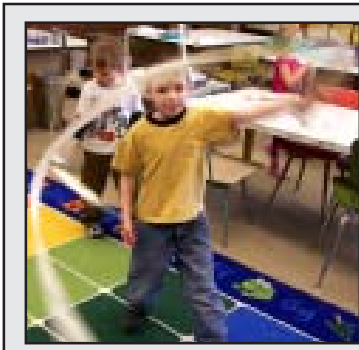


# Capital construction vote is March 25

## Project requires no new taxes

The referendum on whether to approve Owego Apalachin Central School District's \$13.6 million capital construction project is Tuesday, March 25, and district voters will be able to go to polls that day between noon and 9



### Public hearing

7 p.m.  
Monday, March 17  
OFA cafeteria

### The vote

Noon to 9 p.m.  
Tuesday, March 25  
Apalachin Elementary  
and Owego Elementary

p.m. at Apalachin and Owego elementary schools.

The proposed project will

require no new taxes.

Instead, the construction work will be funded through a

combination of EXCEL aid (a special school construction aid fund created by New York state); funds from the district's capital reserve fund; and building aid from the State Education Department.

Some of the bigger items on the long list include:

- ◆ A new roof at OFA
- ◆ New energy management systems in all three buildings
- ◆ AES and OES windows
- ◆ "Smart" classrooms

throughout the district

◆ Lights on the stadium field, the tennis courts and the soccer pitch

◆ Repaved parking lots and sidewalks at OFA and OES

◆ Remodeled bathrooms in each school to meet handicap accessibility requirements, and a new elevator at OFA

◆ Replacement of HVAC systems that are at the end of their useful life

— See **Capital Page 4**



Stephen P. Jensen photos

High school art students recently worked on a project focusing on various angles of the Owego Free Academy lobby. Meanwhile, district officials are focused on improvements at OFA and in both of the district's elementary schools as part of a capital construction project.

## Smart classrooms on horizon

*District goal: Every room to be technology "connected"*

Every classroom in the Owego Apalachin district is earmarked to become a smart classroom in the upcoming capital building project that OA voters will consider in a referendum on March 25.

What would that mean to students and educators, district-wide?

"Right now, consider what a teacher has to do to switch between a projector, a document camera, a computer, or a DVD/VCR and (eventually) a video camera for distance learning," said Bob Farrell, OA chief information officer. "To make that switch, they have to make changes in the projector, and it gets complicated. Currently, we see a lot of trouble-shooting when that happens."

At present, projectors in the high school and both elementary schools are on mobile carts.

"They're large, they're cumbersome and they get in the way, and since they're in the center of the room, Farrell said, "we have electrical and computer

### Inside

**Part of the plan:**  
To replace all single-paned glass windows in both of our elementary schools, increasing energy efficiency, as well as providing a more comfortable learning environment.

**Story on Page 2**

— See **Smart Page 3**

## Sports complex lighting on the project docket

A project that's been discussed, in some form or another, for many years in the Owego Apalachin community would become a reality with the passage of the capital construction project vote on March 25: lighting the OFA sports complex.

In its latest iteration, the idea was the brainchild of four football dads sitting in the OFA stands one fall Saturday

afternoon. Dave Evans was one of those dads.

"We were talking about how cool it would be to have Friday night football in Owego," Evans said, "and how much it would bring the community together."

Evans, who was initially surrounded by OFA fathers John Schmonsees, John Conklin, and Steve Lounsberry, said that group quickly

turned to John Gatto, another OFA dad and a member of the OA board of education.

"He was our go-to guy on the board, and we quickly got Dr. (Bill) Russell (OA superintendent) involved," Evans said.

Dr. Russell recently said, dur-

— See **Lights Page 2**



# New windows at elementary schools would make facilities more energy-efficient

One important piece of the capital construction project targets single-paned windows in the Owego Apalachin district's two elementary schools.

All windows in Owego and Apalachin elementary schools are single-paned, with the exception of the 1988 four-classroom additions at each site, according to Tony Clark, OA maintenance supervisor.

"Everything's original in those two schools (as far as the windows and accompanying hardware)," said Clark. "It's all been in there since the mid-1960s. Back then, fuel oil was probably 10 cents a gallon.

"If you think about it, when those buildings were new, energy costs weren't really a great concern. The new windows will be a lot thicker," Clark added. "Most of the new ones are two pieces of thick glass with plastic sheets in between.

