

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR
WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

November 13, 2024

Contact: Haley Burton, 423-619-5311

**Hamilton County Breathes New Life into Birchwood Community Center
with New Computer Lab, Outdoor Facilities**

Community feedback leads to connectivity improvements, new tennis & pickleball courts

Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp today announced the county has been awarded a \$100,000 Broadband Ready Communities grant from the Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development (TNECD), pending confirmation from the County Commission, for a new state-of-the-art computer lab at the Birchwood Community Center and digital upscaling in unincorporated parts of the county. The county achieved eligibility for this grant after being designated as a Broadband Ready Community (BRC) in November last year.

“We listened to the priorities of Birchwood residents and look forward to creating a place where families and people of all ages can come together, connect, and thrive at this renewed community hub,” said **Mayor Wamp**. “Our community is at its best when every resident of Hamilton County is equipped with modern tools that unlock educational opportunities.”

Grant funding is proposed to go towards a computer lab at the Birchwood Community Center and the Enterprise Center’s “Tech Goes Home” program to enhance digital opportunities in unincorporated Hamilton County. With an entry fee of \$50, this program provides people in underserved communities with eight sessions of digital training on today’s technology and a free device upon graduation.

“Hamilton County’s status as a Broadband Ready Community really elevated us in seeking additional grant funding to provide better technological resources to those who otherwise may not have them,” said **Matt Folz, Director of Hamilton County Parks & Recreation**. “The restoration of this beloved community center continues our commitment to providing resources and recreation throughout our county parks.”

The revitalized community hub is also set to receive a new playground, featuring inclusive surfacing and play components, that will be located in the center of the track—which is slated to be resurfaced and restriped. The Hamilton County Parks & Recreation department will also resurface both of the community center’s tennis courts, converting one into two brand new pickleball courts.

“This investment goes far beyond facility upgrades; it’s a commitment to uplifting an entire community,” said **Linda Wright**, longtime volunteer at the community center. “The Birchwood Community Center is a treasured community staple in the northeastern part of the county, and these enhancements will spark new opportunities for growth, learning, and connection.”

###