



## Residents to Vote on \$5 Million Capital Improvement Project

### PROPOSAL HAS NO ADDITIONAL TAX IMPACT

*The Chatham Central School District is committed to maintaining its facilities and grounds in order to provide a safe, well cared for learning environment for all students.*

On January 12, 2010, district residents will be asked to vote on a \$5 million capital improvement proposal authorizing a number of improvements to district facilities without additional tax impact. Voters will be asked to weigh in on two propositions. The first would shore up aging infrastructure, improve accessibility for disabled students and community members, increase energy efficiency, and upgrade program educational spaces to better meet current curriculum and instructional expectations. The second proposition, which depends on passage of the first, is to authorize replacement of aging athletic poles and lights that have been in place since the 1970's.

The timing of the vote eliminates the need to place an additional tax burden on the community because it uses existing resources to fund the local share of the project. Federal stimulus funds and money remaining after completion of the current capital project have been added to the accumulated capital reserve. When these resources are combined with New York State Aid, the district will be able to complete significant capital improvements.

The construction that was completed over the summer addressed many needed upgrades and safety issues, but it did not include everything that needed to be done. In order to avoid increased costs in the future and to ensure that the learning environment for our students remains healthy, safe, and secure, these capital improvements proposals are being brought before the voters.

The school district encourages you to review the information provided in this newsletter and on the district's website at [www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com). If you have any additional questions, please contact the Superintendent's Office at 392-1501.



**< VOTE >**

**TUESDAY**  
**January 12, 2010**

**9 a.m. – 9 p.m.**

**Mary E. Dardess Elementary  
School Gymnasium**



**CHATHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL ROOFTOP**

**MARY E. DARDESS FREEZER DOOR**

# PROPOSITION ONE: **Repairs and Improvements**

*This Proposition addresses energy efficiency, program needs, infrastructure, safety and accessibility concerns.*

## **Energy Efficiency**

Rising energy costs are something that every district must take into account in considering its future. Proposition One reduces the schools' overall energy consumption with the following upgrades:

- Replace single-pane windows at MED and CMS with energy-efficient windows.
- Replace outdated light fixtures in the gymnasiums and cafeterias of all three schools with energy-efficient units.
- Install occupancy-sensor light switches in the classrooms and offices of all three schools to cut down on electrical usage. These lights turn off when rooms are empty and turn back on when occupied.
- Purchase of an energy-efficient freezer/cooler for the MED kitchen. The current freezer/cooler has a 75-year old door, and the cooler itself is several decades old.
- Purchase of a new oven to replace a unit which is in disrepair with a new model that heats more evenly and efficiently.
- Installation of a backup electrical generator system to prevent the loss of work, data and food during power failures.

## **Program Needs**

Proposition One addresses a number of building issues which impact the district's educational program by doing the following:

- Currently the high school science rooms lack hot running water necessary for certain experiments. Proposition One would supply the rooms with hot water and make other improvements, such as replacing the chemical hoods and lab tables, to bring program space up to current standards.
- Upgrade the high school auditorium lighting and install tablet arms on some seats, enabling the district to use the space for large group testing.
- Expansion of the high school weight room to include space for aerobic exercise equipment. The new space will address lifelong fitness, an important goal of the PE curriculum.
- Improvements to the MED library media center. By utilizing nearby available space and making some changes to the current floor plan, the space can be used more effectively for instruction and activities.

## **Infrastructure**

Our school buildings range from 35 to 100 years old.

Proposition One addresses aging facilities by:

- Patching and repairing foundations and masonry at MED and the middle school.
- Repairing an aging stairway at the middle school.
- Completing the replacement of roofs at the middle school.
- Repair of the sidewalk near the high school tennis courts, and paving of the delivery area near the middle school cafeteria and the area near the district office at MED.
- Installation of room-size air conditioners on the third floor at Chatham Middle School.

## **Safety**

A primary goal of the Chatham Central School District is to provide a safe and secure environment for learning and personal growth. Proposition One would address this goal in a number of ways, particularly at MED.

- Reconfiguration of MED's entryway to increase security.
- Installation of a gate behind MED to protect the playground from the new district office parking lot.
- Relocation of the kiln in the MED art room to a separate space.
- Removal of the electrical transformer in the MED basement and replacement with one outside the building.
- Encapsulation of asbestos flooring in MED classrooms and hallways with linoleum.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance**

School districts are required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Proposition One would:

- Expand access to handicapped accessible restrooms.
- Add handrails and ramps where needed.