"We have some windows (in the high school, for example) that are five-

eighths of an inch thick," Clark said. "Right now in the elementary schools, we have windows with glass that's approximately a quarter-of-an-inch thick.

Seals surrounding the panes have also outlived their usefulness, said Eric Kochis, OA energy conservation specialist.

"Any time we reduce drafts and leaking cold spots in our buildings, the heating and cooling efficiency, alongside the comfort level, is vastly increased," Kochis said.

Teachers in the OA district have stories about working in an old building. Suzanne Peacock, a second-grade teacher at OES, mentioned that during the colder stretches of winter, it's not an uncommon scene to see some of her students wearing their winter coats and gloves in the classroom while doing school work.

OES fourth-grade teacher Karen Monforte has a similar take.

"A combination of new temperature controls and the new windows would be a wonderful enhancement to the learning atmosphere in my classroom," Monforte said. "Having the extreme temperature fluctua-

tions in my classroom hinders the students' performance.

"I've also had students in the past who have worn their coats all day because it was so cold," she said.

"Could you imagine wearing your winter coat at work all day? With so many academic demands on students, it is essential to provide a comfortable environment in which they can learn."

Keith Newman, a fifth-grade teacher at AES, said there's a draft in his room, as well.

"I know that many rooms have dry-rotted caulk around the glass itself," he said. "In my room that's the case, and in the winter I'm sure I lose a good amount of heat as a result of the age of the windows."

OES second-grade teacher Stacey Silvestri said there's a separate issue with the old windows in her classroom.

"My classroom is right next to the gymnasium," she said. "If the ball bounces off the wall in the gym, the windows in my room clang. The students are constantly asking, 'What's that noise?'"

"It's also freezing by the windows, or extremely hot, depending upon the weather outside. They're absolutely not energy-efficient."

Also part of OA capital project is a plan to install a new system that will allow for room-to-room climate control in both of the elementary schools.

The system will be fully integrated to allow maintenance from a remote location, said Eric Kochis, OA energy conservation specialist.

"When a classroom has seen its last action for the day, or over the weekend, we'll be able to set back the temperature to a 60-degree night mode," he said.

The elementary schools are currently divided into "major zones," and with the current system in place, only large chunks of each building may be controlled at a time.

"With the new system, we'll have more specific control and the schools will be more comfortable," Kochis said.

The district already has this type of control in the high school and middle school, said Tony Clark, OA maintenance supervisor.



Stephen P. Jensen photos

## Lights Continued from Page 1

ing a WEBO 1330-AM radio interview: "From about my second week as superintendent of schools here, I began meeting with a group of interested local people who were raising energy and consciousness about lighting the football stadium, as well as providing lights for the tennis courts (and soccer pitch)."

"I heard that interview and I laughed," said Evans. "That's about right. We were right on him about this."

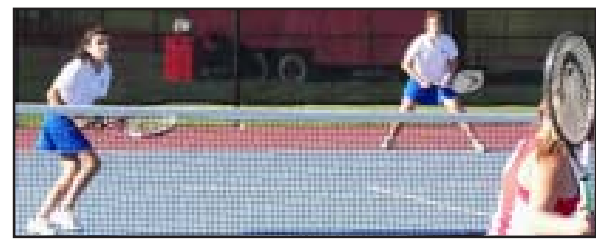
Evans said there was a similar movement to light the football stadium alone, perhaps six to eight years ago. But there were unforeseen snags, he said.

"I wasn't directly involved at that time, but the story was that Coca-Cola offered to write a check to put up the lights, as long as they could have a billboard, which is when there were some problems with the state education department," Evans said.

"So the four of us started meeting and brainstorming," he said. "We pulled (Lounsbury) in because he worked to put together funding for the swimming pool project, so he had that experience."

When the small group put out the community call for help, their primary response came from the tennis community, Evans said.

"Unbeknownst to us, they'd already started fund-raising for such a project, so we



asked them to become involved," Evans said.

"Then we thought it would be a good idea to see if the soccer community wanted to become involved as well, and it grew.

"Long story short, we raised money from private citizens, from grants, and we enlisted the assistance of the OFA Booster Club," Evans said.

"So, because the community worked to raise this money, the plan was soon after updated to include not just the football field, but all seven of the tennis courts, the soccer pitch, as well as additional lighting for the OFA parking lot, which is desperately needed.

