



Oct. 16, 2012

Recent concerns from citizens have brought to light some misconceptions about Georgetown County's newly constructed baseball and softball complex, Eight Oaks Park, and its accessibility to residents. The county would like to make it clear Eight Oaks Park will be an integral part of the county's recreational offerings and a valuable resource for county residents.

When Georgetown County conceived plans for Eight Oaks as part of the county's Capital Improvement Plan a number of years ago, the opportunity to host baseball and softball tournaments was prominent in the minds of county officials. A tournament-level venue was seen as an economic opportunity for the county — a way to attract new visitors, many of whom would hopefully become repeat visitors, and bring revenue to local businesses. Though open only a few months, Eight Oaks is already seeing success in that capacity, having been host to five tournaments, attracting thousands of visitors from around the state and the Southeast, and generating significant visitor spending.

It's a blueprint the county plans to duplicate at other new facilities, including Stables Park in Litchfield.

However, for all the attention directed recently to tournament play, Eight Oaks is first, and foremost, a community park like other parks operated by Georgetown County. Many residents were unfortunately given the impression that wasn't the case as we tried to communicate our plans for the park.

Like other parks in the county, Eight Oaks is used for local league play. When the season starts up again next spring, the fields will be packed with boys and girls learning and enjoying the sport via the county's recreational teams. It will also be available to local adult leagues.

While the teams enjoy the fields, friends and family of the players will fill the stands and make use of amenities for visitors to the park.

It's true: the gates at Eight Oaks are locked when the park is unattended. That's an effort to avoid vandalism and unintentional damage to the facility. It's to keep the facility beautiful and appealing, so it can continue to be enjoyed by local residents and attract tournaments.

While Eight Oaks is not the facility for a pick-up baseball or softball game, the county offers a number of community and regional parks that are available for this purpose. Moreover, the citizens of Georgetown County can be assured that Eight Oaks is open and available to the people in this community and will be used extensively by Georgetown County residents.