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DISCUSSING OPTIONS. Kirk Horner, President of Hollis and Miller, presents several options for reconstructing the schools during a community forum on Monday, Nov. 18. Hollis and Miller architects have come up with six options to rebuild the schools. "The schools lack safety, and the location is constantly being used for boy scouts, 4-H, etc.," said Michelle Chavez, project architect of Hollis and Miller. "We will continue to refine our options, to move toward the best option for the district."

Community provides input on facilities District considers options

2001. The year the Class of 2014 started as students at Holton.

Some may have started in 2000 beginning in preschool, but regardless everyone ended up at the same place, Colorado Elementary School. Since kindergarten it's been the same routine. Kindergarten through second grade is in Colorado, third through fifth is in Central, sixth through eighth is in Holton Middle School, and ninth through twelfth is in the Holton High School.

With the new elementary bond issue, this may change.

A bond issue is necessary because of severe overcrowding and outdated facilities at the elementary schools. Several HHS students who work as teachers' aides at these buildings are aware of the conditions.

"The lunch room is very crowded," said Mason Baum, 11. "Mrs. Baum has one of the largest classes, with 23 kids, and it's at the maximum capacity. The school needs to be at least torn down and rebuilt. It is very outdated and should be expanded for more room."

The classrooms are tiny, which makes it hard for the students, teachers, and aides to maneuver around in. Some teachers have switched from desks to tables, because the tables take up less space. The space is cramped up which makes it harder for the teacher to teach and for the students to learn.

Currently, the board of education is looking at future plans for Colorado and Central schools. At Colorado the kids have outgrown the school. There are two mobile units outside of Colorado that are temporarily serving as four classrooms. The board of education has several options they are discussing for the new classrooms.

"We can build a new K-5 at Colorado site and perhaps renovate the old building for additional classrooms," said Nancy Meyer, USD 336 Superintendent.

"We can build a new K-5 at Colorado site and purchase adjacent land. We can build a new K-5 building at another site, or we can build additional classrooms onto Colorado, continuing with K-2."

Hollis and Miller Architects were hired by the district to complete a planning effort to determine what steps they will take to update the facilities to the district. In October, November, and December, they plan to identify the needs of the district to prepare the plans for the schools to move forward. After that the board of education will determine if there will be a bond issue, when it will appear, and how much money will be involved.

"So far in this process, we have introduced ourselves at all of the buildings and have completed staff interviews at both elementary schools," said Michelle Chavez, Project Architect, of Hollis and Miller. "The general plan for the elementary buildings is to combine them into one 550 student location."

The state will provide 52 percent state aid for a new building. This means any project/budget that is approved through a bond election (in the spring), will be funded with 52 percent coming from the state and the other 48 percent from local taxpayers.

"If the schools combine all the students under one roof," said Shelby Patch, USD 336 Board of Education member, "it will help with the communications between grade levels. We will also be able to provide the services that our children need to be able to grow and learn."

The factors being presented that the community meetings are the safety of kids, class space, and utilities provided to the kids.

The property needs to be safe for the buses that are loading and unloading, it needs to be

efficient, and there needs to be additional parking.

The first community forum was held on Tuesday, Oct. 29, where Hollis and Miller invited the public to learn about the planning process for the schools.

The second community forum was held on Monday, Nov. 18, where they discussed the statistics from last month's meeting. Seventy-eight percent of people who attended the meeting thought the school could not hold any more kids.

The group also discussed the site concepts for the schools and budget options. For a completely new school, the ideal piece of land would be 15.5 acres. That would include four to five sections per grade for an enrollment of around 550-600 kids.

There were six different options Chavez presented at the forum. 1A would be to build up one floor from Colorado. 2A would sit on an 8-acre patch too and build up and out. 2B would also sit on an 8-acre patch, but the old building would be torn down completely. 2C would be built as a one-story building, with no room for expansion. 3A would sit on a patch of 13 acres or more and would be a one-story building. 3B would only use 10 acres out of the 13, so there would more space for any future additions.

No date is certain yet when the renovations will start to take place on the schools. The board members hope that the community will provide input to help decide the future of the elementary schools.

"Even though nothing has been finalized on the renovation of the new buildings," said Patch, "we are asking the community for their input to help direct the board in making the final decision."

By Danica Haverkamp, co-editor

Comet approaches

In the next few months the early morning Kansas skies will feature a comet - Comet ISON. ISON is a Sun-grazing comet, meaning it orbits around the Sun getting within 850,000 feet of the Sun and then slingshotting away from the Sun's orbit. ISON will be closest to the Sun on Nov. 28, 2013, being only 730,000 miles away. It will then make its way past the Earth being closest on Dec. 26, 2013, approximately 28 million miles away.

