

Pinion ponders Nike grant to help Jesse Owens Park

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OAKVILLE — James Pinion is hoping for a grant from Nike to help with construction of a track at the Jesse Owens Memorial Park.

The grant, named after Nike's cofounder and legendary University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman, would provide up to \$50,000. Re-



James Pinion

ipients must find a contributor to match that amount.

"It (the track) has to be tied in with a famous name or person," said Pinion, a longtime board member, who is now park treasurer. "What better name than Jesse Owens?"

He estimates the costs for a track, bleachers for 3,000 spectators, restrooms and a concession stand at \$250,000.

The track would complete construction of the park. Already, there are two lighted ballfields, a museum, a statue of Jesse Owens and a replica of the dogtrot cabin in which he was born.

Pinion said plans for constructing attractions at the park went in a reverse direc-

tion, which prevented the park from becoming self-sufficient.

The museum was the first major attraction.

"In the original plan, the museum would be an attraction, and the track would be the key to bringing in a lot of people throughout the summer," Pinion said.

The lighting of two ball fields will enable recreational leagues to begin using the park. That should allow the Owens

Park board to move toward financial self-sufficiency.

A track would enable Lawrence County to host events similar to the former "Jesse Owens Games" in Arizona.

Coaches are for it

"I talked to coaches in Georgia, Mississippi and Florida who said they would be happy to send their kids to an event

here, just because of the name attached," Pinion said.

Pinion has not yet applied for the grant.

The Bowerman Track Renovation Program provides \$200,000 a year in matching grants to community-based, youth-oriented organizations.

It stipulates that organizations applying for the grant must prove a need for a track and must make the track accessible to the nearby community.