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Hellman Field's opening game marked with state youth day

WATERLOO --- Youth Baseball and Softball Day in Iowa will be celebrated Tuesday as the first night game is played at Hellman Field.

Waterloo Mayor Tim Hurley will kick off the festivities at 5 p.m. by reading the formal proclamation issued by Gov. Chet Culver. The Star-Spangled Banner then will be sung by the Dr. Walter Cunningham School for Excellence children's choir.

There also will be a presentation of colors by the East High School Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps and a ceremonial flip-of-the-switch on the park's new lighting before the game begins.

The state-of-the-art lighting was installed last fall. Hellman Field opened nearly a year ago next to Cunningham School with the help of a large donation by marketing and advertising agency founder Bob Hellman Sr.

Hellman has gone on to create Build Our Ballpark, an organization that helps raise funds to build new or improve existing ball fields.

Youth Baseball and Softball Day is designed to encourage young people to play the games, promote team work, strengthen character, build pride and teach life skills.

"This day helps promote to the public everything that we hold strong to, including lifelong learning, fitness and fun," Bob Etringer, sports programmer for Waterloo Leisure Services, said in a news release.

Hellman added, "Baseball is an important part of American culture and history, and we believe it's appropriate to dedicate a day to the sport and its impact on our youth."

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