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Meridian hopes new community center will grow

For now, it's hosting a summer day-care program, evening classes for adults.

The one-story, 4,200-square-foot building at 201 E. Idaho - which at various times has housed the Meridian Police Department, the local U.S. Post Office and the Meridian Boys & Girls Club - has been remodeled into a community center by the Meridian Parks and Recreation Department.

"The building has a long history of community service," said parks and recreation director Steve Siddoway. "Hopefully, it will get a lot more use."

Siddoway said it cost the city about \$11,000 to remodel the building into one large multipurpose room, which can be converted into two rooms with the use of dividers.

Allison Kaptein, recreation coordinator at the center, said for now the facility is being used for city-sponsored activities. In time, however, the department hopes that it will become a "true community center."

"We'd like it to be a place where community groups can gather," she said. "And, maybe down the road, someplace where we could have Friday night activities for teens."

But increasing the center's availability to outside groups and more activities will have to wait.

"Right now, we don't have the staffing structure to do that," Kaptein said.

The facility is being used now for the city's annual Mer-Ida-Moo Day Camp during the day, with the evenings reserved for city-sponsored classes, including jewelry-making, a yo-yo class, belly dancing, water coloring, scrap-booking and storytelling.