

HIGHLANDS COUNTY SPORTS COMPLEX

By Suzanne S. Hunnicutt, AIA



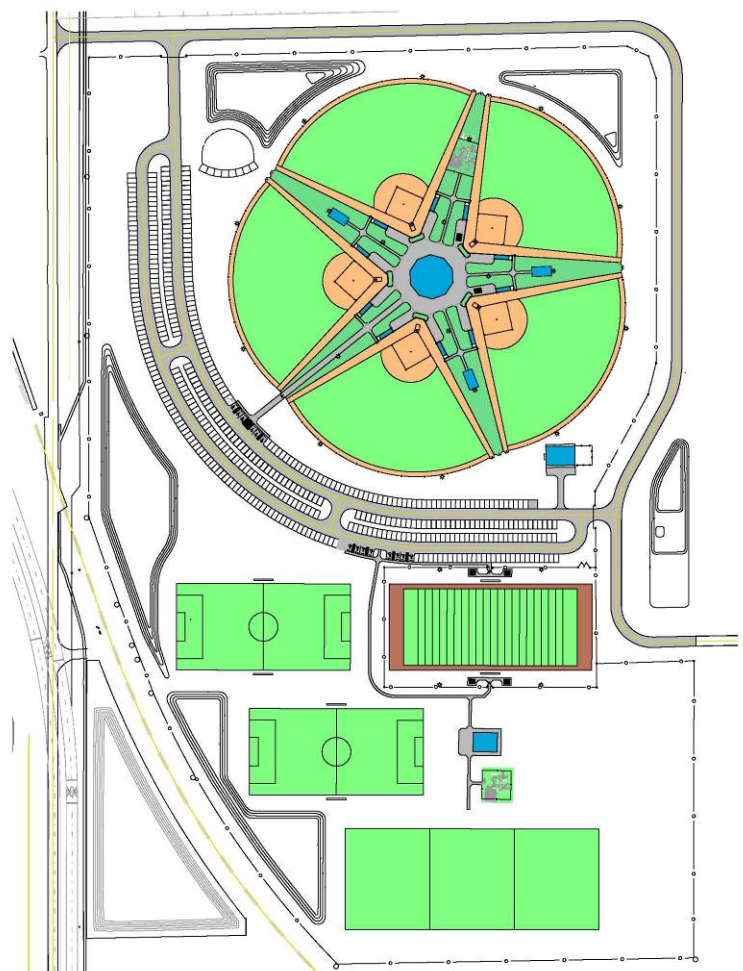
The Sebring office of Chastain-Skillman is presently working with the Highlands County Parks and Recreation Department to develop a major Sports Complex for the County. After taking an inventory of existing facilities, the County's Recreation Planning Advisory Committee identified adult softball fields as the greatest need in recreational facilities. They also recognized the economic impact that a well-designed softball complex could have by bringing tournaments to the County. Several sites were considered before the final site, north of Sebring High School and adjacent to the proposed extension of the Sebring Parkway, was chosen.

Chastain-Skillman was selected to provide both engineering and architectural services for development of the 52-acre site. The design features a two-story Concession Stand/Press Box at the center of a five-plex of softball fields. The building is a decagon with every other side facing one of the five fields. The first floor has a large concession area with commercial kitchen facilities as well as public restrooms and storage areas. The second floor includes offices for management staff, a large meeting room, and an umpire's lounge area along with a scorekeeper/press box area for each field. The master plan provides space for future batting cages, picnic pavilions, and a playground within the softball complex (see adjacent site plan).

The site will also provide fields for youth soccer and football. The plan includes two soccer fields, one football field, and three multi-purpose practice fields. The master plan provides for another concession stand and playground in this area as well. Parking is provided between the two sports areas and consists of 500 grassed spaces served by paved drive aisles.

A 2,400 square foot maintenance building will house the materials and equipment needed to maintain the complex. The irrigation system served by five on-site wells will be computer controlled. This will allow for optimum watering of the state-of-the-art sports turf. The sports lighting will also be programmable allowing for scheduling use of the fields weeks, or even months, in advance.

Working with Highlands County on this important multi-faceted project has been a rewarding experience for Chastain-Skillman's multi-disciplined team of professionals.



Suzanne Hunnicutt is a Vice-President of Architecture, and works out of Chastain-Skillman's Sebring office. Her work focuses on the design of office, institutional and industrial buildings for both public and private clients. Suzanne received a Bachelor of Design degree in 1975 and a Master of Architecture degree in 1980 from the University of Florida. She can be reached at (863) 382-4160 or shunnicutt@chastainskillman.com.