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## Couples dream of a dog park becomes reality

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GALION -Steve Ball and his wife, Kathy, are living their retirement dream.

The couple has been working for the past 15 years toward opening a dog park for local

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residents and that dream came to fruition in May when they celebrated the grand opening of Adventure Mountain, LLC., Dog Boarding and Park, located at 3411 Ohio 309, on the edge of Iberia.

"We love doggies and wanted to provide the area with a true dog park. Some cities, like Marion, have a fenced-in area for dogs at municipal parks but there is nothing for the dogs to do. We have created a park that the dogs will love. It is a dog lover's dream," said Steve, as he worked in the store portion of the park on Thursday.

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The store offers premium dogs foods, dog toys, T-Shirts, coffee mugs and even happy meals for dogs, while the dog park sports a large, wooden play gym for the dogs that includes shoots, ramps and even a rock climbing-type wall.

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6:39 pm EDT Partly sunny

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"We want this to be fun for the dogs and relaxing for their owners," Steve said as he pointed out chairs and picnic tables in shaded areas throughout the three and a half-acre park.

Several small pools for the dogs to cool off in are placed throughout the park, along with a pond that includes a beach.

"The dogs can play in the pond. Dog owners can use our wash station to spray off their dogs' paws if needed, free of charge," said Steve.

The wash station is also available for dogs to be shampooed, either with self-service or full.

"We charge \$7 for member for a bath and brush if you do it yourself and \$14 if we do it," said Steve.

Steve said the park is membership-based.

"We have memberships available for \$29 per year," said Steve. "Currently, we have over 100 members. People love the park and we are getting a lot of positive feedback."

A membership allows half-price admissions for the play park at \$5 per dog per day compared to \$10 per day per dog for nonmembers, along with half-price boarding and doggie day care fees.

John Sisson came to the park for the first time on Thursday with his dog, Sammy.

"My girlfriend heard about it so we wanted to check it out. It seems really nice and will give us something to do with Sammy," said Sisson who lives in Caledonia.

Steve said day care for dogs is offered from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

"We are opening parts of the park in segments so the play park opened first and now we have started the doggie day care. People seem to love it," Steve said. "My wife and I have been rescuing animals for years so our top priority for all the dogs that come to Adventure Mountain is safety. We can't stand for a dog to be tied in a backyard while people are at work. Why not bring the dog to day care where they can play with other dogs."

The park also offers a building with 10 kennels for boarding.

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"We constructed the kennels with wood because we wanted to get away from the concrete that many kennels are made of. Our kennels are indoor-outdoor with a cot in each one. We have five people that work at the park so the dogs are outside, running and playing, not cooped up in a kennel," Steve said.

Steve said the kennels are booked for Labor Day weekend.

"We are booked most weekends and fill up quick on a holiday weekend. People should call well in advance to book a spot for their dog to ensure we can accommodate them," Steve said.

Steve said plans for a primitive camping area at the park are underway.

"We plan to expand the park and add camping by next year. We have plenty of land we can still use," said Steve as he motioned towards the back of the property that includes the home he and Kathy built 15 years ago with plans for the park.

A huge mound sits near the pond that dogs can also climb and play on.

"That is the mountain that we use in the name of the park," said Steve with smile.

For more information, call the park at 419-688-9488 or visit the park's Facebook page at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Adventuremountaindogpark342/?">https://www.facebook.com/Adventuremountaindogpark342/?</a> fref=ts&ref=br tf

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