

Foundation donates \$1M for field  
by JOHN MIDDLETON, Harlan Daily Enterprise



(JASON EDWARDS/Daily Enterprise - The check presentation was made in front of students, county school alumni and the media. Those pictured, from left, include Ross Kegan, Tom Larkey, Bob Howard, Tim Saylor, Richard Gilliam and Myra Mosley.)

The students at Harlan County High School already enjoy one of the finest educational

facilities in the state, and thanks in large part to a sizable donation from the Richard and Leslie Gilliam Foundation, the athletes will have access to first-class football and track facility as well.

Harlan County School District Superintendent Tim Saylor announced Friday that the Gilliam Foundation has made a \$1 million donation that will allow work to begin on Phase I of the football and track complex at Coal Miners Memorial Stadium.

“We feel very fortunate to make this sort of gift to Harlan County. We looked for an opportunity to help as many students as possible, and we felt like this project would allow us to do that,” said Richard Gilliam. “There is a great business environment here and great workers, and we are grateful for our partnership with the people of Harlan County.”

The stadium will include an eight-lane track, high jump facility, long jump and pole vault area and a synthetic-turf football field among other items. The football field will be named in honor of Needham Saylor, a long-time coach, teacher, principal and superintendent in the Harlan County school system.

“Athletics are so important to a school. Of course, academics are first, and that’s where I and the board put our emphasis to get this high school constructed, so we could give a great education to our kids. But, we need our athletic fields too, and now we are going to get it finished up,” Saylor said.

Phase I will include the construction of a 2,000-seat home section, a 1,000-seat 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 as well as other features.

“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,” said Harlan County coach Tom Larkey. “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.”

The first phase of the complex will cost approximately \$3 million with bonding funds being used to pay for the remaining amount.

Officials are hopeful that play will begin at Coal Miners Memorial Stadium next season.

“For the past three years, we have become accustomed to practicing and playing on facilities that require a bus ride every day. 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,” Larkey said. “I have always had faith, and have never questioned that we would have a football field. I trusted him 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.”

Construction has already started on the school’s spring sports fields and those projects are expected to be completed during the spring.