

# Middle school project on ambitious schedule

The Sweet Home community approved a \$23.95 million bond issue in 2005, primarily for the purpose of renovating Sweet Home Middle School. Plans for the project were finalized last spring, and construction began in May. The project has a very ambitious 18-month completion schedule. I am proud to report that almost six months into the project, everything is on time and on budget. We were able to award all of the construction bids at or below our original estimates, a major accomplishment given the impact of Hurricane Katrina on construction costs.

There was a large amount of work completed over the summer. All of the classrooms on the second floor of the middle school were renovated. Each room received new flooring, lighting, ceilings, white boards and tack boards. The dividing doors were replaced in those classrooms that were so equipped. New clocks were installed in the classrooms, and the public address system speakers were replaced. Throughout the course of this school year, renovation will continue on second floor bathrooms and the library, which will

be expanded to almost double its existing size.

Site work in the front of the middle school was also finished over the summer. The existing parking lot was expanded and a new bus lane was added for safety purposes. The new bus lane is divided from the parking area by a concrete divider that physically separates the pickup and drop-off points.

The project specifies a number of additions to the existing building. Two of the additions were completed prior to the beginning of this school year, the new fitness center and two additional classrooms in the rear of the building that eventually will be used for health classes. Significant work was also completed on the new auditorium and suite of music classrooms. The auditorium will be one of the last parts of the project to be completed, but the new music classrooms will be finished in March 2007.

Project plans call for eight additional classrooms

to be constructed in the old courtyard space of the middle school. New rooms on the east side of the building will be completed this December, and new rooms on the west side of the building will be finished in September 2007. Another new addition is a large group instruction space/cafeteria annex that will be completed in December 2006. The existing library will be moved to that space upon completion, allowing the full renovation of the second-floor library to begin.

All nine of the existing middle school science classrooms will be expanded and renovated during the course of this school year and in the summer of 2007.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Sweet Home community for supporting the middle school renovation project. A year from now the project will be substantially complete, and the learning environment for our students will be greatly enhanced.



**GEOFFREY M. HICKS**  
Superintendent  
Sweet Home  
Schools



## Heard

call: 632-0390

*(Editor's note: Call The Bee at 632-0390 and record a one-minute comment on our Bee Heard line. It gives readers an opportunity to comment quickly and candidly on items of local or regional interest. Callers do not have to identify themselves and no callers' names will be used. In the interest of fairness and good taste, The Bee will not publish derogatory or insulting comments. All comments are by our readers and are subject to editing.)*

✓ I had to laugh when I heard Satish Mohan on the radio being interviewed about how he paid for

his own furniture in town hall. Well, nobody in town hall is getting furniture bought for them in this day and age.

✓ Why would Supervisor Mohan want to cut the Amherst bike patrol for next year's budget? The recent tragedy in Clarence, as well as the rape and murder of Linda Yalem and three other victims in the '90s on the Amherst Bike Path, should not warrant this action. Bike patrol was instituted for the sole purpose of providing safety on the bike path, which has itself been proven invaluable. Do residents know that Supervisor Mohan did not appear

at the 9/11 Memorial service on Main Street to acknowledge the police, firemen and first responders' duties and appreciation? Instead, Dr. Mohan is planning to cut protective services.

✓ Regarding to the expansion of Daemen College: They have asked the town for a variance in their contractor's plans not to provide parking for over 150 cars. Can anyone tell me why Getzville Road, Meadowstream Drive, Elmhurst and Woodbury must be turned into a student parking lot? What is wrong with all the green space in front of Main Street for Daemen College to utilize?

✓ In response to the comment in the October 11 issue that kids need to learn to have fun without sex, drugs and alcohol, we had a

program in this town to address just those needs; it was called D.A.R.E. Thanks to Supervisor Mohan, that program was cut, and we will no longer be addressing those needs with our children.

✓ I read with interest in this column the editor's note that all firefighters in Amherst are volunteers and none receive a salary. It is of interest to note that they will, for each year served, receive a pension paid for by taxpayers of \$20 per year to accumulate for the years served. If a volunteer has 30 years of service and started at age 25, s/he would then at age 55 receive a total of \$660 per month pension, so even though they are volunteers, they are paid for their service.

✓ I agree with the caller about

the drinking fest at Williamsville South Homecoming weekend. It's happening at the all the schools. It's absolutely ridiculous, especially for those parents who allow parties at their homes. Although they do not provide alcohol, they turn the other way when alcohol is brought into the house. They are jeopardizing my children's lives as well as yours, and this has got to be stopped. The drinking age is 21 for a reason!

✓ I find it amazing, after all the so-called reports of Tom Reynolds in the media, that none of the Washington newspapers had one item about it! Talk about making a non-story into a story! I guess the media had a slow news day, but it's too bad people can't think for themselves.



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