



School's out for summer and Phase III of the Brookings High School remodeling project is well under way. The entire front of BHS, shown above, has been removed, including the steps, offices and technology area.

The Brookings Register
Tuesday, June 15, 2010

BHS work hits snag, but still 'on track'

Delay in steel finds school admins, staff juggling project around

By Vicki Schuster

Phase III of the Brookings High School expansion and remodeling project hit a temporary roadblock recently when steel for the project was backordered.

The project includes new classrooms on the northeast side of the building, a new cafeteria, auditorium renovations, transfer of the guidance counselors' offices into the main office, and a

new theater, including storage and a green room.

The \$5.54 million renovation is expected to be finished in August 2011.

"Steel is coming back in line a little more. You know how things can get," Superintendent Roger DeGroot told Brookings, school board members Monday.

DeGroot says a delay in the steel caused the project to fall about six weeks behind. But instead of letting that put a damper on the project, everyone came to the table to revise the schedule.

Even though the project has hit a few speed bumps, DeGroot says, "Phase III of the Brookings High school is moving right along."

"The architect (Koch Hazard) wanted to know if we could begin work on the auditorium, which was actually scheduled to start later, around Christmas of this year," he said.

To keep things on track, Brookings High School Principal Paul von Fischer

and Brookings High School Activities Director Steve Berseth had to round up some willing "volunteers" to help begin moving equipment from the auditorium.

Von Fischer says the flexibility of staff was to be commended and was integral to keeping things on track.

"We told staff they'd have the first semester this fall to move out of the auditorium," he said. "So this became an exercise in flexibility."

Especially deserving of kudos, said von Fischer, were high school instructors Chad Caldwell, Kelly Riedell and Michelle VanderWal, who are the key people at Brookings High School who work with sound and lighting in the auditorium.

"They've done a wonderful job giving up their summer," said von Fischer. "We're going to pay them a little bit – it's really not what they deserve – but it's what we are going to pay, and they're doing very well."

Mills Construction Company's flexibility and ability to be accommodating has also been worth noting, said von Fischer.

"They've all been very good to work with, communicating what items are going and what are staying," he said. "They've said, 'Anything you don't want, we'll get rid of it for you.'"

In the end, he said it is all going to be worth it as he quoted country music legend Dolly Parton: "The theme for next year is 'If you want the rainbow, you have to live through the rain.'"

Overall, DeGroot says he's really pleased with the progress so far. "The front is completely gone, the steps

are gone, the offices are all ripped out and the technology link has been moved.”

“We’ve started putting footings in the front,” he said.

“I’m confident we’ll be ready to move in the fall of 2011,” said von Fischer.

In other board action Monday, the board went into executive session for what was listed as a personnel/student issue/contract discussion. When the board came out of executive session, the members took no action.