



MEDIA RELEASE

May 23, 2025

Johnson Township Brings Pickleball to Desbarats with \$150,000 OTF Grant from the Province

Desbarats, ON – In 2024, Johnson Township began construction on a seven-sport, multi-court that's been designed to support both physical health and social connection for residents of the North Shore. On Friday, MPP Bill Rosenberg joined Mayor Reg McKinnon at the Johnson Township Community Centre, located at 1 Cameron Drive, for the official opening, a project made possible thanks to Johnson Township receiving a \$150,000 Capital grant from the provincial government's Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) in 2023.

"Congratulations to the Mayor, Council, and everyone involved in making this exciting project a reality for the residents of Johnson Township," said Bill Rosenberg, MPP for Algoma-Manitoulin. "Thanks to the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, this new pickleball court will provide a lasting space for active living and social connection for years to come. This is a great example of how community-driven initiatives, backed by provincial support, can make a meaningful difference."

The OTF grant enabled Johnson Township to replace the aging courts with a professionally engineered, high-performance surface. The new court includes an asphalt foundation with a high-strength fibre glass membrane and a Laykold Acrylic coating, designed for durability and unmatched cushioning, with a lifespan of 30–35 years.

The site has a long history of serving local athletes. Originally constructed over 20 years ago to meet a growing need for tennis facilities in the area, the double tennis courts provided decades of recreational value. As community interests evolved the court surface has shown its age, the courts became outdated and unsafe. In recent years, interest in pickleball and basketball has grown significantly, especially among youth and older adults, prompting the need for a more versatile and modern space.

In early 2024, Johnson Township launched a public consultation process to help shape the project. Based on strong community input, the final court layout includes a full-sized basketball court, three pickleball courts, a shared tennis/badminton/volleyball court, and goaly creases for floor hockey. Shuffleboard lines, which were part of the original plans, will be added in a future phase.

"It's truly exciting to see the support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation making crucial infrastructure upgrades like this a reality in Johnson Township," said Hon. Reg McKinnon, Mayor of Johnson Township. "Our Community Centre is more than just a building—it's a central hub for connection, recreation, and support for residents across the North Shore. This new Sport-Court supports our commitment to providing access to modern, high-quality facilities that will not be limited by geographical location and provide fair access to underrepresented communities. The impact of this investment will be felt for generations, supporting healthier, more active lifestyles for residents of all ages. We are incredibly proud to see this project come to life."

This project reflects Johnson Township's long-term commitment to updating and modernizing its recreational infrastructure to better serve residents for years to come. By transforming an aging, single-use tennis court into a durable, multi-purpose facility, the Township is significantly improving the quality and availability of local amenities. The new Multi-Sport Court provides a safe, accessible space for community members of all ages and abilities to engage in physical activity, build social connections, and



enjoy recreational opportunities close to home. Reinforcing Johnson Township's Community Centre as a central, welcoming hub for health, wellness, and community interaction.

The Municipality of Johnson Township is committed to providing a fully centralized, accessible facility to meet the needs of the area, supporting recreation, promoting healthy lifestyles and acting as a valuable meeting place for organizations throughout the extended catchment area. To learn more or get involved in programming on the Multi-Sport Court, or any of the other offerings at the Johnson Township Community Centre, please visit the website at: www.johnsontownship.ca or call the Recreation Coordinator at 705-782-6601 x205. Follow along and find us on Facebook [@JohnsonTownshipRecreation](https://www.facebook.com/JohnsonTownshipRecreation).

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Ontario government with a mission to build healthy and vibrant communities across the province. Last year, OTF invested nearly \$105M into 732 community projects and multi-sector partnerships. Projects aim to enhance economic well-being, foster more active lifestyles, support child and youth development, provide spaces for people to come together and connect, and create a more sustainable environment. Visit otf.ca to learn more.

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