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Triple Crown Baseball swings to double its size

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By Phil Wieland

VALPARAISO | The economy might be a bust, but the baseball business is booming.

After three years in business at 2902 Cascade Drive, Triple Crown Baseball is doubling in size to provide another 5,000 square feet of training area for young players.

Plans for remodeling a second building on Cascade will be presented to the city's Site Review Committee on Tuesday.

Kari Fryar Ritthaler, co-owner and instructor with her father, Bill Fryar, and her husband, Mike Ritthaler, said the goal is to open in mid-October in time for area travel teams needing space to train in the winter.

"The current building is used primarily for hitting, and it has pitching lanes," Fryar Ritthaler said. "The second will have a field with 60-foot baselines for Little League and softball with another batting cage and a bigger lane to pitch for the guys. Teams will be able to practice about all game situations."

Triple Crown works with youngsters aged 7 to 19, and its staff includes former Gary resident and major leaguer Lloyd McClendon, now coaching with the Detroit Tigers. Fryar Ritthaler said she plans to have McClendon on hand for the grand re-opening, if he's not involved in the postseason.

If the project is approved by the city, work is expected to begin in early August.