

BOND: District got a lot of bang for taxpayers bucks in projects

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expected.

“Originally, the bond was just going to touch one and two,” Hudson told *The Nugget*. “We were able to incorporate a lot of student outcomes.”

“We’re very proud of the project team and how they delivered,” said school board member Jay Wilkins, who headed up a citizens’ bond oversight committee.

The District ended up with considerably more funds than those voters signed off on. They caught a “tailwind” in selling the bonds, earning additional money to the tune of nearly \$1 million from favorable market timing. In addition to that, Sisters was unexpectedly in a position to be awarded \$4 million in state grants.

“We were able to go in and refurbish a whole science lab (at Sisters Middle School),” Hudson offered as an example.

The Leadership/Language Arts classroom was doubled in size to offer more functional space, and a new SMS student union has proved to

be a popular and welcoming space for students.

“The kids rush to get there for lunch,” said Superintendent Curt Scholl.

A list of bond-related projects may be found with the online version of this story at www.nuggetnews.com.

“A lot of the things we did were safety upgrades,” Scholl noted.

“We were able to go in and refurbish a whole science lab (at Sisters Middle School).”
— Brett Hudson

That included redesigning and remodeling building entrances to improve security and sight lines. Paint and sealer and projects to catch up to deferred maintenance will enhance building longevity, Hudson noted, and upgrades to lighting will provide operational savings.

For example, new high-efficiency LED field lights at Reed Stadium are so efficient that the entire system runs on what one of the original six light poles used.

School noted that, “One very noticeable improvement while visiting the schools during our after-hours events is the District-wide upgrade to LED lighting. Several IT projects and systems upgrades were also made throughout the District to facilitate the educational models for the schools.”

Wilkins noted that the bond oversight committee was fortunate in that they knew in advance that there would be more money to work with, which enabled the project team to make strategic choices about projects. The District “reached out to each school and the operations department to identify additional needs for the facilities,” Scholl reported.

Wilkins acknowledged that there was “a lot of pressure to deliver” for a skeptical electorate that had earlier rejected a bond. The bond oversight committee was created to ensure that the public got its money’s worth — and knew it.

Once tangible results became apparent, Wilkins said, “that’s when I felt the momentum really turned.”

Delivering on time and on or under budget wasn’t easy. A booming construction market meant that it was sometimes “tough finding the

trades to complete the job,” Hudson said.

And since the 2008 Great Recession, “suppliers don’t have things on their shelves,” Hudson observed. “Everything you need is special-order.”

“I think what’s really exciting is how it’s set up for the future.”
— Jay Wilkins

That made for long lead times trying to hit a narrow window of summertime construction, especially for the middle school, which was heavily torn up last summer.

It was a close call, but the SMS work was completed in time for students to be in their classrooms on time in September.

Wilkins noted that the District has established reserves for maintenance so that the newly refurbished buildings stay in good shape and functional for years to come.

“I think what’s really exciting,” he said, “is how it’s set up for the future.”

Cougar deemed threat and killed in Bend Saturday

BEND (AP) — Authorities say they’ve killed a cougar that had been seen around homes in Bend.

Agents with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Bend police tracked the animal into the Deschutes River Woods on Saturday morning. They say they believe that based on the territorial nature of male cougars and the size of its paws, it was the same animal that had been seen in backyards in southwest Bend and that it did pose a threat to people.

It weighed 135 pounds. Officials say the river canyon offers excellent habitat for mountain lions, and people should be aware that they might encounter one in the area.

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