



Tomorrow's News Today

News From the Tomorrow River School District

From Dennis Raabe, District Administrator –

March, 2017

Apparently my current vehicle, a Chevy Uplander with over 200,000 miles on it, has seen its better days. This is my distinct impression after several mechanics stated that it was not safe to actually drive on the highway, or at all. Something about bearings and axles and a lot of other words they throw about, I'm sure just to confuse those who are not mechanically inclined. Hearing such, I did what any rationale fiscal conservative would do, I found a mechanic who was more optimistic. Just the same, there are admittedly some issues which I can no longer ignore. For example the heat works great except in the winter months. My "check engine" light has been on so long that now the indicator on by dashboard says, "too late to check engine". Either I have a significant oil leak or all the fracking in North Dakota is somehow draining my oil reservoir on a regular basis. All in all and with great regret, I have probably ignored the issues related to my aging vehicle too long and sooner than later I will need to address the issue of purchasing a new vehicle. In all honesty, I have probably waited too long.

My vehicle dilemma is not unlike the situation our District and community faces regarding our athletic sports complex. Our track is in such rough shape we are not allowed to hold track events on it. Funny yes, but unfortunately true. We have more activities for students than we have fields to accommodate them. Our soccer team has to travel to Stevens Point for practices and games. By the end of the season, our football field is so maligned that to hold additional games upon it is questionable, if not unsuitable. The available bleachers for games are limited and pretty unsuitable for our visitors. These are some, but certainly not all the issues which reflect the need to renovate our sports complex.

As some of you may recall, there was a referendum a few years back in which upgrades to our sports complex was the focal point. The referendum failed and not a great deal of District resources has been allocated to the complex since then. We are at a point where we need to utilize resources to address our deficiencies related to this complex. The question is do we address the project in whole now or utilize limited funds as band aides to get by.

This past month the School Board of the Tomorrow River School District approved of an updated plan to address the deficiencies of our current sports complex. Current projections for making the planned improvements are estimated in the range of three to four million dollars. The Board recognizes that the District cannot responsibly ask the tax payers to take on the cost of this project in isolation until the current debt related to recent building projects has dropped off, which is in excess of ten years. There are those in the District and the community who believe we can accelerate the development plans for this project via a combination of private and District funds.

Therefore, the District has approved for a group of community and District representatives to ascertain if there are some major donors in the community or surrounding communities who may be interested in supporting this project. If we can identify such donors, then the District may be in a position to utilize a combination of private donors, District budget, and referendum to move this project forward. If such donors cannot be identified, then the District will incorporate existing funds to address what it can of the already significant needs and wait until our debt load is reduced before addressing the issue in earnest.

I want to make sure the community is aware of the current status of our sports complex, that our School Board and community have a development plan to address it, and that we are seeking private entities who would partner with the District to address these issues sooner rather than later. Should there be any community member who would like more information regarding this initiative, simply give me a call. For any individual or corporation that would like a more detailed sharing of our plans and needs, we would be more than enthusiastic to meet with you. Again, simply give me a call. I will keep the community posted as to developments in this area.