

Ice rink owner projects Friday opening

By TOM PERRIN
Staff Writer

Just beyond a sign that says "The Rinks," Coming in November 1995," construction workers can be seen trudging in and out of Shawnee's new ice-skating arena.

The \$2.5 million project at Johnson Drive and Barker Road that owner Stan Oliver had hoped to have complete by Thanksgiving still wasn't open for business by Christmas.

Construction activity was heavy on Tuesday, but Oliver is still projecting "The Rinks" will be open for business on Friday with public skating from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Admission is \$5.50, skate rental is \$2.

"I don't know what could stop it at this point, but there's always something out there that could," said Oliver, who had planned to be open last weekend with a temporary occupancy permit from the city.

Oliver still hasn't received the permit, but plans to have one by Friday, provided enough work is complete. Before opening, Oliver wants to have all of the flooring installed, bathrooms available and limited concessions to sell.

The main entry doors to the building were supposed to be delivered last week, but still had not arrived Tuesday.



Pat McLin uses a tape measure to check the size of an opening before installing a sheet of Plexiglas Tuesday at the new Shawnee ice rink. The owners hope to be ready for hockey games by Friday.

JEFF ROBERSON
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A youth hockey tournament is planned for Saturday and Sunday. The Kansas City Junior Blades Amateur Hockey Association has committed to 35 to 40 hours of weekly ice time.

"We have so many people waiting to get in here that we've got to get open as quickly as we can," said Oliver, who has been working toward the project for two years.

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What people will see when the facility first opens won't be a finished product by any means. The kitchen won't be fully operational and the pro shop won't be open, among other things.

Oliver said it would be about a month before the interior is complete. The exterior won't be finished until spring, when landscap-

ing work can be accomplished.

The most visible sign of progress is the 85-by-200-foot ice surface that is ready for skating. Lines have been painted and hockey goals installed. A reconditioned Zamboni ice-resurfacing machine has been purchased for \$35,000, Oliver said.

Oliver himself constructed the waist-high reinforced wooden bor-

der that surrounds the ice and connects to the Plexiglas shield that protects spectators from flying hockey pucks.

Oliver, who spent 12 years in the swingset business before going to work on the ice arena, has extensive construction experience. He would have had someone else construct the border, but didn't think it

would arrive in time for the facility to open on time.

Of course, that was when the ice arena was scheduled to open in November.

Oliver's next construction project will be the racks for rental skates.

A full-time staff of five has already been hired — a pro shop

manager, a concession manager, an assistant general manager, a certified athletic trainer and an assistant manager.

Oliver, who has routinely been putting in 12- to 16-hour days, will be the general manager. He can hardly wait to get started, saying, "I've been waiting for two years to make a living."