"While we've been working toward this for quite a while," Evans added, "we're very fortunate it's come together as it has. The timing for this is perfect."

Said Joe Palladino, OFA athletic director: "We currently have some of the best athletic facilities in New York state. Upgrading these facilities by placing lights on the stadium field, the tennis courts and the soccer pitch will do several things

to highlight our standout athletes, our employees and our community.

"Geographically, we're in a perfect position to host sectional and statewide competitions," Palladino said.

"We also have exceptional parking, and our sports complex is easily accessible from Route 17.

"Athletic competitions held at night bring with them a certain unique atmosphere that provides affordable entertainment for those in our community," he said.

Evans agreed.

"I think one exciting aspect of this, being a football fan, is that there's just something about a Friday night game in the fall," Evans said. "Last season OFA played under the lights at Waverly and that place was packed - there were more than 4,000 people there.

"The additional excitement of Friday night games will increase the gate and boost the concession sales significantly. It will also help boost school spirit, community pride, and in the bigger picture, help all the OFA sports programs."

## Paving, playground equipment, OFA locker rooms part of plan

Several areas of interest in the proposed capital project boil down to basic maintenance. Some of that work will fall under the area of heating, ventilation and air conditioning, as the district plans to replace some of the ventilation equipment in both of the elementary school classrooms and offices.

These units, many of which are physically located along the perimeters of rooms, supply heat in the wintertime and help to circulate air at other times of the year.

"We feel that what we have is well maintained and they function," said Tony Clark, Owego Apalachin maintenance

supervisor. "We think we get the best performance from these units as we can. But you're looking at the best efficiency from technology from the 1960s versus what we could be getting with today's technology."

The OA district also plans to replace four of the rooftop (HVAC) units on top of the high school.

"These units have been on that roof since 1970 and they're in bad shape," Clark said. "By replacing them, we'll certainly have more energy efficiency, and they'll be more reliable."

Also on the district's list is to replace equipment on the

south playground at Owego Elementary School. This equipment was cited by the school's insurance company as in need of replacement, said Clark.

Substantial pavement work is also on OA's list of plans for the capital project.

"Owego Free Academy opened in 1972 and that student parking lot is the original lot," Clark said. "I've been here myself for 25 years and in that time, it's not been re-done, so it's in bad shape."

Both circa-1972 original high school locker rooms are on the list, with the boys' locker room needing the most attention, Clark said.

# Re-directed co-gen energy will help heat middle school

One of the energy-saving projects targeted on the Owego Apalachin district's capital construction docket is to install a heat exchanger that would harness lost energy from the co-generation plant at the high school, then re-direct that heat to make heating the new middle school even more efficient.

It may sound complex, but it's actually not.

Our co-generation plant, located at Owego Free Academy, is comprised of five 454 Chevy engines. During the wintertime, the blue big blocks cruise along at about 1,800 RPMs, producing electricity for OFA and some for Owego Elementary School.

"A byproduct of running the co-gen plant is heat," said Eric Kochis, OA energy conservation specialist.

"And in order to better utilize the heat that escapes through vents, out through the high school's rooftop, you have what's known as heat exchangers.

"A heat exchanger takes the heat from a co-gen loop and brings it into a building heating loop, in this case, the heating loop for the middle school," Kochis said. "We can't use all the heat that we're producing now in our co-gen plant," said Tony Clark, OA maintenance supervisor.

"We're heating all the water for the (high school), for the pool - we send 180-degree water to our pool 24 hours a day. We're creating more heat than we can currently use, so instead of continuing to dump it out into the air, we're looking to utilize more of it.



Stephen P. Jensen photos

Five Chevy big-block 454s comprise the power plant of the OFA co-generator. One of the engines is shown above. At left is a view, looking up from the floor, of tubing that carries domestic water, boiler water and anti-freeze. In the top photo in the series, OFA head custodian Dan Brink checks the RPM on the outer case of one of the Chevy engines. Each of the 454s run at a steady 1,800-plus RPM.

Once a new heat exchanger is in place, Clark said, the middle school will

have a new source of "free heat."

Said Kochis: "Those five engines,

instead of being hooked to transmissions, are hooked to an electric generator. When it runs, it spins, and when it spins, it creates electricity and that gets pumped back into the system to meet our electrical demand."

