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# First of String of Building Projects Complete

APRIL 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

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**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Business leaders, city officials, law enforcement, long-range planners and other community stakeholders helped celebrate the ribbon cutting Thursday, April 7, for the FEMA safe room and classroom addition at Poplar Bluff Junior High School.

More than 20,000 square feet was added to the original facility as the result of a \$1 million federal grant, plus the district-wide levy issue voters approved in 2014. The construction project is the first of several major renovations to be completed this year as part of the R-I buildings plan.

“Everything we do on the board level is done with the goal in mind of providing our children with the best possible education, to make them college and career-ready and to help our kids in the Poplar Bluff area compete anywhere in the world with anybody,” said board president John Scott. He added that so far the rest of the projects are on schedule and within budget.

Superintendent Chris Hon thanked the many individuals involved in making the long-range plan a reality, including the voters for producing a 15-year record turnout. Architect Ben Traxel explained that the safe room, which doubles as a gymnasium, was designed to withstand an F5 tornado with 250 mph winds.

The Junior High Science Department will move into six of the nine new classrooms next school year. The school also received ADA ramps, new bathroom and locker

room facilities, and a loop road around the campus. In phase two of the plan, the lower gym will be converted to an industrial arts classroom, and the school will be able to vacate its standalone building.

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Zoellner Construction, [REDACTED] as the four elementary school renovations this summer, completed the expansion of Junior High. The 132,000 square feet being added by K&S Associates to the future high school is slated for completion in September.

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