

Reimagining Rural Right Here

Visitors and residents of Miner County have been watching and waiting. It's about to start – construction of the Maroney Rural Learning Center, that is.

“We’ve put together the financial package that enabled us to give the green light to the contractors. They’ve been waiting for this, too,” said Randy Parry, Rural Learning Center President.

The Center has several components including 24 lodging units, a gathering place, a green roof garden and a fitness center on the second floor with a restaurant and learning corridor on the

first floor. The first floor will also be home to the conference training center. The \$6.4 million project will be built to LEED platinum certification standards, the highest “green” standards in today’s building construction methods and materials. Materials salvaged from the former American Legion building will be incorporated throughout the building.

Initially the conference training center will host training for wind turbine technicians. The space will also be available for community-based, regional and family gatherings.

Henry Carlson, construction managers, met in Howard this past week to make preliminary plans. They will be looking to local businesses for on-site purchasing, meals for crews, and local lodging. Temporary workers will be needed to assist with the on-site work. Details can be found on Henry Carlson’s website at www.henrycarlson.com.



Construction Meeting with Henry Carlson on 6/21/10.



Artist rendition of what the Phase II building might look like across the street from the Rural Learning Center.

Miner County Bank has agreed to serve as the lead bank for the project – financing includes a 90% USDA guaranteed loan. Dawson Construction will be doing the site dirt work with Thompson Electric (managed by Bryan Spader) doing the electrical contract work. Other partners and contractors on the project will be featured over the next several issues.

Mike McDowell, CEO for Heartland Consumers Power District highlighted the partnership between Heartland and Rural Learning Center recently, “Heartland and the Rural Learning Center share a vision of making green building and energy efficiency the norm and have both proven the outcome is worth the

investment. The Rural Learning Center is a product of determined, local leadership and because of our shared vision, the Heartland Board of Directors unanimously voted to approve this loan.

“Heartland looks forward to continuing our long-time partnership with the Rural Learning Center. We are proving that small communities and small utilities can work together to make cutting edge technologies work in rural America.”

Actual construction will begin in July and is anticipated to be completed within 12-14 months.