When the new middle school was built, 108 wells were dug, each at a depth of 400 feet, encompassing the geo-thermal heating/cooling loop. Plastic piping runs down into each of these wells and those pipes carry fluid (similar to anti-freeze). The goal, during the winter, is to get that fluid's temperature elevated to the deepest and warmest ground temps.

"In the wintertime, the loop temperatures could get down into the low 40s," said Clark, "which is just about the lowest design temperature we have for the units. So with the co-gen plant running at full tilt, we have all this excess heat, and we'd like to redirect some of that energy to increase the underground fluid temperature."

By doing that, Clark said, instead of trying to heat the fluid from 45 degrees, the temperature would begin at 55, perhaps 60 degrees.

"What that means is that it'll take that much less energy to heat the middle school's classrooms," Clark said. "That should add to the longevity of our equipment, while it also makes us much more energy-efficient."

"It's difficult to know exactly how much more efficiently we'll be able to run at the middle school," Kochis added, "but I can tell you this, it'll be significant."

## Smart *Continued from Page 1*

wiring running across floors, which is a safety concern, and it's certainly inefficient."

With a new system installed, projectors at OFA, AES and OES will be ceiling-mounted (projectors were ceiling-mounted in every classroom with the construction of the new middle school).

"Everything else will be stationed against the wall and out of the middle of the floor, and there are no wires," Farrell said. "They run through the raceway (conduit) in the walls and in the ceiling."

The entire system will be operated through a single switch-plate mounted to a wall. A teacher will then be able to easily toggle between devices, as well as control the volume from this switch.

"Content, instruction and curriculum will become the focus," Farrell said. "The technology will be much more easily integrated into daily routines, and before long, usage of these great technologies will be second-nature. We'll eventually wonder how we ever did without them.

"Every one of our classrooms will be technologically 'smart'," Farrell added. "It's a major district initiative to move ahead with this technology. Everyone will have access and we'll be working with our teachers to help them learn to use it to enhance teaching and learning."

The Owego Apalachin district currently has 30 SMART Boards that are in use in all four of the school buildings.

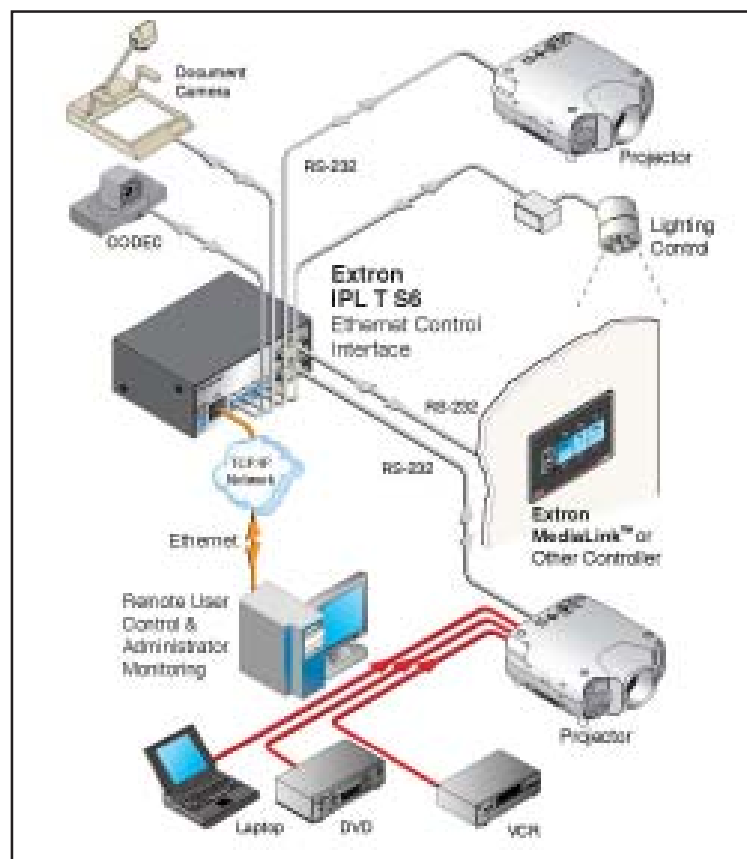
Another 10 are expected by the end of this school year, and by the fall, Farrell said, he hopes to have as many as 60 in place.

In-house maintenance would be part of the plan, too.

