Buildings, programs turning STHS into center of education

By Kathryn Reed

Meandering through the classrooms during the open house of the Stadium View building, an excitement permeated the walls. Students were excited – this from youth not accustomed to going to school before Labor Day; teachers giddy; administrators joyful; school board members relieved; and the public appreciative and awed by the transformation.

Realtor Deb Howard knows the upgrades to facilities and programs at the campus will in turn help her business. Families moving anywhere almost always inquire about schools. She said on Thursday that the campus, which she has seldom visited since her last child graduated in 1999, will be a selling point for her.

South Tahoe Middle School Principal Beth Delacour couldn't stop smiling. Even though she doesn't want to change schools, she's excited about sending her kids to STHS with all the changes that have and will continue to occur during the next few years.

Proving why the STHS building is called Stadium View.

Photos/Kathryn
Reed

The $64.5 million facilities bond passed by voters in 2008 has been supplemented with $30 million in matching funds from the state. The bulk of the money is being spent at the high school, though every campus will see upgrades.

Blight is how the City Council views South Lake Tahoe, but it’s not how what’s happening on Gardner Mountain can be described.

When South Tahoe High School students start classes Monday, the second new building in four months will be theirs to learn in.

Thursday was a day to have a tour from a student of the two-story Stadium View building – appropriately named for the views to the football field; as well as the Career and Technical building that opened in April.

Superintendent Jim Tarwater and Principal Ivone Larson both spoke of how the programs being offered in the new facilities will prepare students for whatever they want to do after high school, be it college or work.

Math is one of the main subjects that will be taught in the Stadium View building. Da Vinci Algebra is a course the faculty created to blend math and art, and taught by instructors in both disciplines. The first in the nation course was just approved by the University of California as an accredited class.

“We want to make it exciting for kids,” Larson said of math as she gave a handful of people a tour of the building.

In the future, math and construction will be woven together.

The point is this generation should never have to ask, “When I

will I use this?” when it comes to math principles. They will learn practical applications in high school.

Jamie Greenough, who teaches environmental science, couldn’t stop talking about what she will be able to do with her classroom, the greenhouse that is in the back of the room, the 3-D television that allows students to experience things like a tsunami, and the groundwater filtration system that still needed to be installed.

Connie Hunt was busy that day organizing her room. In the back are two dental chairs just waiting for someone to open wide. The dental program has been integrated with what Lake Tahoe Community College offers to make the transition seamless for those pursuing dental hygiene or dentistry.

What might seem like little touches are throughout. Windows open to provide fresh air. Tables in some rooms are really three put together to make one round table – which gives instructors more options. The AVID room can be one big room or two smaller rooms.

“Counselors were working up to 5 (Thursday) morning on the master schedule. As more students see this, they want in,” Larson said, going from room to room. No two seem a like. Each seems to be specialized. And that’s just how it was designed to be – unique and functional.

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