

The Sun - Moriah Little League's Pepper Field gets makeover

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MORIAH – Moriah's John W. Pepper Memorial Field has new life thanks to prison inmates and town employees who pitched in to resurface it and build a new backstop.

The town softball field gets a lot of use in the summer, and the clay surface was worn down, said Moriah Buildings and Grounds Foreman Ed Roberts.

The Moriah Town Highway Department, Buildings and Grounds Department, and Moriah Shock Incarceration Facility inmate crews all started working on the field earlier this summer.

"It was resurfaced with red shale, a fine stone," Roberts said. "You have to rough it up, rake it, to maintain it. It looks really nice."

Truckloads of the material were brought in by the Highway Department to create a new, more durable infield, he explained.

Crushed red shale is a premium material for sports fields, because it isn't slick when wet, and dries quickly. It also offers firm footing and is aesthetically pleasing.

The inmates also applied wood stain to the team dugouts, Roberts said, as well as to new backstop that they built.

The project was spread out over several weeks.

"Eventually, there will be a new backstop," he said. "It has to be installed."

The ball diamond, located in the Moriah Corners hamlet, is used for both softball and baseball games, he said.

The town maintains the field for public use, Roberts said, but the Pepper family owns the property.

The field is named in honor of John W. Pepper, one of the town's prominent citizens in the first half of the 20th century.

“The Pepper family leases it to the town for \$1 a year,” Moriah Town Supervisor Thomas Scozzafava said. “They’re very generous to the community.”

The town paid for the stone and stain, he said, but much of the labor was from the inmate work crews.

“Pepper Field is fabulous,” he said. “It’s a major asset to the town.

“Everyone worked together to get this done.”