Catching up



COURTESY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OCONEE COUNTY

This artist's rendering shows what the main entrance of the new Walhalla High School on S.C. Highway 11 will look like when the school opens its doors, scheduled for the fall of 2015.

New Walhalla High project overcoming rain delays

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

WALHALLA — Although a wetter-than-usual summer slowed construction of the new Walhalla High School, School District of Oconee County (SDOC) officials say workers are feverishly trying to make up for lost time.

Jack Weber, of Trehel Corporation, informed the Oconee County School Board of Trustees Monday night that there were more than 170 workers on site Monday. Weber said improved weather conditions in recent months have allowed workers to catch up on three months lost during the summer.

SDOC Assistant Superintendent of Operational Services Michael Thorsland said Weber has informed the district that he feels very comfortable with the construction schedule.

"He anticipates turning over the school on time," Thorsland said. "There's nothing they're not doing right now, as we have masonry, electrical, mechanical and plumbing work going on at the site."

The new $55 million school, located in the Pickett Post community,

'Things are going well and progressing right along.'

Michael Thorsland
School District of Oconee County Assistant Superintendent for Operational Services

is scheduled to open in the fall of 2015. It will be located on S.C. Highway 11, a little more than three miles from the existing high school on Razorback Lane, and house some 1,300 students with room for growth.

Total square footage for the new school, including mezzanine space, is 268,000. While that is a substantial increase over the 235,000 square feet projected in an initial study, building officials attributed the change to the need for a multipurpose room — along with a gymnasium and auxiliary gymnasium — found in most new schools.

Along with wet weather conditions, the school also experienced the theft of 273 feet of copper last month, valued at more than $2,000, taken out of the walls. The Oconee County Sheriff's Office has said there are no suspects and that the investigation is continuing.

In spite of a few setbacks, Thorsland said the latest news from Trehel Corporation — which is the project's construction management at-risk company — is very positive.

"Things are going well and progressing right along," Thorsland said.

Thorsland said masonry work is the most noticeable when driving by the site and that workers are attempting to get as much done "before the cold weather hits."

"It's not in the dry, but it's getting close," he said.

During Monday night's meeting, architect Brian Delchman displayed 3D images of how the complex should look upon completion. Thorsland said he hopes to have those images available on the school district's website (www.oconee.k12.sc.us) later this week.

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goliver@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6687

WALHALLA: Opening of high school planned for fall of 2015