MIDDLE SCHOOL STAIRWAY

# PROPOSITION TWO: **New Lighting System**

*Proposition Two proposes replacing the present lighting system on the high school athletic field with a new system. The approximately 35-year-old converted utility poles that now serve to illuminate night games would be replaced with four 80-foot steel poles in concrete bases for a total cost of \$320,000, including wiring and installation.*

**Specifically the project would:**

- Provide more focused and consistent illumination, as today’s steel poles are aimed to ½ degree accuracy. (Wooden poles can sway as much as 15 to 20 degrees.)
- Expand the range of light and increase safety for students and spectators by relocating the poles from inside the track to outside the track.
- Move wiring underground rather than leaving it to hang in the air between poles, increasing safety and reliability.
- Replace traditional lights with more energy efficient bulbs, resulting in brighter light without additional utility costs.

Friday night football at Chatham High School is a long-standing community tradition, but the field lights are also used by other teams and community groups. Twenty events were held under the lights in the fall of 2009. Replacement of the poles creates the potential for even more use of the athletic complex at night.

### **Capital Project – Proposed Budget**

Federal Stimulus Money (ARRA) . . .	\$ 547,714
Authorized in Previous Vote . . . . .	\$ 550,000
Capital Reserve . . . . .	\$1,425,578
<b>49.6% Aid Ratio</b>	
<b>Total Recommended Budget . . . .</b>	<b>\$5,087,283</b>

**No Tax Impact**

## Timeline Shows Sixth-Graders How Far We Go Back

Chatham’s sixth-graders study ancient history, but that only goes back as far as there are written records. The earliest written records were on cuneiform tablets dating back 5,000 years. According to Dr. Mike Wallace, human “history” goes back much farther than that.

Dr. Wallace and Tom Lee of the Spencertown Academy have been working with CMS sixth-graders for the past few years on a project funded in part by the Chatham Education Foundation, trying to bring home the idea of the long record of prehistoric human existence.

One technique they have used is bringing in or referring to artifacts from archaeology, anthropology and paleontology: stone tools, bones, and burial sites that all predate the written record.

When confronted with items that predate written history, students ask ‘How do we know?’ Wallace said. “So we give them an idea of how scientists measure back in time.” He uses familiar examples, such as the decay of a piece of fruit, and the layering of items in a trash can to illustrate complex scientific techniques such as radiometrics and stratigraphy.

Meanwhile, Tom Lee tried to show the students the personal dimension of the passage of time. Everyone, he said, had a grandmother. Fifty years ago, she was probably 10 or 11, about the age of the children in the class. Fifty years before that, her grandmother was 10 or 11; and so on, back to 2,000 years ago. This creates a personal link to history.

Each year, Wallace and Lee have experimented with different hands-on methods to illustrate the vast expanse of time: One year they made a chain of paper clips, each representing a decade. This



year they used folders, which the students will be able to use throughout the year. Each folder had a date on it, and they were separated in increments of 500 years. They started with 2009, and with about 90 students, there were enough to take the timeline all the way back to 39,000 years BCE, when humans might have already been walking the Earth.

Wallace said this course connects to a very popular high school course taught by Mark Pearson, which looks at the history of time from the Big Bang to the present. “We’re trying to build something starting in the sixth grade,” he said, “planting a seed that scientists have a record of humans before written records – cave paintings, skulls – that show human behavior; we know something from them about humanity.”

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

## How are we able to pay for the project with no additional tax impact?

School construction is normally paid for using two sources of money. Typically, part of the project is paid for with NYS building aid and the rest is paid for by the local community. In this case, the community's share will be paid using a combination of money left from the last capital project, federal stimulus money, and money the district has put aside in a capital reserve. This allows us to do the work without raising additional taxes.

## Why do we have to vote if we are not raising taxes?

The district is required to have voter approval for three purposes:

- To apply the funds in the capital reserve toward the project.
- To apply the federal stimulus funds toward the project.
- For any construction project that will require borrowing of funds. Any borrowing needed for this project will be offset by the state building aid portion of the funding.

