

Claremore Progress

From the ground up

By Stevie St. John - Date: 2004-08-27 17:49:05

With a \$14.5 million contract paired with Claremore Public School's contribution of four pieces of equipment worth a total of \$428,000, Claremore will have almost everything needed for the Claremore Performing Arts Center, which will sit on the corner of Florence and Stuart Roosa.

A few things, however, are missing: seats, landscaping and irrigation.

"We know that the community will step up, and we won't have any problem there," Frank Robson said at the groundbreaking ceremony Thursday morning.

Frank Robson and his wife, Ludmila, are donating \$8 million toward the facility's construction. They will also put \$3 million in an endowment fund, which will be used for building maintenance and employing a director. Another \$3 million is being given by the Walton Family Foundation.

Once the 68,000 square foot facility is completed, the board of directors will give it to Claremore Public Schools. Construction is expected to be completed in late spring 2006.

Community members can contribute to the facility — which will have 1,070 seats — by purchasing seats for \$200 each. A plaque in the lobby will recognize donors. Robson said three people approached him at the groundbreaking ceremony to tell him they wanted to buy seats.

Craig Stanley said he wanted to purchase the first 10, Robson said. For more information about purchasing a seat, call Rick Mosier at 341-3025.

Mosier spoke at the groundbreaking and said, "Frank and Lu had a dream about this project." They went to great lengths to make it happen, Mosier said.

School board president Don Crutchfield thanked the Robsons for their contribution.

"It's something ... that we've needed for years," Crutchfield said.

Mayor Jim Cochran said that the performing arts have always played a valuable part in successful civilizations.

"It will reap great benefits for the city," he said.

The facility will include a band room, a choir room and a speech, drama and debate area. There will be a small and large ensemble room and a percussion area and for uniform and instrument storage. Practice rooms will be soundproof.

Designing and building sets will be done in the facility's stagecraft area.



The stage will be 114 feet by 45 feet. The facility will also include a 50 feet by 50 feet black box theater, which will be used for smaller productions.

The board of directors for the PAC is composed of Frank Robson, Jerry Hastings, Mike McClaren, Rick Mosier and Linda Pollock.

The contractor for construction of the PAC is Key Construction. The dirt contractor is Walker Construction.

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