

New Menahga High School addition should be fully enclosed in March

New two-story high school expected to be in use next fall



This was the view looking south down the new Menahga High School addition main hallway after exiting the current high school building.



The first-floor elevator shaft in the main hallway of the Menahga High School addition.

By Matthew Johnson

Menahga School officials are optimistic that the new two-story high school addition will be fully enclosed as early as the first week of March and ready for students by the first day of school next fall.

District voters approved a \$14 million addition in November 2017 and crews have been working on the project, under the direction of Vercon construction management in cooperation with Foss Architecture & Interiors, since last summer (2018). There have been a few setbacks, including key materials being delivered later than expected, which resulted in the building not being fully enclosed by the end of November as was anticipated. By the time materials did arrive to help complete load-bearing walls, etc., the weather had taken a turn, adding plenty of moisture to challenge crews who placed temporary coverings over a

number of areas. Nick Ylitalo of Vercon informed the district in January that the block laying contractor had put the project behind schedule, but crews quickly rallied to get the project back on track, allowing Vercon to report an expected “July substantial completion.”

Superintendent Kevin Wellen and High School Principal Mark Frank are confident, as well, that the project will be finished on time and on budget. They are confident in the budget projection for a number of reasons, including the fact that construction materials were purchased in advance of significant price increases. Other districts in the planning stages of a new school building were apparently not as fortunate concerning the prices they’ll likely be paying for the same materials.

Key load-bearing walls that were originally anticipated to be completed by the end of

2018 are complete now and, as weather permits, crews can install the second floor where the infrastructure is primarily in place. A full ceiling will follow that. Temperatures above zero degrees Fahrenheit are required in order for crews to install the second floor, according to Wellen. So, on days that meet those parameters, crews make the most of their limited time, he said.

Wellen and Frank led a tour that began at the south exit of the current high school with the double doors opening into the new addition. The first doors on the left open into the spacious new choir room with two large, vertical windows facing the east parking lot. Continuing down the hall to the south, on the right, or west side of the hall is the spacious new locker room/restroom area with rebar set where the finished floor will go. Continuing west from the locker room area is an east entrance into the spacious new gymnasium where drywall is currently being installed. Like the school’s current main gym in the elementary wing, the main basketball court in the new high school will run east to west, Frank said. He said a large curtain will be installed to enable them to divide the large gym into two separate, still-spacious areas, as needed. Another hall parallels the north side of the gym, and a connecting door will be installed across the hall from the northeast end of the gym leading into the current multipurpose room. That multipurpose room will still be used for a variety of activities, including physical education, during the school day and will be designated for wrestling practice after school. The cur-

rent wrestling room for the United North Central (UNC) Warriors team, made up of athletes from Sebeka and Menahga, is in the elementary basement.

Back in the main hall on the east side of the locker rooms is an elevator shaft connecting the first and second floors. Continuing along the east wall are classrooms, and the new high school office will be in the southeast corner of the new addition. Moving west from these rooms will be a new feature for Menahga High School – a spacious commons area.

The new kitchen is located on the opposite (west) side of the commons, and more classrooms run along the south perimeter of the structure. On the north side of the commons is the south entrance into the new gym. Hallways for a second floor filled with more classrooms will be bordered by a railing parallel to the upper perimeter of the commons area, with a stairs going from the commons up to the second floor.

Northwest of the new gym will be a spacious industrial arts metal shop with a large overhead door to the west access road. Connected to the metal shop on the north side is another spacious room to be used as a project area for both metal and wood shop projects. Another large overhead door is located on the west side of the project area. A doorway on the east of the project area connects to the current Industrial Arts room that will generally be the wood shop area.

Other spaces beyond the gym walls will include a school store for selling Menahga Braves clothing, etc., and a new weight room.

Anyone with access to the internet can view additional photos taken at various stages of construction and take a moving, three-dimensional virtual tour of architectural renderings of the new addition. The virtual tour begins

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outside the south entrance of the new high school opening into the commons area, then the gym, back out into the commons, up into the upper hallway area above the commons and pulling away from the second story hallway window leaving a bird’s eye over-view of the new building’s exterior.

The Menahga School website address is www.menahga.k12.mn.us. To view the photos or take the virtual tour on the school’s website, first click on “Building Progress” in the left

portion of the menu bar near the top of the screen. A “photos” tab will then drop down. Click that and it will redirect to another screen. A “Links” box is located on the left side of the new screen containing choices to click on including “Building Photo Gallery,” “Architectural Rendering” and “Detailed Architectural Rendering.”

Watch for further updates on the new Menahga High School building addition project in future editions of the *Review Messenger*.



This is looking toward the southwest corner of the new Menahga High School commons area. The south wall (on the left) includes first- and second-floor classrooms. The west wall (at right) borders the new kitchen area.



The spacious gymnasium in the new Menahga High School, facing the northwest corner.



This is the view looking toward the northwest corner of the spacious new Menahga High School choir room during a tour on Wednesday, February 13. Standing in the doorway (l to r), were tour guides Superintendent Kevin Wellen and High School Principal Mark Frank.



The first section on the east side of the new high school, with the two vertical windows parallel to one another, is the spacious new choir room as it looked from the exterior.



The southwest exterior of the new Menahga High School looks like as of Wednesday, February 13.

Photos by Matthew Johnson



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