

Vermillion High School Renovation

BY SARAH WETZEL
For the Plain Talk

Mike Hubbard of Johnson Controls appeared before the Vermillion School Board at Monday's meeting to give an update on the progress of the Vermillion High School renovation project.

According to Hubbard, a large portion of the high school has been blocked off for construction personnel only.

Ceilings have come down and work has begun in the classrooms.

"We started in April in the boiler room and the tunnels," Hubbard said. "Demolition is by far our biggest challenge at this point. When the ceiling came out, 50 years of wiring came down with it. Classrooms were a lot more forgiving. Pretty clean, pretty easy to work with."

Some piping issues came up leading to a modification in the plan where some piping will go outside on the wall next to the gym covered with PVC and insulation according to Hubbard.

Removal of the tile in the mens' and womens' restrooms has also taken place as part of the demolition process.

The tile in the womens' restroom reportedly took about three times as long as the mens' according to Hubbard causing a slight delay.

Hubbard also reported the biology lab cleaned out. "All the abatement is out," he said. "Casement work will be here I believe in early July so we'll get that



COURTESY PHOTO

The High School renovation project is well underway with only a few setbacks, demolition being the most challenging aspect of the project according to Johnson Controls Representative Mike Hubbard.

put back together."

The chemistry lab has also been cleaned out with plumbers coming in to work on it. The back wall has also been removed adding about eight feet to the classroom.

Most of the tasks on the remodel agenda are on schedule, however there are a few delays according to Hubbard.

"We were planning on being completely done in the tunnels but we still have a little domestic water piping we need to pull out of there," he said. "The HVAC system electrical power we wanted to get started this week but we're trying to work through

the demolition to get those guys out of the way so we can start the power upgrade. We're also going to have to start putting the ceiling in in areas where we don't have equipment going over it to get the ceiling guys started on it. That was all going to start last week."

The auditorium lighting upgrade has also hit a snag.

"We wanted to get that done before school was out," Hubbard said. "We had a delay with the shipment of material so we couldn't get that done and now we have other priorities to try and get you back into the classrooms. This we don't really have a revised date for.

Everything else is on track. It is going well."

Not all changes to the schedule are delays. The boiler plant, for example was pushed up to start working October 1.

Meanwhile the work rolls forward.

Four classrooms were painted last weekend and the intention is to keep pushing through that as the high school employees work to remove items from the walls of the remaining classrooms.

Though a few changes have come up, Hubbard reported that there are no cost overruns for the project so far.

Dairy Month Is Every Month For Cheesemaker At Redhead Creamery

BY KATIE CLAUSEN
For the Plain Talk

For Alise Sjostrom, there is no business like the dairy business.

Sjostrom is running Redhead Creamery in Brooten, Minnesota, in conjunction with its partnership dairy, while raising a family and spreading the word on why dairy is important. Sjostrom isn't just milking cows, she's making artisan cheeses.

"The idea of doing this actually started before I even went to college," Sjostrom said. "I went on a 4-H trip my senior year of high school and we toured an operation called Crave Brothers and I felt it was something I wanted to do."

Crave Brothers was an on farm cheese making plant, and Sjostrom felt she could find her niche doing something similar. Growing up on her parents dairy farm gave her experience with the industry previous to starting up her own creamery with her husband Lucas and parents. The path to making and selling her own cheese is lined with distinctive experiences and learning ventures. Sjostrom and her development in the artisan cheese market are unique to the Midwest and the Redhead Creamery is one of the closer cheese makers to the Vermillion area.

"We moved to Vermont six years ago for my husband Lucas' job with the Holstein Association, and by chance there was a cheese company looking for someone to work in their cheese shop," Sjostrom said. "Luckily I got the job, I was the only person with dairy experience that had worked there."

Vermont helped further Sjostrom's knowledge about dairy end products and cheese production. Sjostrom graduated from the University of Minnesota, and worked in grocery brokering prior to moving to Vermont.

