

## Local Schools



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# First of String of Building Projects Complete

APRIL 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

## First of String of Building Projects Complete

**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

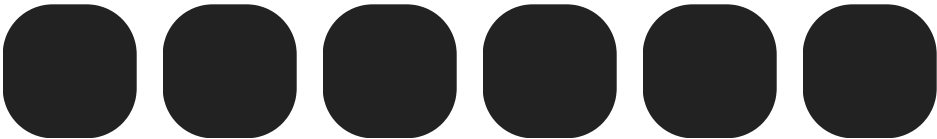
facilities, and a loop road around the campus. In phase two of the plan, the lower gym will be converted to an industrial arts classroom, and the school will be able to vacate its standalone buildings altogether.

Zoellner Construction, the contractor over the Middle School as well 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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# Hon Honored by School Administrators Association

APRIL 14TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Hon Honored by School Administrators Association

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Chris Hon, a lifelong educator, was among eight Missouri superintendents nominated this year for the prestigious Robert L. Pearce Award, which is presented annually by the Missouri Association of School Administrators.

Hon was selected for the honor by his colleagues in the Southeast MASA District. He was recognized as a nominee during the awards banquet at the MASA spring conference on Wednesday, March 30, at Lake Ozark. The Pearce award program is a long-standing tradition of the association honoring excellence in education and community leadership among Missouri superintendents.

“Chris Hon is a true public education professional who has positively impacted many students and staff during his career,” said Kennett Superintendent Chris Wilson, district president. “It was an honor for the Southeast MASA District to nominate Mr. Hon for the Pearce Award and is a small token of appreciation for all he has done for public education in Southeast Missouri.”

The annual award was instituted in 1987 by Richard and David Pearce, then principals of the Pearce Corporation, a Missouri architectural firm specializing in educational facility planning. The awards purpose is to recognize the hard work and dedication of superintendents and their contributions to the children of Missouri.

Hon was additionally presented honorary life membership in recognition of his service to education and participation in his professional organization. Hon, who is retiring in June, has worked nearly three decades in public education, serving as the superintendent of Poplar Bluff Schools for six years.

**Shown in the photo: Chris Hon (right) is presented a plaque by Warsaw Superintendent Scott Downing, MASA president.**

Article and Photo by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator, Poplar Bluff R-I School District.

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## Eugene Field Becomes the Talk of the Town

APRIL 13TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Eugene Field Becomes the Talk of the Town

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Eugene Field left attendees in tears of joy following Leadership Day on Friday, April 8, demonstrating why the elementary school is on track to become lighthouse certified, a prestigious designation currently held by only six schools in Missouri.

“Let your greatness shine” was the theme of the third annual event during which students put on skits involving public speaking, song, flag etiquette and science experiments all choreographed to showcase how the good habits they practice daily reflect in everything they do, both in and outside of the classroom.

“I feel as their coach they have a remarkable staff, everyone is absolutely committed and they genuinely love these kids,” Leader in Me senior consultant Dr. Paul Pitchford said regarding the certification process. “They’re really, really, really close. They just have a couple more things they want to perfect.”

An independent review team will visit Eugene Field in the fall to evaluate how deeply the school has embedded the program principles into its culture, and whether students are taking ownership of their learning and behavior, according to Pitchford.

Eugene Field received a grant from FranklinCovey’s I Am A Leader Foundation valued at

tens of thousands of dollars during the 2013/14 school year to implement the school-wide program, based on Dr. Stephen Covey's best seller, "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People." The school informally piloted the program prior.

Chris Hastings, a semi-retired auctioneer, has volunteered in Eugene Field classrooms for five years and has witnessed the character growth of the students since the program was launched. "I'd say they have a better outlook on life in general," Hastings commented.

Not only does the faculty instill the habits during every class, students live them out at home and through community service projects.

Stetson Pullun, 9, said her favorite habit is No. 7—to sharpen the saw—which is to maintain a balanced program for self-renewal in the following aspects of life: physical, social/emotional, mental and spiritual. The third grader explained how her mother has set up a lighted reading nook for her in a closet that she enjoys using after she puts her younger brother to bed.

"After doing a hard day of work, I want to," said Stetson, referring to rewarding herself with some relaxation time. "Especially with a 4-year-old," she continued to exclaim. "He follows me everywhere!"

Through the program, students track their own attendance, behavior and academics in data notebooks, and even lead parent/teacher conferences to discuss their progress and goals.

Incoming superintendent Scott Dill witnessed Leadership Day for the first time last week. He is a practitioner of the seven habits, but was impressed to see them applied at such a young age, he noted.

