

Pinion: Owens museum dedication slated for May 16

By Brette Martin Burnes
Staff Writer

After years of planning, the Jesse Owens Museum in Oakville will soon be completed, and one the museum's board members said it should attract tourists "from all over the world."

Board member James Pinion addressed the Lawrence County Commission Monday and told the commissioners the museum commemorating the birthplace of the 1936 Olympian will be ready for a ribbon-cutting ceremony May 16, the day of the annual Jesse Owens run.

"I'm really excited about it, and it's something the county can be

Although most aspects of the museum are going as scheduled, Pinion said there is a ditch at the park which has the potential to cause problems and asked for the county's help in correcting the matter. However, the commissioners didn't commit to correcting the problem.

He said a ditch has washed out

proud of," Pinion said. "It's really a lot better than I even thought it would be."

Pinion said the Owens family is expected to arrive in Lawrence County on May 14 for the festivities, which will take place on May 15 and 16. He told commissioners a \$100 donation to the museum will secure a private tour with the family on the 15th.

He said *The Decatur Daily* and its editor and publisher, Barrett Shelton Jr., donated the funds to equip the museum with a resource center which, according to Pinion, will contain two computers, a laser printer and a library of about 75 magazine and newspaper articles

and is undercutting an area of pavement at the park. Pinion said he is concerned about the pavement eventually caving in and requiring unsightly patch work.

"This ditch is a nagging problem, and it's just going to create other problems," he said.

Commissioner Mose Jones told Pinion that he appreciated all the

documenting Owens' life. The center will also be connected to the internet.

"Now, school children and people all over the country can access this information," Pinion said.

Pinion said the museum will house a theater which will feature a video of the 1936 Olympics, narrated in part by Owens himself, as well as two other videos.

Pinion said Sylvester Owens, brother of the legendary athlete, also provided narration for a segment of the tour.

Pinion said the board will soon begin work on brochures and pamphlets to market the museum and park.

work Pinion and other board members had put toward the opening of the museum.

"(Lawrence County has) got something to offer, and folks want to see it," Jones said.

"It's going to be one of the grandest things that ever happened to the county and Alabama," Pinion agreed.