

New Halfpipe Heading to Skate Park

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Kodiak's skate park users can expect some new equipment in the weeks to come. Jeremiah Gardner is the owner of the bike shop 58 Degrees North and said, if all goes according to plan, a new 24-foot wide halfpipe should be installed sometime next month.

"We're waiting on the skatelite to get shipped up from the lower 48, and then, you know, we got some shop space verbally donated, but I've got to clarify on all that. So if all that's in check then hopefully within the next two weeks we're going to start construction on the skeleton of it all. And get it all prepped so that it's ready to go when all the skatelite gets here and we can just screw things down and bring it down in chunks to the park."

The new halfpipe will be put in the current skate area at Baranof Park, and Gardner said the next task will be keeping it protected from Kodiak's notorious elements.

"We're trying to figure out some sort of modular way to make it so we can maybe pull it out in the winter and find a way to keep it preserved somewhere. You know we're looking at all the drainage and stuff. I mean there are just a lot of unique problems for the island in terms of keeping stuff like that good. So that's pretty much where it's at."

The money for the new halfpipe came from \$30,000 the city allocated to the skate park for renovations and equipment. It was part of a larger sum of money left over from the new track and field. Majority of that leftover money ultimately went toward the baseball outfield. Gardner said he's grateful for the contribution, but frustrated that the city doesn't seem to want to put more toward a better skate park.

"I mean I get frustrated going to meeting after meeting and trying to convince people to do something

and out of \$1.9 million they gave us \$30,000. That's realistically, nothing. But, it's enough to do something if we do it all ourselves."

He said the lack of support is especially frustrating when you look at the amount of users the current skate park gets.

"An absurd amount. Way more than any other park system that we have, in my opinion. And the user group is by far the widest. There's kids in there from age 2, with their dads, riding around on little balance bikes, on up to guys in their 50s."

Gardner said the new halfpipe will cost around \$15,000.