

# HOBBS MUNICIPAL SCHOOLS

## Construction, renovation, maintenance projects show results

VANGE PERRYMAN  
NEWS-SUN

Construction seems to remain a theme for the Hobbs Municipal School District.

Although many of the jobs are smaller in comparison to last summer, there is still lots to be done, according to HMS interim Superintendent Cliff Burch.

Burch, who has been the HMS assistant superintendent for operations for more than two years, started the 2002 summer at the helm of the largest construction and renovation push in the school's history. But construction, renovation and maintenance continue around the district.

"It has been a three-year ride of intense projects," Burch said. "We're down to the smaller items and other needs have surfaced since we started this plan. Overall I am very pleased with where we are in the process."

The following projects are in the works:

### Houston Junior High

• At Houston Junior High School a new gym is due to be completed by early June. It will hold 700 people and house a new weight room and locker room. The project will cost the district \$1.8 million. The district is using \$1.3 million in bond funds and the rest from mill levy money.



The second floor of Tydings Auditorium is the most completed part of the auditorium renovation on the Hobbs High School campus.

### Watson Stadium

• The district is using \$235,000 of bond money for renovations to Watson Stadium. The bathrooms are being gutted and brought up to comply with the American With Disabilities Act. More wheelchair seating is being added to both the home and visitor sides of the stadium.

### Hobbs High School Cafeteria

• Bathrooms in the Hobbs High School cafeteria are also being renovated to be ADA accessible. The project called for the stage in the cafeteria to be lowered and shortened at both ends. The cost to the district is \$156,000 in bond funds.

### Building Trades Project

• Construction on the building trades project at Hobbs High School is due to be completed in July. The project is late starting due to weather delays, according to HMS director of special projects Erich Francke. Bond and mill levy funds totaling \$442,000 are being used to complete the project.

### Tydings Auditorium

• Renovations to Tydings Auditorium are scheduled to be finished April 1, according to Francke. The facility is getting a sound and lighting upgrade, fresh paint and new carpet.

More than \$1 million is being spent on the project. The Public School Facility Authority of New Mexico is tossing in \$500,000 for the project.

For many of the projects, the cost has increased from what had been first projected due to an increase in the cost of construction materials.

"Overall, on every project there was a price increase on steel," Francke said. "It affected wiring and everything."

While the cost of steel has caused problems in the budget, the decrease in change orders has helped make up for some of the cost increase, according to Burch.

"Moving Erich to special projects has really made a difference in the amount of change orders and the down time on the jobs," Burch said.

Francke agrees that he has been able to "head off" delays by being available to answer questions more quickly and to "be on top of what is happening."



PHOTOS BY DANIEL HOWELL/NEWS-SUN

Budwine Service electrician Richard Ruiz vacuums all of the dust created when he put the final touches on the sound system panel in the newly renovated Tydings Auditorium on the Hobbs High campus.

"We will always have projects as we want to maintain the buildings and upgrade the older structures," Burch said. "I think we have facilities that we can all be proud of and a lot of that is due to the bond and mill levy funds. Without those funds we won't be able to do all of this."

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