



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

"The research and planning that went into the development of this facility is readily apparent."

INDOOR FAMILY AQUATICS CENTER Class 8 (under 100,000 annual attendance)

Illinois Valley YMCA, Peru, Ill.

The majority of funding for the Illinois Valley YMCA came from two posthumous donations. The goal of both benefactors was to share the gift of aquatics — and health — with the community. The result is a 62,000-square-foot, indoor center that has become the hub of aquatic fitness for much of the Midwest, says CEO Dave Potthoff.

With a waterpark, eight-lane competition pool and therapy pool, the YMCA strives to meet the different needs of young, old and everyone in-between. Before opening the facility in 2006, directors visited more than 30 aquatics centers, taking meticulous notes on the good and bad aspects of each one. And while the waterpark and eight-lane competition pool are top-quality, the research produced the biggest results when it comes to YMCA's therapy pool.

"I wouldn't just say this is the best therapy pool in Illinois," Potthoff says. "This very well could be the best therapy pool in the entire Midwest."

Designed by a team of physical therapists and orthopedists, the main physical therapy pool is just four lanes wide and 20 yards long. But what it lacks in size, it makes up for in integrated features. It boasts a jet current to swim against, two underwater treadmills, three underwater exercise bicycles, a hydraulic lift and four therapeutic jet seats with handheld jet controls. Working in conjunction with the local hospital, the YMCA provides qualified trainers to help patrons on the path to rehabilitation.

In conjunction with its three aquatic facilities, the YMCA also offers a previously built 45,000-square-foot indoor workout and sports facility. It was the family and community atmosphere of this venue that encouraged the benefactors to donate money for a new aquatics facility, Potthoff says. While keeping the memory of the benefactors alive, the new center is dedicated to keeping the community living healthy. — *Danny Brown*



FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS: One of the most advanced indoor therapy pools in the Midwest • Underwater egg hunt at Easter time, and swim with Santa at Christmas

FEATURES: 1 indoor pool • 1 leisure pool • 1 therapy pool • 1 hot tub • 1 lazy river, 3 water slides, 1 water playground, 2 water toys

PROGRAMMING: Learn-to-swim • Lifesaving • Water aerobics • Water therapy • Competitive swimming • Snorkeling • Special events