"The goal is to have every classroom connected, through Web access," Farrell said. "That will allow our network specialists to trouble-shoot problems remotely. We can remotely see the problem from our network operations center, and we'll be able to fix that problem.

"Network access to classroom equipment will also provide us with statistics regarding usage," he said.

"That information will help us with training in the future. We'll also be able to analyze the lives of our machines, as far as bulb use, etc. Right now, we don't have that kind of information."



The diagram, shown above, is similar to the way classroom technology throughout the OA district will be configured. At right, Keith Newman, a fifth-grade teacher at Apalachin Elementary School, demonstrates how he employs his classroom's SMART Board while working on a lesson with students.

Stephen P. Jensen photo



Joe Shambo is one teacher eagerly anticipating the advent of the district-wide smart classrooms.

"SMART Boards will enhance learning at all grade levels," said Shambo, a kindergarten teacher at OES.

"With these new technologies, our district will

"It'll be nice to have this technology within reach every day," Silvestri added. "The students will have so many more opportunities to get up close and personal with information - whether it's learning from an author study, or a quick introduction, at your fingertips, of any other imaginable subject."

continue to move forward.

"The importance of my classroom becoming a smart room is limitless," Shambo said.

"Some examples of things I could more easily incorporate into lessons are: Venn Diagrams, phonics, letter-sound work, letter-writing work, interactive writing, shared writing, shapes, number-writing activities, money lessons, as well as numerous other topics.

"To have a projector mounted on the ceiling would be an enormous step in using this technology to its fullest extent," Shambo added.

"This would allow for the students to work on the board without the distraction of blocking the projector."

Keith Newman has had a SMART Board in his AES fifth-grade classroom for several months now.

"The more people who experience using this technology, the better," he said.

"It will take some getting used to for some teachers, but there's so much training material available out there, and there's literally something for everyone with SMART Board technology."

"Technology is so important in this day and age," said Stacey Silvestri, a second-grade teacher at OES.

"Having technology at hand that is reliable will be so valuable. I've run into technology missing or not working properly several times in the midst of a lesson.

**Capital** *Continued from Page 1*

“Every five years or so every school district in the state is required to conduct a building condition survey, where an architecture and engineering firm reviews the status of the district’s buildings,” said Dr. Bill Russell, OA superintendent.

“We had a survey done, and as we reviewed it about a year ago, we recognized that there was a long list of items, especially at Owego Free Academy, Owego and Apalachin elementary schools, listed as unsatisfactory,” he said.

“In short, there were many items that needed to be refurbished, reconditioned or replaced to bring our buildings up to current standards.”

OES and AES were built in the 1960s, while OFA came on-line in 1972.

“Many of the items in the project are designed to promote greater energy efficiency. If you’ve got facilities that were built when ours were, the level of energy consciousness was quite different than it is today,” said Dr. Russell.

For example, the windows in the elementary schools are single-pane windows.

“Some homeowners have replaced those in their homes with thermal-pane windows, for energy efficiency and comfort,” he said.

“We’ll be taking care of all the windows in our elementary schools as part of this project.”

The controls for heating and air conditioning systems in OA’s elementary schools are original analog controls. In OES and AES, there’s one control for heating the buildings.

“This project will allow us to make upgrades that will control, room-by-room, the climate and comfort level for students and teachers throughout the elementary schools,” said Dr. Russell. “And there’s a whole list of other energy system upgrades that accompany this project as well.

“In the Owego Apalachin district, we’re very conscious of our energy use,” he said. “This project will make us even more capable at avoiding costs for energy and make our buildings much more energy-efficient.”

Another large piece of the capital construction project is to install lights on the OFA sports complex.

“There’s been a great deal of community interest in being able to use our sports facilities more fully,” said Dr. Russell.

“Anyone who’s visited them knows that we have one of the most beautiful sports complexes in the region, and it’s a great source of community pride.

