

Saturday, February 14, 2009

Great Park opens new ice rink

Newly unveiled temporary rink kicks off yearlong entertainment series.

By **SEAN EMERY**

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

Comments 12 | Recommend 2

IRVINE – Skaters flocked to the opening of the Great Park's brand-new temporary ice rink today, kicking off a yearlong entertainment series.

The free event brought a little taste of winter to the former El Toro air base, as visitors enjoyed a 50-by-80-foot ice rink housed in a converted hangar in the shadow of the Great Park balloon ride.

Early this afternoon Great Park officials said the event was off to a fast start, with hundreds of visitors waiting for a 45-minute session on the ice rink. Younger attendees also enjoyed a craft tent where they made valentines.

While today's visitors enjoyed clear skies, rainy weather earlier in the week forced Great Park leaders to scale back their plans a bit, including delaying efforts to add snow, sledding and ice carving. Those events are now planned for a St Patrick's Day-themed "Shamrock and Skate" event on Saturday, March 14, the day before the temporary rink will close for the season.

Also taking part in the rink opening was the Anaheim Ducks Street team, which has also helped promote Great Park festivities. The Ducks are hoping to forge a long-term partnership with the city of Irvine, possibly through the opening of a permanent ice rink within the sports park portion of the Great Park.

Contact the writer: 949-553-2911 or semery@ocregister.com



Attendees of Saturday's event wait for the Zamboni to make its run around the Great Skate rink Saturday afternoon.

MIGUEL VASCONCELLOS, ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER