see the possibilities," she said.

T.J.'s Italian Café in Indian Rocks Beach catered the appetizer buffet and Tim Bogdan played romantic classical guitar for the two-hour open house.

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