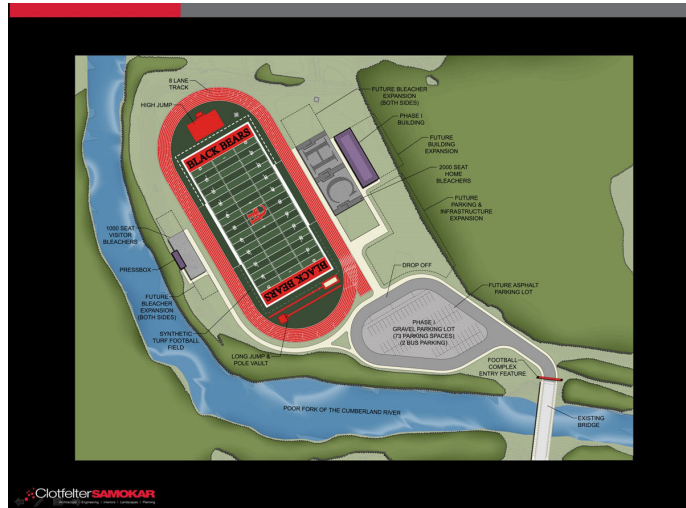


NEW FOOTBALL/TRACK COMPLEX REVELED IN CEREMONY

Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation grant to allow District to Begin Construction on Coal Miners Memorial Stadium

The Harlan County School District has received a \$1million contribution from the Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation to aid in the construction of a football field and track facility to be called Coal Miners Memorial Stadium.



“Today, with the noble generosity put forth by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gilliam and the Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation, it is with great excitement that I announce Harlan County Public Schools can proceed with Phase One of the Harlan County High School football field and track facility.,” said Superintendent Tim Saylor, addressing hundreds of student athletes and HCHS supporters.

Throughout the program there were standing ovations on the announcement of the donation, the name of the facility, and the unveiling of the schematic designs of the complex.

“This facility will carry a name to honor the history and traditions of our county which have and continue to be dependent upon the Coal Industry,” said Saylor. “Our stadium will carry a name complimentary to the many coal miners and the industry that has been the lifeblood of our county throughout the past century. Coal is our future and this sports facility will be a lasting tribute utilized by children, grandchildren and great grandchildren of those mining coal today.”

Saylor noted that while there are smaller projects that would have been worthy of funding, Harlan County High School presented a giving opportunity that would benefit the greatest number of families in the county for years to come.

“I think everyone in this county will agree that the name of our new facility shall be called the Coal Miners Memorial Stadium. It is my goal to have a coal miner statue at the main entrance to the complex to honor all past, present and future coal miners. “

The football field will be named after Saylor’s father, the late Needham Saylor, a longtime coach, teacher, principal and superintendent of Harlan County Schools.

“Mr. and Mrs. Gilliam have significantly impacted the School District’s ability to move forward with construction. As you will recall, the Board of Education utilized its financial resources to construct one of the finest high schools in this state. Our athletic

facilities had to be placed on hold as construction costs soared,” said Saylor. “To be perfectly honest, without this significant donation from the Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation our field of dreams would be only that – a dream. “

Saylor told the audience that he cannot recall a donation of this magnitude being made to Harlan County Schools. “I am deeply humbled as this facility has been a personal goal of mine since the process began 10 years ago. And, as a result of Mr. and Mrs. Gilliam’s commitment to the students of our county and their families, the donation will allow us to move forward immediately with construction.”

At the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday night, the board members gave approval to proceed with the filing of the BG-1 for construction. If everything goes well, it is possible some games will be played in this facility next season.

To hit some of the highlights, the stadium will include an 8 lane synthetic track, high jump facility, long jump and pole vault area, synthetic turf football field, and much more. Phase One will include the construction of a 2,000 home seating section, a 1,000 visitor seating section and a press box. The additional phases will include bleacher expansion on both sides of the field, expansion of the locker room and training facility, and many other features.

“When this is completed, it will be the best high school facility in the state of Kentucky. Each athlete, parent and community member will be proud of this facility.” said Saylor.

“I think it is imperative that you realize that this will be the first time in the history of Harlan County Public Schools that we have a facility for track and field,” he said. “Our students over the years have trained running alongside our roadways and on parking lots, giving their all as they dodged vehicles. This facility will allow us to host regional meets for track and field. “

“Harlan County is a special place because of its people. We are proud to be Harlan Countians and we are proud of our Heritage that is heavily dependent upon coal,” said Saylor.

“Again, I thank Mr. and Mrs. Gilliam, the Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation and Mr. Kegan for their tremendous support and for this contribution which will allow our athletes to remain on campus for their athletic events.

Football Coach Tom Larkey, who will led his Black Bears into the regional 5A championship game against Pulaski County tonight, said, “When I took this job as football coach there were two things I knew. I knew there would be great support for football and we didn’t have a football field.”

“I think it’s good for any team in any sport to have a place that they can call home. I really believe it’s a big part of the psychology of football to have your own house to play in,” he said.

“For the past three years we have become accustomed to practicing and playing on facilities that require a bus ride every day,” said Larkey. “I can’t think of one day that the football team has had the opportunity to stay at school and do any kind of training,”

“I have always had faith, and have never questioned that we would have a football field. I trusted Mr. Saylor and the county board that this would become a reality. We go to class here. We get our education here, and in the near future we are going to have winning football teams here.”