Daniel High School dedication set for Sunday

BY GREG OLIVER
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CENTRAL — More than two months after the new Daniel High School formally opened to students, faculty, staff and administration, the public will finally receive an opportunity to tour the facility.

A dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sunday in the auditorium at 140 Blue and Gold Boulevard in Central. U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham, a member of the Daniel High School Class of 1973, will be the keynote speaker.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to welcome the community to our new school as we recognize the people who made this possible," said Daniel High Principal Danny Merck, who assumed those duties July 1.

Seating in the new 627-seat auditorium is limited and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors will open at 1 p.m. and once the dedication ceremony is completed, participants will move to the front of the school for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

From 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., the school will be open for the public to take self-guided tours.

Merck said the new school provides wider hallways to walk through, 250 security cameras throughout the campus, a new gymnasium for basketball and an auxiliary gymnasium; a cafeteria, with a seating capacity for 500 students, that serves two lunches; motion sensors and additional windows, as well as an atrium area that allows light inside.

The first floor features a Fine Arts wing while the second and third floors consist of academic wings with science labs and foreign language classes. The Daniel High principal added that the five science labs are all shared and that the center location features a window. A business lab, featuring 30 overall computers, a new weight room, coaching offices and locker rooms is also featured.

Herbert Cooper, who has represented the Daniel area on the Pickens County School Board of Trustees for the past 20 years, will be among the dignitaries in attendance. For Cooper, who spearheaded the effort to construct the new school, Sunday will mark a day he has long dreamed about.

"I feel it is something the people of the Daniel area will come to appreciate even more as the years ago by," Cooper said. "Since Daniel High is the number one traditional high school in the U.S., as noted by U.S. News and World Report, this provides them a state-of-the-art facility that allows them to match their achievements.

"If any area ever deserved a new school, it is the students, teachers, parents and community of Daniel High School."

The new school also features 611 parking spaces compared to the former school's 300 and all are now in place. Merck added that the 611 spaces allow any sophomore, junior or senior student who wants to drive and has completed the required Alive at 25 program the opportunity to do so.

Sitting on 70 acres, the new school continues to feature landscaping and construction of its soccer, baseball and softball fields, tennis courts and football practice field.

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