



**Klamath Falls
City Schools**

100% Graduation is Our Expectation!

March 7, 2014

KFCS' District Newsletter

By Paul Hillyer, KFCS' Superintendent

In Case You Were Wondering

KU BOND ISSUE Q & A

Q. What are the main reasons the board supports the KU remodel plan?

A. There are five main reasons:

1. The need for increased student safety;
2. The need to replace or renovate much of the 86-year-old structure to make it more functional, efficient, and attractive;
3. To make the Klamath Falls community a more attractive location for new businesses, professionals, and families;
4. To give our students the learning advantages currently enjoyed by competing students in Oregon and the United States;
5. To implement the citizen-developed facility plan approved by the board in February of 2012.

Q. Why is there a need to address student safety?

A. There are a number of reasons:

1. There are currently 28 outside entrance points that do not go through or by the administrative offices. The remodel would create one main entry point. It would also drastically reduce outside entrances. Visitors coming into the building would need to go through and sign in at the administrative offices. In the plan, administrative offices are relocated inside the main entry.
2. A good portion of the building currently is not usable space. These vacant spaces present supervision challenges as they rarely have scheduled classes or activities. The remodel plan would eliminate most of these unused spaces.
3. The state has placed KU on a seismic danger list due to its age and structural integrity. The remodel would seismically retrofit the entire building to make it much safer.

Q. Why does the facility need to be updated? Many of us were educated in this facility and it worked just fine for us.

A. Perhaps the best way to answer this question is with a question: If you owned a home for 86 years, do you think you would need to update and improve it over that time? KU heating, cooling, electrical, plumbing, and wiring systems are failing and are in dire need

of replacement. Interior components such as flooring, windows, lockers, and wall surfaces are dated, worn out, and inefficient. Outside brickwork is worn and needs addressing. Think of it this way: 700 to 1200 students have used this building seven hours per day for 86 years. Such use has resulted in natural wear and tear that must be addressed at least once a century in order to be able to continue to use the space for almost any purpose.

Q. How can improving KU make Klamath Falls a more attractive location for new businesses, professionals, and families?

A. Any time Klamath Falls attempts to attract jobs and people to the area they are competing with hundreds of other locations in the state and country. The shape of schools is a key factor that potential newcomers explore before making their choice. The city's high school is often the first school such potential new residents check when analyzing community attractiveness. The condition of KU puts our city at a serious competitive disadvantage.

Q. Why is a remodel necessary for our children's education?

A. Students throughout the state and country now go to school in facilities that are categorized as 21st Century Learning spaces. This means their schools facilitate flexibility, collaboration, technology integration, and multi-use spaces. Such 21st Century Learning spaces match how students should be learning if they are to prepare for today's colleges and workplaces. Having young people learn in spaces that were built to prepare for the workplaces and colleges of 100 years ago disadvantages students who must leave their high schools and compete with young people who are acclimated to 21st Century working and learning requirements.

Q. What is the facility plan that you referenced above?

A. A group of about 25 parents and community members met during the Fall and early Winter of 2011-2012. After touring all district schools and studying facility needs, they determined that all the district schools would need to be improved, remodeled, and/or replaced over the next decades. In their plan, KU was given the first and highest priority for improvement. This is why the board is addressing the KU facility needs first. The bond payment plan is set up so that the bulk of the project is paid off in the first ten years. This will reduce the cost to the taxpayer during the last ten years of the debt and make it possible to consider other building improvements without raising the cost to the taxpayer beyond the prior ten-year period.

Q. What is the cost of this remodel?

A. Final figures are in the verification process before the final cost is given. It will be between \$30M and \$40M.

Q. Are any other district needs going to be addressed by this investment?

- A. Yes, some of the bond funds will be used for major repairs of all district buildings. Some also will be earmarked to update each district elementary school. Finally, bond dollars will also be used to update technology throughout all district schools.

Q. Why was the Modoc Field Project addressed separately from the bond issue?

- A. There are several reasons: First, there was tremendous community support for moving forward quickly with this renovation; second, there were significant donations and in-kind contributions given to defray the cost; third, the district was granted a zero-interest loan (this does not include the 1% administrative fee) to pay for the project; and fourth, this reduced the overall cost of the bond issue by doing the Modoc Field Project outside of it. Over all the Modoc Project reduces the cost of the bond issue by about \$1.8M. Comparing the 1% cost of the loan with the current 3% interest rate for a school construction bond, the district saves about \$300,000 in interest over the life of the loan. The district also saves more than \$300,000 through donations and in-kind contributions for the Modoc Field project. Thus addressing the Modoc Field renovation separate from the bond issue saves tax payers more than \$600,000.

An important side note: the refurbished Modoc complex will also include re-doing the track. The field and track are great community resources that many organizations and individuals will be able to use including youth soccer and football and community members who use the facility for walking, jogging, and running.

Q. If the school is in such poor shape, why don't we just build a new one?

- A. A complete remodel will give us a new school inside of a stable reinforced frame for about half the cost to build new. By rebuilding inside our current structure we save millions on the cost to bring essentials to the building such as water, sewer, electricity, street work, landscaping, and parking lots. We also preserve a central location where many students can walk to the campus. Our long-term facility upgrade needs extend beyond just Klamath Union. A remodel at half the cost of new enables us to reduce the cost to the public and allows a shorter time frame to address the needs of aged grade schools.

Q. Why is the district closing down some schools and wanting to repair others?

- A. The operational cost of aging buildings is great. Long-term strategic financial and facility planning must look into the size of our district and future growth. This will result in tough decisions along the way. One of those includes closing buildings. The long-term strategic planning is taking into account the future needs of the community.

Q. Why do we want to spend money repairing a school where only 90% of the students receive a high school completion certificate?

- A. Klamath Union has been working very hard to increase the graduation rate and has seen success. Having an updated facility with great potential for addressing the learning needs of students far into the future, will accelerate the graduation improvement in the district.

Q. If the district would have spent more money along the way maintaining the building, would we still need this significant remodel?

A. The district has been spending smart money maintaining the building along the way. For example, the roof over the portion of the school that will see the remodel is in new condition, and the heating controls are in upgraded condition. The real issue comes down to the major plant systems, which keep the school safe and operational, running on borrowed time.

Other News:

1. If you have a question that is not included above, please reply to this email with your questions and someone will get back to you.
2. About 100 people attended the community forum for the KU bond issue. About 40 filled out forms to express their thoughts on the bond issue. Please find the form attached and send it back to us (1336 Avalon Street) if you would like to learn more or express your thoughts and interest.
3. Please forward this on to anyone you know who might have an interest in the information.