

Scoop: Lauridsen Skatepark gains certification

Jason Clayworth



Lauridsen Skatepark. Photo: Courtesy of Polk County Conservation

Lauridsen Skatepark is being certified with USA Skateboarding during a public event Sunday, Polk County and Catch Des Moines officials tell Axios.

Why it matters: The designation means the facility will be a regional skateboarding hub and likely attract more Olympic-qualifying events, Laura Jass, director of sports for tourism advocacy group Catch Des Moines, tells Axios.

Catch up fast: Lauridsen Skatepark is a nearly \$7 million project that [opened in spring 2021](#) along the DSM River downtown.

- It hosted the Dew Tour soon after opening, a U.S. qualifying event for the sport's debut in the Tokyo Olympics that summer.

Of note: The 88,000 square foot facility is free to the public and remains the [largest skatepark in the nation](#).



Skateboarder [Sakura Yosozumi](#) during the 2021 Summer Dew Tour in Des Moines. Photo: Courtesy of the Dew Tour

State of play: USA Skateboarding is a governing body of the sport.

- Polk County government, which owns and operates the park, sought the group's certification to help promote the facility and the sport, county spokesperson Jessica Lown tells Axios.

Zoom in: Factors like safety and levels of difficulty are considered as part of the designation, Norm Sterzenbach, president of [Skate DSM](#), tells Axios.

The intrigue: DSM police previously had a "three-strikes-and-you're-in-jail" policy to discourage public skateboarding.

- [The 1998 arrests of two skaters](#) were cited in support of a bill in the legislature that year that exempted cities from some liabilities linked with the sport.
- Groups like A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy (AMOS) then led [nearly two decades of organizing](#) and fundraising that resulted in Lauridsen Skatepark.

If you go: Sunday's event at the park from 11am-2am includes appearances from professional skateboarders.