Written by Carol Pomeday
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Uncertainty over future state funding makes officials cautious about budget

The Cedar Grove-Belgium School Board has several projects they want to proceed with, but uncertainty about state funding for the next school year has some items on hold.

"We don't know yet how much we're not going to get," Supt. Steve Shaw said. "It sounds to me that the governor won't have his budget out for a while. I met with the DPI (Department of Public Instruction). It's going to be interesting."

One project put on hold is new bleachers on the visitors' side of the athletic field.

The old bleachers were moved to the visitors' side and new raised bleachers with back and side supports were installed when the athletic complex was built.

During a Broncos youth football game in the fall, a visiting fan fell as she was getting off the bleacher and injured her leg.

"Initially, I thought she had fallen backwards and injured her back," Shaw said. "It turns out it wasn't that serious, but we want to be proactive and replace the bleachers."

Initial estimates for new bleachers was $83,000 to $85,000, but the company that installed the home bleachers will put similar ones only not as high on the visitors side for $53,430.

"That's a good price, but we have to let them know by May so they can get them ordered," Shaw said.

Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Carl Huenink added, "It's something we can live without, but anytime there is an injury to someone, you have to be proactive."

Several maintenance projects that have been put off for several years are on a wish list if the budget allows them, Huenink said.

"I treat the school buildings like my home. If there is money, we'll do them, otherwise we have to make do," he said.

Huenink and his crew were in the buildings Tuesday and Wednesday when classes were cancelled, checking to make sure everything was running properly.

Huenink went through large drifts to get into the high school building Wednesday morning. He told anyone who called to stay home until they could clear drifts as high as six feet.

Construction crews working on the $6 million building project were busy all day Tuesday installing block for the technical education addition to the high school, but they didn't plan to work Wednesday, Huenink said.

"They called this morning to ask me to check on a few things. Everything looks good, and we'll keep checking," he said Wednesday morning.

Most of the work being done now is on the tech ed center, Huenink said. Two new classrooms on the east side of the elementary school are finished except for paint and cabinets.

Work planned during the school year at the middle school has been completed, Huenink said, including moving the office near the entrance and adding two classrooms on the north end of the building.

"The old office now looks like a gigantic bowling alley (with all the interior walls removed)," he said. "It used to be crowded little offices and cubicles."

That area is being turned into science rooms. Some items for the science labs are also on hold until state financing is known.

New heating, plumbing and air conditioning systems in the middle school will be installed during the summer.

Construction manager Keith Iskin of Joseph Schmitt & Sons Construction recently told the School Board the project will be completed by the start of the 2011-12 school year.

Board member Aileen Dahlke suggested school start after Labor Day this year to allow more time for construction, but the board decided not to do that, saying it would extend the school year too far into June.