"I studied food marketing and took a lot of dairy science classes," Sjostrom said. "And then I did take cheese classes at the Vermont Institute of Artisan Cheese."

After starting a family, Sjostrom knew it was time to come home and put her plan into action. She was lucky to land a job working for that same creamery she toured in high school, gathering information along the way.

"Crave Brothers was a family run farmstead operation that made mozzarella," Sjostrom said. "The Vermont store made aged cheddar, so it was the best of both worlds of learning."

Tours at the Redhead Creamery give Sjostrom the opportunity to interact one on one with the customer. "We want to make sure people realize that we are living, breathing, and eating all of this and we do treat our animals with care," Sjostrom said. "If we didn't, then we wouldn't succeed either. We do care about our animals and our land and that's not just a publicity statement. We like to give tours because

Sjostrom toured cheese making facilities in over six states in the U.S. and even toured some facilities in Switzerland to fully grasp what she needed to make her dream come true and what designs worked best for her model. Her husband Lucas is also heavily involved in agriculture and has traveled internationally to gain knowledge on farm-to-table products.

Start-up was not easy. There were facilities to build and supplies to buy, but now the Redhead Creamery is up and running, allowing Sjostrom to fulfill her dream and, most importantly, supply a quality product.

"We've been making cheese steady for seven or eight months now," Sjostrom said. "I just hired my first full-time employee. She went to South Dakota and studied dairy manufacturing."

Sjostrom's produce is the tangible form of her hard work and dedication. Along with break downs and operational issues there are struggles associated with running the on-farm business.

"The biggest challenge is time, and also for me and Lucas, trying to raise a family at the same time," Sjostrom said. "You also can't ignore that there is always the financial burden of starting your own business. You have to keep your cash flow moving. For us we are aging cheese so we were making it but not selling it."

All of that hard work pays off for Sjostrom, whose quality product reflects how rewarding it can be to supply people with good food.

"The greatest reward is probably using your own milk in creating a product at the end of the day," Sjostrom said. "I personally enjoy physical work and that's a big reason why I wanted to be a cheese maker. Also, working with my family is really great."

The dairy industry has become slightly mysterious as more people move away from their agricultural roots. Redhead Creamery encourages people to join them for tours and experience the farmstead first hand to help them better understand how important the dairy industry, and dairy families, are to agriculture.

"You can diversify milk in so many ways," Sjostrom said. "You can make cheese, yogurt, or other products that are actually for us as the end user."

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Last Chance For Landowners To Sign Up For TLC Equipment Effort

Private landowners in the Ash Creek, Blind Creek, Long Creek and Turkey Ridge Creek watersheds in Clay, Lincoln, Turner and Union Counties respectively, who are interested in helping to reduce flooding on the lower Vermillion

River, have until June 19, to sign up for the TLC EQIP Effort. This TLC Project initiated by the Turner-Lincoln-Clay organization, in conjunction with the NRCS, uses the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to improve water retention, infiltration and reduce flooding. Additional benefits include reduced

soil erosion, improved water quality and enriched soil health.

Postcards were previously mailed to known landowners in this area. However, if you own land in the above watersheds but were not notified, give this opportunity consideration.

To learn more, plan to attend the TLC-EQIP Work-

shop at the SDSU Beresford Research Farm on Wednesday afternoon, June 10th, 2015, from 1:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m., sponsored by the USDA NRCS and Turner-Lincoln-Clay organization. NRCS and its partners provide funding sources, in addition to conservation planners, who offer technical assistance at no cost to help you develop and implement your plan.

Some of the voluntary conservation practices that landowners may incorporate into their farming operations to enhance soil health and conserve water include: cover crops, crop rotation, residue and tillage management, introduction of ponds, riparian herbaceous buffers and filter strips.

Those landowners or operators within the priority area are eligible to apply.

For more information about this effort contact your local USDA Service Center.

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