HOLIDAYS ON ICE ... Skaters will get an extra week to enjoy themselves this year

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Despite temperatures rising to the mid-60s on Friday, skaters eagerly took to the ice as Greenville Technical College Ice on Main opened for the season. KEN OSBURN/STAFF

ICE RINK OPENS TO WARM RECEPTION

By Anna Lee | Staff Writer

There were more short sleeves than scarves and more water bottles than hot chocolate as downtown Greenville welcomed Greenville Technical College Ice on Main for the start of its second season Friday.

"As you can see, this is our little version of Rockefeller (Center)," said Mayor Pro Tem David Sudduth at the opening ceremony. "We've started what we think is going to be a long-standing tradition."

The outdoor rink drew more than 18,000 skaters and 50,000 visitors to the sunken courtyard at Main@Broad on South Main Street last year, Sudduth said.

Organizers have been counting down the days for this year's event, which will run a week longer until Jan. 21.

A small line had already formed before the rink opened for business at 11 a.m. It was 54 degrees. Onlookers warmed their hands against cups of coffee as they watched skaters with varying degrees of skill glide across the smooth ice.

By 1:30 p.m., it was 66 degrees and still rising. The ice will remain frozen at temperatures up to 70-75 degrees, organizers said.

There were an equal number of skaters Friday as there were viewers thanks to improved seating and new dasher boards made of clear polycarbonate plastic.

Even folks from home can watch

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the action this year with the Ice on Main Skate Cam at www.IceonMain.com.

Other new features include Greenville Tech Gives Back Sundays, to be held Dec. 2 and 16, and Jan. 6 and 13. A portion of ticket sales on those days will go to Habitat for Humanity, and volunteers from Greenville Tech will help with the new build, said the school's president, Dr. Keith Miller.

"After 50 years of supporting families through education and training, it is fitting that we would support an activity like this — an activity that is a popular family destination," Miller said.

Ice on Main's rink can hold 100-175 skaters at one time.

Weekday hours are 2-9 p.m. until Dec. 7 and 11 a.m.-9 p.m. from Dec. 8 to Jan. 6. Weekend hours are 11 a.m.-10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for children aged 12 and under.

Concessions, including hot chocolate, coffee, apple cider and kettle corn, are also available for purchase.