

SUMMER FACILITY PROJECTS

Ongoing projects around the district

By Trish Yerges

The La Grande School District has made a commitment to its voters to continually improve the district's facilities and to maintain its buildings and properties for the benefit of their students and the community. To that end, the district has made great strides to upgrade its facilities responsibly over the past seven years especially.

Maintenance and Facilities Director, Joseph Waite, announced that "the district has been awarded a seismic grant of \$2.5 million for seismically strengthening the La Grande High School auditorium." He added that the recent upgrade with the bond and with safety in mind, the district wants to protect both the occupants and the building as best as possible.

The other benefit of this grant is that it will allow the district to get the auditorium roof replaced. "All the other areas in the district have been reroofed within the last ten years," Waite said.

Waite is currently drafting up a request for proposal for architectural and building services and that will go out to the public later in August. From there, the process involves a customary evaluation and recommendation to the district board.

"The difference with the seismic project, is that it will later go out to bid for a construction management general contractor as the design develops at the architectural firm," he said. "It's likely that both projects will happen concurrently."

There are companies in our area that could handle and perform well with this scope, he added, but being a public entity, the district has to put it out to anyone and everyone. If more

time is needed to capture additional bids on this project, the district will take the time to select the best firm that will fit its needs.

The district has completed seismic reinforcement work before on the high school gymnasium and on Greenwood Elementary School in 2018, and that cost about \$3 million total between the two buildings.

Similar to the high school gymnasium, the proposed auditorium work will have to meet the district's specific request that the work aesthetically blends in with the rest of the building.

Completed Summer Projects

"We replaced the carpet in the main office at the high school, and we installed toilet partition doors throughout the district," Waite said. "We added additional security cameras to the middle school, inside and out, and we recoated the track."

The district also poured new concrete in the entryway and inner courtyard at Island City Elementary, and at the high school, they renovated the old automotive shop and made it into a horticulture lab. That work involved removing the automotive equipment and putting down an epoxy flooring. In addition to this, the stairwells were repainted at the middle school.

Ongoing Projects

At the middle school, the district is remodeling the kitchen, work that is funded by an equipment grant for \$5,000. The food manager, Heather Torres, and Michelle Glover, the district's business manager applied for that grant for a new refrigerator, so the room was rearranged to make room for that.

Besides this, there were some

repairs that had to be done. "The culinary arts ceiling was damaged and those ceiling tiles were replaced," Waite said.

Also, when doing some renovation work on the Odyssey Center, the crew noticed some damage under the building that needed to be addressed. "We replaced some of the piers that the building sits on," Waite said. "The piers had picked up some moisture from underneath the building and were starting to rot out, so the maintenance crew also worked on the drainage outside the building to prevent that from happening again."

Another project involved the security camera software, which was being changed to a new system. The old system was failing and the district could not get any support to fix it.

To provide safe entrance and exit from the north end of Greenwood Elementary School's gym, some old stairs are being replaced with new concrete stairs and an ADA ramp.

"At Central, LHS, and Island City, we're replacing batteries for our backup lighting systems," he said.

Other project news involves the LHS wood shop, which received a Career-Technology-Engineering (CTE) grant to purchase a new computer numerical control machine (CNC) for the students to carve signs from wood. The old CNC machine is being transferred to the middle school so the students there can learn on that machine as well.

One other project that is noteworthy is that the high school and middle school have both installed vape sensors in the restrooms that will alert administration if kids are smoking or vaping in the restrooms. Vaping in the restrooms will now be sharply reduced because of

this technology.

In addition to these main projects, there are all the customary maintenance work going on, like floor washing and waxing, classroom repainting, refinishing gym floors, and shampooing carpets. The district would like to give a big shout out to the hard-working maintenance crew that maintains a safe, healthy, and clean learning environment for the students.

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Starting this school year, Sam Fiorito will act as dean of students at Central Elementary School, transferring from LMS, where he just completed his seventh year teaching sixth grade students.



"My role is to assist the principal and all the staff,

providing the support where they need it," Fiorito said. "Also, I will have the main role in discipline for the school and being there to provide good systems and processes for all the students. I will make it a priority to engage students in extracurricular activities and anything they could be a part of that will help them be successful."

"I'm grateful to be part of the Central building," he said. "I'm family-oriented and have an open door policy. I want to understand the community better, and I want to serve in my position as best as possible."