"The best time to view the comet will be during December and early January. It will always be a morning object and when it does go around the Sun, it should be a spectacular sight," Mike Ford, Banner Creek Science Center observatory director, said.

The comet will make a dangerous journey after passing Mercury. It will take on high amounts of radiation from the sun, potentially causing the comet's material to evaporate. When the comet gets close to the Sun, the tail will also brighten. These effects on the comet will help scientist learn about the solar system.

"Scientists can learn more about the Sun and solar radiation by watching its effects on the comet," Travis Henry, HMS science teacher, said.

The comet will become more visible after Thanksgiving, when it makes it way around the sun. The Banner Creek Science Center will be having viewings on weekends at 4 a.m. Announcements of specific viewing times will be made in the *Holton Recorder* and in other media.

"Unfortunately, ISON will be visible just before dawn in the coming days toward the eastern skies," Henry, said. "That means it will be hard to see unless a person is up in the early morning."

By Colby Cannon, news editor



GOING FOR FOUR. HHS students suit up for battle against Andale. They not only wanted to pump up the team, but the crowd by making motivational signs. Despite the cold, the students stuck it out, and cheered for the big win.

Cats aim for Salina

For the past 16 years, Holton has made the playoffs. Year after year Holton is in the conversation about who will end up in Salina. Coach Brooks Barta and his staff have won three state championships and finished runner up in two others. They're in pursuit of number four this year.

After the Cats started their playoff run by posting an undefeated district record, they took on an undefeated Wamego team in their first matchup and dominated from start to finish. Wamego's high-powered offense never got going and the Cats rolled, 56-6. Brenden Hampton, 12, had 17 carries for 157 yards and two touchdowns. Drake Ewing, 12, had 18 carries for 118 yards and four touchdowns.

The following week Holton traveled to rival Hayden, where Holton came out with the win, 31-14. "It is always good to beat Hayden, and we put ourselves in position to win our district. We knew we couldn't overlook Royal Valley though. We still had work to do," Ethan Holaday, 12, said.

Royal Valley came to the friendly confines on Senior Night. It rained the previous two days and the field wasn't in the greatest conditions. The Panthers bled the play clock to almost zero between snaps. "It was just a really boring way to play football. There was nothing we could do to speed it up," Drake Ewing said.

The Cats capitalized on the chances they had on offense and won, 26-0. The defense earned their first shutout of the season and the offense also scored through the air for the second time this year.

The Cats and the field had little time to recover because the 8-1 Hesston Swathens came to town five days later. The rain came down all day and the field was even in worse condition then the previous week. Hesston's offense featured the states leading rusher, Ryan Schadler, who had rushed for a state record. 524 yards, the week before. The Wildcats shut down Schadler and company and got their second straight shutout of the year. The Cats won 45-0.

The following Saturday the Wildcats traveled to Mulvane to take on a 6-4 team that had beaten Wichita Collegiate in dramatic fashion the week before. Mulvane's offense featured another one of the state's leading rushers. After leading 21-0 at half, the Cats added two more touchdowns in the second half. Mulvane scored two late touchdowns but the Cats held on and won, 35-14.

"We weren't happy with how we ended that game. We knew that wasn't good enough but it's the playoffs and it's all about winning and moving on. Just do whatever you got to do to win," Brenden Hampton said.

Last Friday the Andale Indians made the trip to Holton. There was hype surrounding the game all week. Rumors about seven charter buses coming to Holton swirled around. News articles about the dump of the field Holton plays on were read and put on social media sites.

"We knew the atmosphere was going to be crazy because of everything we heard about during the week. We knew Andale circled us and they were going to be ready," Holaday said.

The game lived up to the hype. Lines started outside the gate as early as 4:30. The stands were full when the Cats came out for special teams. The Wildcat defense set the tone by stopping Andale after three downs. The Wildcat offense marched down the field, but was forced to settle for a field goal. After breaking some big plays, Andale then scored to gain the lead, 7-3. Later in the second quarter, the Holton defense stopped an Indian drive and forced Andale to attempt a field goal. The field goal was wide right but Andale went into half with the 7-3 lead. The Wildcats started the second half with a touchdown drive followed by a stop on defense. After scoring on their next drive, the Cats built a 24-7 lead. Andale added a late touchdown through the air, but Justin Rieschick, 10, recovered the ensuing onside kick.

"That was feel-good win all around," Ewing, said.

Holton travels to Buehler Friday to decide who gets to go to Salina.

By Jason Yingst, sports editor