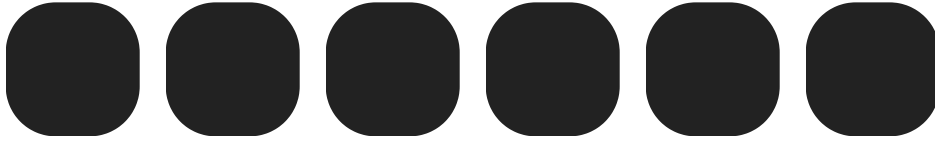
"It really permeates at this level," Dill observed. "Producing assessment capable learners is not just setting the students up for success at school, but they are going to go on to become better citizens – better adults. It's fantastic."

Science leaders Jasmeka Harley (left) and Madison Ballew perform a foaming volcano experiment with PTO President Lori Amoss and R-I Chief Technology Officer Aaron Badgley.

Article and photo submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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## Gary Simmons Honored for His Service

APRIL 13TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

### Gary Simmons Honored for His Service

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - Veteran Poplar Bluff School Board member Dr. Cynthia Brown, who has begun her fifth term, and newcomer Roger Hanner were sworn in during a reorganizational meeting held Thursday, April 7, in the Administrative Building.

Outgoing board member Gary Simmons was awarded a plaque and thanked for his 9 years of dedicated service to the district.

“Gary has been such a good member of the board and supporter of the district much longer,” board president John Scott said. “I’m sure you’ll stay involved. There’s so much you do for the students that people may not even know.”

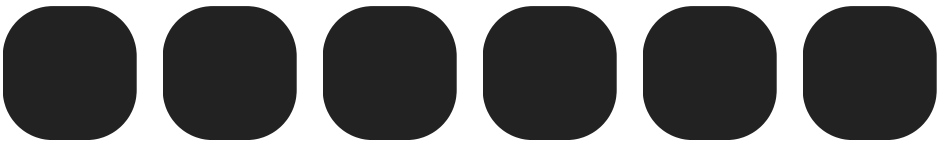
During an election of officers, Scott was nominated to continue as president and Ken Davis will take over for Brown as vice president. Alana Robertson will succeed Simmons in serving as a delegate to the Missouri School Boards' Association. Member Heather Tuggle will remain the board liaison to the Foundation.

**Superintendent Chris Hon honors Gary Simmons for his three terms of voluntary service to the school system.**

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# Elementary Construction Comes in Under Bid

MARCH 24TH 2016 BY DEE LOFLIN

Elementary Construction Comes in Under Bid

**Poplar Bluff, Missouri** - The low bid for the elementary projects—the final component of the Poplar Bluff R-I buildings plan—came in over a half-million dollars under budget,

it was announced Thursday, March 17, during the school board meeting.

The Board of Education awarded a \$1.5 million contract to Zoellner Construction to complete this summer the four renovations designed by Dille and Traxel Architects. Zoellner is responsible for building the Junior High safe room and classroom addition this past year, and the Perryville contractor is presently working on the 50,000 square-foot expansion of the future Middle School.

“This is the second time (Dille and Traxel) have come in under budget,” R-I Assistant Superintendent of Business Rod Priest said. “We are very proud of the way they designed these projects. They are producing a good product while remaining conscious of tax dollars.”

The following features are included in the elementary projects for purposes of increased safety and security:

- The newest building at Eugene Field will be connected with a T-shaped corridor between the main facility and the library. The playground will be relocated behind the school so students no longer have to cross a city road for recess.
- The two classroom buildings at Lake Road will be connected with an enclosed corridor. The opening of the new Middle School with grade four entering the configuration will allow the elementary school to abandon its trailers.
- A front entrance at Oak Grove will be created off the loop road that was financed last summer through the Transportation Development District. Corridors will connect the buildings with ADA-accessible ramps allowing students to travel without having to go outside.
- Four buildings at O’Neal will be connected with ADA corridors. The fourth grade wing will be remodeled for art and music classrooms, allowing for the converted basement currently in use to be vacated. A new HVAC unit will also be installed.

Shown in the photo: Several contractors attend a bid opening Tuesday, March 1, in the board room led by Project Manager Mike Pollard (left) of Dille and Traxel. Also pictured is Assistant Superintendent Rod Priest (middle) and Al Ursery, director of buildings and grounds.

*The Poplar Bluff R-I Public School District is comprised of approximately 5,300 students, over 400 professional staff and 300 support staff, and has an operational budget in excess*



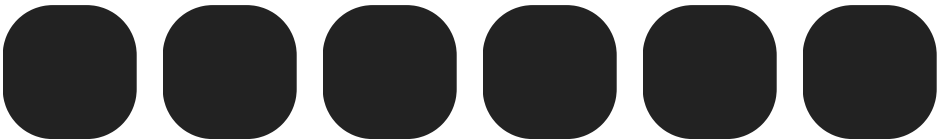
*of \$46 million. Our goal, in partnership with parents and community, is to educate all students to their potential, and to inspire them to be lifelong learners who possess the skills and knowledge necessary to be productive members in our changing world.*

Submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Coordinator, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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