



NEWS FROM THE TOWN OF PENFIELD

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For Immediate Release
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Town of Penfield Grand Opening of Rothfuss Park **September 29 at 10:00am**

The Town of Penfield will host a grand opening celebration of Rothfuss Park Saturday, September 29. A ribbon-cutting ceremony that will include Rothfuss family members, NYS Senator James Alesi, dignitaries and town officials is planned for 10:00 am. Activities to showcase the 70-acre park's sports fields, trails and other amenities are planned from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm.

Rothfuss Park features six multi-purpose rectangular sports fields to support the growth of soccer, lacrosse and other field sports in Penfield. Amenities include a red-roofed pavilion reminiscent of the old Rothfuss barn with a snack-bar and handicap-accessible restrooms, paved walkways and picnic tables. An open pavilion sits atop a knoll in the park, offering views of the entire facility. From this vantage point visitors will be able to watch multiple games at once. A trail system is also being developed throughout the 70 acres. The park is bordered by dense trees on land owned by the Nature Conservancy providing a transitional buffer to the Thousand Acre Swamp. One thousand additional trees were planted throughout the park.

The need for a park with multi-purpose sports fields in central Penfield was first identified in a 1995 Recreation Master Plan. The idea was reinforced in the 2001 Recreation Master Plan Update. To fulfill that goal, in 1996 the Town of Penfield purchased the Rothfuss property in partnership with the Nature Conservancy, which acquired a 20-acre buffer along the park's border with the Thousand Acre Swamp. Funding for the land purchase came from a New York State matching grant awarded through a statewide bond issue. Initial development of the park's fields, plantings and infrastructure was made possible by a \$300,000 grant secured by New York State Senator James Alesi. A Monroe County Community Development Block Grant funded sidewalks along Five

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Mile Road to make the park handicap-accessible. Town of Penfield incentive zoning funds and recreation fees for community improvement projects further supplemented development of the park. Penfield's Rangers and Strikers soccer teams also made generous donations from their own fundraising efforts.

Development of the park began in 2005. Since then, the Town of Penfield Parks and Recreation Staff, Highway Department, and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board have worked diligently towards its completion.

Supervisor George C. Wiedemer comments, "Rothfuss Park is a truly exciting addition to Penfield. This park is the result of thoughtful planning and attention to the Town's recreation needs. I would like to commend all who worked to conceive of – and build – this multi-purpose recreation facility. I thank Senator James Alesi for securing financial support that made Rothfuss Park possible. We also appreciate a county grant that allowed us to make the park handicap-accessible with sidewalks along Five Mile Line Road. Looking ahead, Rothfuss Park will support a future of wellness in Penfield."

Tom Rothfuss, fourth generation farmer and son of James Rothfuss, grew up on the farm that has become the new park. He and his brothers will represent the Rothfuss family at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Rothfuss says, "This is the greatest thing for us, we did not want to see this land developed. My family and I are excited to see the farm become a new park for Penfield that will serve the community's recreation needs while providing open views and trails for all." Many Rothfuss family members will attend the grand opening, including an aunt from Vermont.

The grand opening will feature Penfield Rangers and Strikers soccer games and demos, and a shots-on-goal contest. Penfield Youth Lacrosse will also play games and offer demos.

Entertainment and demonstrations will be provided by the Rochester Astronomy Club, Pen Rec Jugglers, First Lego League from Bay Trail Middle School, the Sticky Wickets Croquet Club, the YMCA inflatable obstacle course, the Rochester Area Model Yachting Association. The Rothfuss family will be offering hayrides. There will also be science-based hands-on activities for families. The Penfield Trails Committee and The Nature Conservancy's Thousand Acre Swamp Committee will be on hand to showcase the park's planned trail system. Large farm equipment will be on display, and everyone is invited to bring a kite to fly during the celebration.

Penfield Parks Director Robert Ainsworth and Recreation Director Mike Cooper have been close to this project since it was first included in the 1995 Recreation Master Plan. Cooper says, "Sports in Penfield have rapidly grown in recent years, and while this is a positive trend, we lack the playing fields to adequately accommodate all the teams. The additional rectangular playing fields at Rothfuss Park will be an asset to many of our teams. And, although the fields comprise a large part of the park, it is such a beautiful, wide-open space that everyone can enjoy the park in their own way, from a quiet stroll, to a game of Frisbee or a family picnic. This park is a gem in the center of our town and one more way to enjoy recreation and promote healthy, active lifestyles."

All are welcome to the grand opening celebration. Rothfuss Park is located at 1648 Five Mile Line Road, just north of Atlantic Ave. See details at www.penfield.org.

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