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**Prairie Creek Reservoir Cuts Ribbon on Immersive Education Center**

On Monday morning, dozens gathered to cut the ribbon at the brand-new Cook Family Education Center at Prairie Creek Reservoir. Once an unheated building without restrooms, the Reservoir Office has now been transformed into a natural history museum, complete with a timeline of Muncie history, interactive exhibits, full-size trees, a sailboat, live fish and turtles, and more.

The Education Center is dedicated to the Cook family, who have served a collective total of 87 years at the park. Eldon Cook Jr., who has carried on his father’s 30 year legacy and is on his 34th year at the park, accepted a plaque from Mayor Dan Ridenour. Prairie Creek Superintendent Dustin Clark has planned the center since 2020, and finalized the exhibits this year.

The Education Center was made possible through generous grants from Muncie Sanitary District and Ironman International, as well as various in-kind donations from the community. Clark explained that the new center, which is in phase one of three, cost the taxpayer nothing and will continue to be free to the public. “This vision started years ago,” explained Mayor Ridenour. “Now, we have a place for all of East Central Indiana to learn about our history and our natural resources.”

In addition to natural history exhibits, the center features a historic timeline, including the Lenape people, the early gas boom, women’s suffrage, and more. The center also contains display cases from the Delaware County Historic Society, and the Muncie Endurathon (now IRONMAN), which is perhaps the longest running 70.3 triathlon in the world.

The Cook Education Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 to 3. School field trips can be scheduled by calling the main office at (765) 747-4872.