

Bracing for change

MHS campus will become 14-month construction site

By ERIC A. HOWALD
Of the Keizertimes

The McNary High School campus is about to get a lot busier.

Beginning later this month or April, Salem-Keizer School district officials are expected to start staging a multimillion dollar expansion of the Celtic's school.

"Now that we've purchased the [church] property, we'll start the mobilization. You'll see the trailers and putting the longer lead-time materials like pipes hanging out in the area," said Mike Wolfe, chief operations officer at the district.

The district recently came to a \$2.26 million agreement with St. Edward Catholic Church to purchase six acres of land it needed to proceed with the expansion. The purchase and the new development project is being funded by a bond voters passed in 2018. McNary is one of five area high schools scheduled to expand with the goal of absorbing 200 additional students over the next decade.

Over the next 14 months, a new wing on the north end of the building will be home to 14 classrooms and a new construction-focused, career-technical education space and the front entrance of the building will be expanded and remodeled.

The day after staff leaves for the summer will mark the beginning of the most visible work on the existing campus.

"The whole north end of the building will be demolished," said Erik Jespersen, McNary principal. "That will take out the tennis courts, the current music studio, a video production, a graphic design room and a computer lab."

At the same time, seven new portable buildings, with two classrooms each, will be placed on the fields at the south end of the campus. A quadruple-wide portable unit will serve as temporary home to the weight room.

The campus will be an active construction site throughout the entire 2019-2020 academic year as the new wing in constructed and with the goal of opening at the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year.

"The disruption will be the students going out to the portables. The logistics of how that will work is big and still a work in progress," Wolfe said.

Students in the graphic design and media production programs will be some of the most impacted. The current graphic design program serves as a computer lab, screen printing shop and photo studio all-in-one. The media space also serves multiple functions.

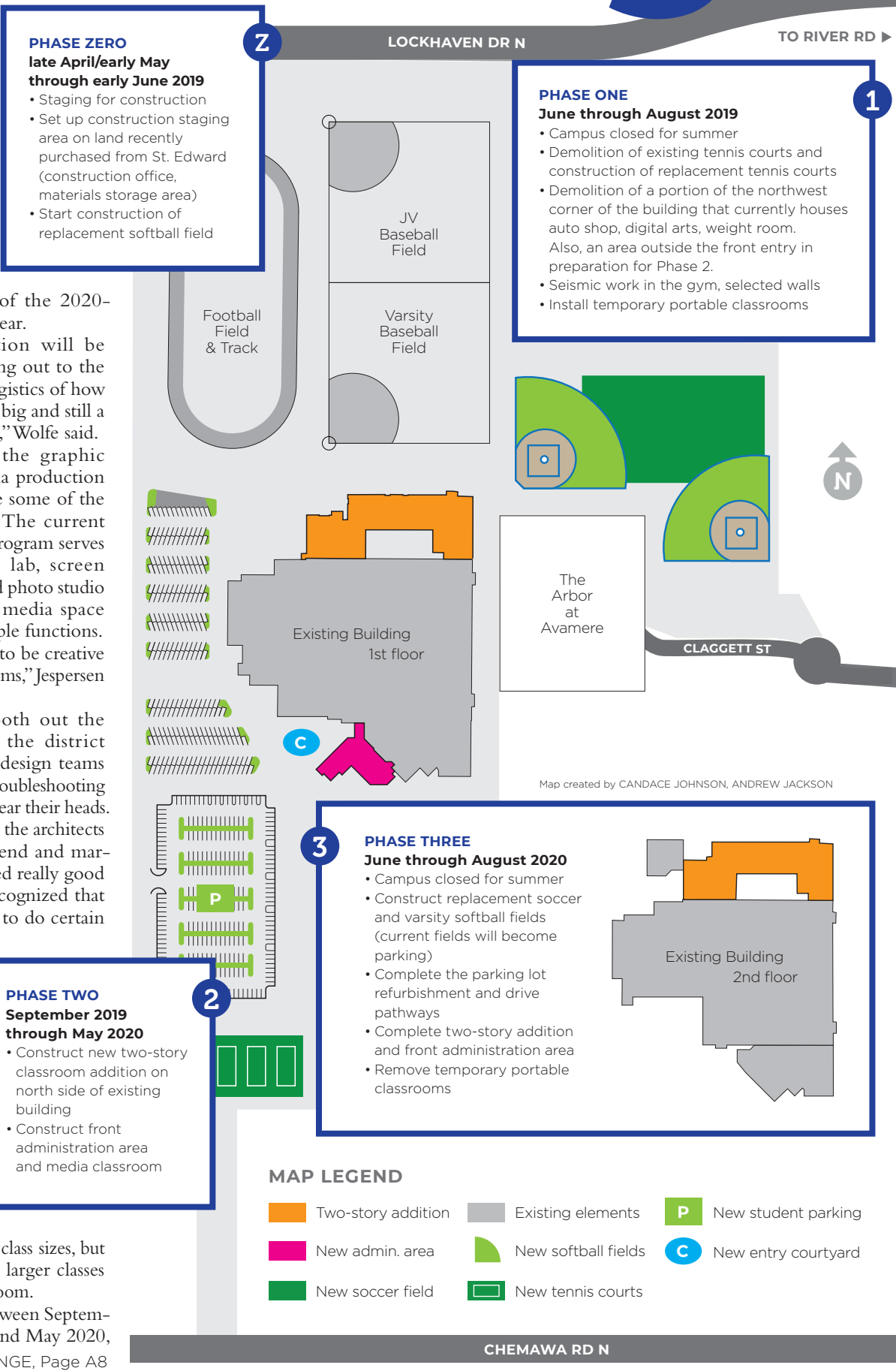
"We will have to be creative with some programs," Jespersen said.

To help smooth out the rough patches, the district enlisted on-site design teams with the goal of troubleshooting before problems rear their heads.

"Working with the architects has been a godsend and marvelous. They asked really good questions and recognized that we are obligated to do certain things the bond pays for. There's still a lot of creative decisions we were able to make in the process," Jespersen said.

The new classrooms will not decrease class sizes, but might give some larger classes more breathing room.

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Sports impact will set in this summer



KEIZERTIMES/Matt Rawlings
The McNary softball program will have to do away with the brand new dugouts they installed two years ago as they will begin playing on their new field by Saint Edward Catholic Church in 2021.

BY MATT RAWLINGS
Of the Keizertimes

With construction on the expansion of McNary High School getting set to take place this summer, the protocol for Celtic sports — as well as other Keizer athletic programs — will be a little bit different over the course of the upcoming year.

While all the short-term plans haven't been set in stone yet, McNary athletic director Scott Gragg is confident of the game plan that the school is putting into place.

"We're going to be impacted and there's going to be inconveniences, but we feel like we identified the gaps of where we need to put people," Gragg said.

The softball and soccer fields, which are currently in

the space next to Chemawa Road, are being moved to the purchased space by Saint Edward Catholic Church to make room for the school expansion that will include 14 new classrooms.

Phase 1 of the three-phase construction process will begin this June, meaning that the McNary gym will be completely off-limits as it will be going through seismic upgrades, meaning that the McNary summer volleyball and basketball programs will have to find other options for practic-

es, camps and games — both summer programs typically end in late-June.

While programs directly related to McNary High School will have access to the football and baseball fields this summer, the campus will likely not be available to outside groups. "Nothing is really finalized, but the general message is that outside user groups for the time being, until we figure out all our bases covered, they're going to have to find another place for a facility," Gragg said.

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"We need a plan for soccer, we just don't know what that is yet."

— Scott Gragg, Athletic Director, McNary



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