



August 29, 2013

KFCS' District Newsletter
A Great Example for Us All
By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

The KU football team, under the leadership of Coach Tom Smith, has shown us the way to make things happen. Their initiative to restore the decaying KU field house is a story worth sharing.

The old edifice had run into such a state of disrepair over the many years of its existence that it had become embarrassing to let our own team use it, let alone visitors. The cost of re-building was checked out five years ago and proved to be prohibitive, about \$1 million. Therefore, the district abandoned the idea of tearing down and building new.

Coach Smith and the football players did not whine or complain about the situation. Instead, they chose to do something about it. First, Mr. Smith and his assistant coaches visited another district with a similarly old and decrepit facility, Lake Oswego. A couple years ago, their football team had worked with their community to restore their structure at a fraction of the cost of building new. Now they have a facility about which they are proud. This provided all the inspiration the coaches needed. They shared the idea with the team. The boys embraced the challenge of restoring the building and the rest is history.

First, they shared their ideas and vision with parents and community members. More partners than they thought possible stepped forward to help. Donations of time, effort, and materials poured in. The boys provided much of the muscle power, the coaches provided the direction, and the local partners filled in the remaining gaps.

Then the KU girls' soccer coach, Scott Souders, became interested. He thought a refurbished field house would be a great place for his team as well. The girls' soccer team then added their hard work to the project as did their parents and friends.

An army of committed workers put in time and energy this summer and the result is remarkable. The Modoc field house now is a building about which to be proud. And the cost? Less than \$50,000 – most of which is due to roof work and new lockers. This is a savings of about \$950,000 over the original estimate of a new facility. Money from the County Road Funds will be used to cover the much smaller expense. The Commissioners gave KFCS \$150,000 in Secure Rural School funds this summer.

The momentum from the project is building. It is hoped that the whole Modoc Field complex can be restored and updated. This would make it a place that all KU outdoor sports teams could

use and about which we can be proud. Much work must be done to make this dream a reality, but the way to get there has been illuminated by the KU football team: Share an attractive vision, seek inspired partners, and roll up your sleeves and get to work.

Clear vision, united partnerships, and hard work can accomplish results that many have said are not possible. The same is true with our district's mission of 100% graduation for all students and the district vision of each student being ready for the next grade before leaving the one in which he or she currently are. As the staff, parents, and community unites around this initiative and works together, this dream will become a reality for Klamath Falls. Just think what that will mean for our community's health, attractiveness, quality of life, and economic development! Please become a partner in this critical work.

Other News

- The district is in the process of planning after-school programs for Pelican, Mills, Conger, Ponderosa, and KU. The kickoff of these programs for students will be in mid October. The program model for K-8 will include an after-school meal, an hour of academic support in math, reading, and homework, and an hour of enrichment activities to include art, fitness, and science projects. Enrichments will be provided on a rotating basis. The current plan is to provide these opportunities on a sliding-fee scale and to provide transportation following the last session. Providing non-grant- funded after-school support for Roosevelt is also under consideration.

Once details are finalized, the opportunities will be presented to parents. Gayle Yamasaki has been hired to coordinate the programs. Site coordinators will soon be hired to coordinate the work at each school. Funding for this five-year program is provided through a more than \$2 million 21st Century federal grant.

- The Ponderosa addition was completed on time and will be a great asset to our district. It includes a three-classroom facility built by Diversified Construction Incorporated and six new classrooms created in spaces that had been a shop area and the original library (a new library was created in the middle of the school). The nine new classrooms will house sixth-grade students who will be divided into three teams. It promises to be an exciting improvement in middle-level education in KFCS. Feel free to stop by the site and have one of the office staff show you the new area. Preliminary expense summaries indicate the project came in under budget.
- Another new initiative for 2013-14 are KYDC staff who will work with students in grades 9-12 who are new to our district or who have transferred to a different secondary program in the district. The transition coordinators will work with students and families to help transfer students establish school connections and help their families become acclimated to the community. These new workers will be key in helping students in the midst of challenging moves and changes to find high school success and become graduates. This change is a result of our district goal to bring about 100% graduation in KFCS.
- The effort to improve graduation rates in the basin is called the "Klamath Promise Initiative." It is a collaborative effort with the schools and community partners from many walks of life

including businesses, churches, service organizations, and parents. They are having their kickoff event on **Thursday, November 7th**, at OIT with Danny Miles the keynote. Recently this group received a state grant of \$40,000 to advance their work.

- Thanks to the voter-approved operating levy, Klamath Falls City Schools has been able to retain the teaching positions hired last year and keep class sizes at a similar level. We also have been able to purchase science and math textbooks for Ponderosa and Klamath Union through levy dollars. Thanks Klamath Falls!
- On June 1st of this year, Klamath Falls City Parks joined the ranks of 268 parks throughout Oregon that are tobacco free. This policy prohibits tobacco use in all picnic and playground areas which will provide a clean, healthy place for children and their families to recreate. The goal of the policy is to protect our children from secondhand smoke and model healthy, tobacco-free lifestyles as they play, grow, and develop.

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think might be interested in KFCS' news. If you are not a regular recipient of this free newsletter and would like to be, please respond to this email and let us know.