## How was work chosen to be included in the project?

The District Facilities Committee has worked with our architect and the district administration and staff to identify our needs and prioritize them according to five criteria:

- Energy Efficiency
- Health and Safety
- Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance
- Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair
- Program Needs

## How is NYS Building Aid affected by the current economic conditions?

The budget reductions at the state level do not include school building aid. By structuring the project's funding the way we have, the district will use money that is set aside for this specific purpose.

## Why is the project divided into two proposals?

**Proposition One** contains work in all three schools that fits the criteria listed above. Once projects were identified, an analysis was done to determine the most cost-effective way of addressing the issue. For example, the cost of cooling the third floor of the middle school was reduced by 75 percent by using smaller, room-sized cooling units instead of a centralized system. In a few years, when declining enrollment dictates that we no longer need to use that space, the room-sized units can be relocated and used elsewhere in the district.

**Proposition Two** asks voters to authorize replacement of the athletic lights on the football field. After reviewing the recommendations of the Facilities Committee, the Board reached consensus that this work meets the criteria for work to be included in the project (see below). It was however, the only aspect of the project for which the Board and administration were receiving mixed reaction from the community.

If either proposition is voted down, we cannot resubmit it to voters for 90 days. This would be too late to utilize the Federal Stimulus money by June 30. Including projected State Aid, we could lose up to a million dollars of the funding for this project. To lessen that risk, the Board decided to put the athletic lights in a separate proposition.

## Criteria for Including Athletic Lights

**Energy Efficiency** — The lights are over 35 years old. With current technology, we can get brighter lighting without additional electrical costs.

**Safety** — Currently, the lights are mounted on wooden utility style poles. Because these poles are shorter, and because of their placement inside the track, they only light a limited area. By placing the lights outside the track and putting them on taller poles, a larger area of the field will be better lit, improving safety for players and spectators. Also, underground wiring is safer and more reliable in general.

**Program** — The fields meet the criteria of an existing program space that does not meet the standards expected in a typical high school. The field lights are used by a variety of teams and community groups (20 events were held under the lights in the fall of 2009), and the potential exists for other uses if the lighting is upgraded.

**Infrastructure** — Wooden light poles are more likely to shift and have other problems than metal poles. Please visit [http://www.chathamcentralschools.com/district/capital\\_project/athletic\\_lighting.pdf](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com/district/capital_project/athletic_lighting.pdf) for more information about athletic lighting and why wooden light poles are no longer recommended. Metal light poles are also put together in sections, so that if indicated by future needs, they can be moved rather than replaced.

## If we are spending the money in the capital reserve, how will we pay for building maintenance or emergency repairs?

The capital reserve is a special account put aside to save money for significant capital projects. It requires voter approval to use that money, so it is not designed for any short term emergencies. Routine maintenance is a part of the regular operating budget. Depending on the circumstances, emergencies would be paid through the regular budget, our insurance coverage or other reserves that can be accessed for that purpose.

[www.chathamcentralschools.com](http://www.chathamcentralschools.com)



# High School Students Study Real World Issues

As the world around us changes, so does the way our students study science. At Chatham High School, Sandy Fischer's Environmental Science course offers students the opportunity to study issues that will directly impact their lives.

Many of the course activities are technology based. During one class, students used laptop computers to find examples of three different kinds of urban sprawl. Google Earth allowed them to get bird's eye views of local and distant communities, compare them with each other and see how they've changed over the years.

Chatham, they discovered, is an example of ribbon sprawl, with development happening along roadways. But pulling back and looking at the larger area, one sees leapfrog development, with clusters of development happening intermittently from the hamlet of Austerlitz to Spencertown to Chatham and Ghent. The area between the communities was equivalent to the distance one could travel by horse in a day, Mrs. Fischer said, so that was where settlements sprang up. They also looked at examples of continuous sprawl, the third type, hovering over large metropolitan areas like Albany or Atlanta.

But an Environmental Science course can't be all on laptops, and some of the activities are more traditional. For example, the

class has studied rye grass to see what factors affect its growth. Students Erica Gentile and Alex Brown focused on sunlight. Brown said keeping the grass under a grow light resulted in greater growth. Despite the results of the experiment, he said, "I think we should keep using sunlight. I'd rather keep it natural."

So what's the tie-in between how grass grows and how cities sprawl? The class did some role-playing, with each group representing a different special interest – business, industry, farming, preservation groups, all with their own ideas about what to do with this little area of grassland.