“Very shortly after I began working as superintendent of schools here, I began meeting with a group of interested local people who were raising energy and consciousness about lighting the football stadium, as well as providing lights

ITEM	OFA	OES	AES
Pave Parking Lots	◆	◆	
Parking Lot Lighting - when parking lot repaved	◆	◆	
Catch Basins & Dry Well - when parking lot repaved	◆		
Athletic Field Lighting - stadium, tennis courts, soccer field	◆		
Sidewalks - OFA to OES, others as necessary; new curbs as needed	◆		
Playground Equipment		◆	
Tennis Courts - repair/resurface	◆		
Cracks in floor - Lobby, Corridor to Pool, Cafeteria	◆		
Exterior Door Frames and Hardware - inspect and replace as needed	◆		
Replace Single Pane Windows		◆	◆
Emergency Windows in 99 addition; inspect and replace other windows as needed	◆		
Replace window shades		◆	◆
Single Ply Roof, including skylights, insulation, and roof drains	◆		
Replace Soffits		◆	
Expansion Joints - re-caulk windows, doors, expansion joints when replacing soffits	◆	◆	
Skylights		◆	
Replace movable partitions in English wing classrooms	◆		
Replace movable partitions with masonry walls - kindergarten rooms			◆
Renovate remaining 6 public toilet rooms	◆		
Boy's Locker Room - replace lockers	◆		
Boy's Teamroom - replace lockers	◆		
Renovate Boys & Girls Locker Rooms & Team Rooms (complete)	◆		
Classroom door locksets	◆		
Switch Gear for Electrical Distribution Panel - end of expected useful life	◆	◆	◆
Emergency Generator and Automatic Transfer Switch - end of expected useful life	◆	◆	◆
Clock/Bell System		◆	
Relocate Grease Trap outside of Kitchen		◆	
Upgrade existing heating plant and hot water systems (shut-off valves; domestic hot water; hot water heaters; reline storage tank; boiler; summer hot water heater)			◆
Heat exchanger to transfer heated co-gen water to geo-thermal water loop	◆		
Replace School Office HVAC units - include nurse's office		◆	
Corridor Ventilation System		◆	◆
Upgrade HVAC throughout building (convectors, unit heaters, fintubes, fan coils, terminal units)		◆	
Replace HVAC rooftop units (4)	◆		
Supply combustion air to boiler room (up to code)		◆	
HVAC Control System		◆	◆
Fire Alarm System		◆	
Security and Lighting upgrades			◆
Handicapped Accessible Toilet Rooms		◆	◆
Accessible Interior Door Hardware - as needed		◆	
Improve handicap accessibility - new elevator	◆		
Casework and Cabinetry - sink cabinets			◆
Change chalkboards to whiteboards		◆	◆



*Stephen P. Jensen photo*  
New windows and digital temperature controls in the elementary schools will make scenes like this one, in Erica Tabbert's art room at Owego Elementary School, more energy-efficient and comfortable.

for the tennis courts.

“With this project, we’ll also be able to light the soccer pitch as well,” Dr. Russell said. “All these additions will make OFA an even more attractive location for sectional and state-

level competitions in the future.”

Dr. Russell emphasized that all this work will be performed using no additional tax dollars.

“One of our fundamental

goals was to be able to address as many of our building needs as possible and to put them into this project,” he said. “We want to be able to use as much state aid as possible.

“There’s special state funding available now known as EXCEL aid,” Dr. Russell said. “We’re entitled to about \$722,000 of that toward our local share, and that money generates a great deal of state building aid. We get about 83 cents for every dollar we spend on construction projects in state build aid coming into the district.

“Also, because of voter support last May (2007), we established a capital reserve fund where we have money set aside to do projects like this,” Dr. Russell said.

“So the combination of the EXCEL aid, the building aid from the state and some amount of our capital reserve means we will be able to do this entire project without raising taxes, which is a fundamental goal we have had and one I’m proud to say we’ll be able to accomplish.”

Because there’s a great backlog of projects in the queue awaiting approval at the state level, the OA district must take a number of steps before such a

large project may move forward.

“First, we need voter approval for the project,” Dr. Russell said. “On March 25 we’ll put this proposition on the ballot and invite voters to come and let us know what they think of our proposal.”

With that approval, OA would then enter a phase of design work with its architects and engineers, who would follow that step by submitting those designs to the state.

“There are 700-plus districts in New York state, and each one is working on some sort of capital project,” said Dr. Russell.

“They’re estimating about six months for the state to conclude its review. So our target is to begin this work is the construction season of 2009.”

“It’s a huge undertaking,” the superintendent said, “but it’s a necessary one. Much of the work included in this capital project will renovate and update our district’s infrastructure for years to come.

“We believe voters and people in the community expect us to keep the facilities they’ve entrusted to our care in top-notch condition. That’s what this project is all about.”