

## **Building Places to Learn**

*by Cindy Kleyn-Kennedy*

If anyone has driven by some of our school sites under construction, you will have noticed a great deal of progress that has taken place. For those who have not had an opportunity to view the progress firsthand, we'd like to provide an overview of our construction and remodeling status.

To begin with, if you were to head north on Wheaton Road until you intersected with Wilhite Road, you would see a huge parcel of cleared land on the northwest corner of that intersection. The dirt-work" portion – clearing and leveling of the thirty acres – has just been completed, and flagged and graded areas provide an indication of what will be located where.

This is the site of our brand new school – the W. D. Gattis Middle School. It's no easy feat to clear that large a portion of land, with the number of aspects to be considered; the access roads and bus loops must be marked; the actual school building site prepared; the parking lots and sports fields marked and prepped.

A great deal of meticulous planning has gone into this major project, and Clovis Municipal School's Joel Shirley, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, along with Jody Balch, Director of Operations recently shared details: "The position of the building has been optimally situated so as to take advantage of prevailing winds; in addition, the building will be placed for maximum solar gain, which will not only contribute to better lighting, but also increased energy efficiency. Also, since the contractor has been on board from the beginning, collaboration has been maintained throughout the design stage, which has provided great consistency throughout. And - working under CMAR (Construction Manager At Risk) ensures the work remains within budget." The final square footage of the new middle school will be 131,000 square feet; as a comparison, Marshall Middle School is approximately 165,000 square feet.

Drive by the Arts Academy at Bella Vista, and you will see steel framing on the north/northwest side of the school. This is the new addition, which will hold an additional 12 classrooms, along with the hallways and restrooms. The raised, shaped pile of dirt on the west side of the school will be the stage of the Performing Arts Center.

At La Casita, remodeling continues, as the older part of the building is being gutted and redone, while the staff and students have happily settled into the newly constructed buildings. The completion target for the remaining work is February 18.

Work at Marshall is ongoing, with the major needed changes still underway, and the anticipated completion time frame is late spring.

Groundbreaking for the new Lockwood building will be sometime in April or May, and watch for news regarding the new James Bickley school construction.

Being in the Operations Department in education is sort of like the technical crew in the theater: sets have to be created; lighting and costumes perfected. All of which allows the actors in the spotlight to dazzle the audience.

A special thanks to our own uniquely skilled and dedicated "stage hands".

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