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Construction of Flat Rock school in Starr rocking along

New school going up faster than expected, according to officials

By Charmaine Smith-Miles (Contact)
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Photo by Nathan Gray

Workers for Melloul-Blamey construction company continue work recently on what will be Flat Rock Elementary School in Starr.



Photo by Nathan Gray

A Melloul-Blamey construction company employee cuts a cinder block Wednesday while working on what will be the new Flat Rock Elementary School in Starr.

STARR — The steel beams are up. There are windows to look through and halls to look down. And the sky already is being closed out overhead by a metal tin roof.

Construction of Flat Rock Elementary School in Starr is moving right along — enough ahead of schedule that the building will be out of the elements before the winter season really sets in, Anderson School District 3 Superintendent Hugh Smith said.

"It's going fast because of the weather," Mr. Smith said. "We haven't had any rain to slow us down."

Crews began working on the 88,000-square-foot school in February.

Now, 10 months later, the entrance to the school is recognizable, and large windows are installed in the cafeteria, the gym and the media center are standing. On Tuesday, crews worked on the hallways that will fan out from the front of the school. Most of the school's 31 classrooms will be on the hallways.

Crews are to finish the campus by mid-June 2008 so that it can open for its first students in fall of that same year, Mr. Smith.

School officials decided the new school was necessary as portables continued to pop up at Starr and Iva elementary schools to accommodate the increasing number of students in the district.

"We added on to both schools five years ago, and they have already passed capacity," Mr. Smith said.

There are four portable classrooms standing at Iva Elementary School and eight in use at Starr Elementary School. Officials expect 450 students to attend Flat Rock Elementary School in its first year. Roughly 300 of those will come from Starr Elementary and roughly 150 from Iva Elementary, Mr. Smith said.

As crews work to complete the school's roof by Christmas, Mr. Smith said he and district officials are making the decision on whether to use a septic system at the school or to work with the county to install a \$1.1 million sewer line in the area.

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He said the district had set aside \$400,000 to install a septic system. For a bit, officials discussed having a sewer line installed instead to maybe open up a small area around the school for development. But in the end, Mr. Smith said, the district will likely opt to install the septic system, because neither the school nor the county can pay the additional \$700,000 that would be needed to install a sewer line instead of a septic system at the school.

"It doesn't make sense for the county to use \$700,000 to lay a sewer line that serves only one entity," Anderson County Administrator Joey Preston said.

Mr. Smith said if the school system paid for the sewer line, money that they would normally use for operational costs, such as teachers' salaries, would go toward the project.

"The idea of adding sewer line in this community is great, but the bottom line figure is that we can do a septic tank cheaper," Mr. Smith said.

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