"By doing a biomass activity, they're learning how scientists work," Ms. Fischer said. "To assess the value of a piece of land, you look at plant productivity, how much value you can get out of a piece of property: x value for planting and harvesting versus development, or the conservation route, with its appeal to tourists. All these are different ways to see what effects you can have on a landscape."

The students, she said, are exposed to a lot of different concepts to help them make the decision what they're going to do with their hypothetical land. This is how science overlaps with the study of society, economy and history, she suggested.



## Voter Information:

### Election

The Capital Improvement Project vote will be conducted from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010 in the gymnasium of the Mary E. Dardess Elementary School, 50 Woodbridge Ave., Chatham.

### Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots for the January 12, 2010 Referendum may be applied for at the office of the District Clerk of the Chatham Central School District. Applications for absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk at least seven days prior to the date of the Referendum vote if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. Absentee ballots must be received by the District Clerk not later than 5:00 p.m. on January 12, 2010.

## Discover a New World of Learning

The Chatham Public Library will offer its patrons the keys to a whole new world of information resources in its upcoming database classes in January 2010. For the convenience of the public, the class will be offered twice, from 11 a.m. to noon, Thursday, Jan. 21, and from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 25.

These databases, covering a wide range of needs and interests, are one of the library's best-kept secrets. They are useful for students who are writing reports or working on graduate dissertations. Chatham Public Library Director Luisa Sabin-Kildiss said patrons can access the databases from home through the library's website, using a library card and PIN number, as well as at the library itself using one of their computers.

There are a wide range of databases available, including ones providing information on business, cars, Civil Service practice exams, college prep, GED tests, genealogy, newspapers and online children's books. The newest addition is Mango Languages, a database of language lessons. Users can log-on at home and take their pick of learning Mandarin Chinese, Greek, or any number of other languages.

For more information, visit the Public Library's website at [www.chatham.lib.ny.us](http://www.chatham.lib.ny.us) or call 392-3666.

< VOTE >

Tuesday, January 12, 2010

9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

MED School Gymnasium

**ADMINISTRATORS**

Cheryl Nuciforo 392-1501

*Superintendent*

Diane Malecki 392-1503

*School Business Administrator*

Jean Scheriff 392-2417

*Director of Pupil Services*

Kristen Reno 392-2255

*Mary E. Dardess Elementary School Principal*

Gordon Fitting 392-1560

*Chatham Middle School Principal*

Larry Burud 392-1560

*Chatham Middle School Assistant Principal*

Ronald Davis 392-4142

*Chatham High School Co-Principal*

John Thorsen 392-4142

*Chatham High School Co-Principal*

**BOARD MEMBERS** *Term Expires*

John Wapner 2012

*President*

Elizabeth Macfarlane 2011

*Vice President*

Michael Clark 2012

Denise Dapice 2010

Fred Hutchinson 2013

Francis Iaconetti 2011

David O'Connor 2012

Melony Spock 2010

James Toteno 2011

# Teaching Lifelong Fitness, Teamwork



With the nation focused on the issue of childhood obesity and the importance of lifelong fitness, the district's Physical Education program has evolved to meet the needs of students of all ability levels.

At MED, PE teachers John Roloson and Linda Colwell seek to level the playing field and increase enjoyment for all by giving students basic skills at an early age in a format that is simple and fun. Visitors to their classes see kindergartners and first graders playing cooperative games that teach them basic skills like running, throwing, kicking, and catching without the anxiety sometimes associated with competitive games.

A game called "Cleaning Your House" is used to teach throwing and hand-eye coordination. The teachers scatter a large number of balls on either side of a center line. Students on either side "clean house" by

throwing balls to the other side of the line. But even though there are many balls and many players, the game is not chaos. Students have learned to concentrate on technique so that the ball lands where they want to throw it.

"I saw some people really concentrating on throwing the ball correctly," encouraged Mr. Roloson during a recent class. Then he asked one boy to demonstrate. "He makes a T, steps, and throws it—that's outstanding."

Lessons are designed to keep children moving, whatever their skill level. For example, the old favorite of freeze tag has been modified so that to "unfreeze" a friend, a child has to run around him three times and wave.

With a focus on fun, the students at MED are developing fitness skills that will serve them for a lifetime.

CHATHAM CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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