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Mansfield stadium slated to be completed in June

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MANSFIELD -- The project along Broad Street and Texas 360 has started to take shape.

The Mansfield school district's \$32.8 million stadium and natatorium is on target to be completed by June. The 11,000-seat stadium will include a giant video screen, reserved seating, large handicapped-accessible areas and state-of-the-art technology for athletic use and teaching needs.

School officials wanted to get the most from the projects and have been working with teachers to see how classroom learning can be incorporated, said John Perdue, director of facilities.

Swim classes can be held at the natatorium, and the stadium will also be used as a learning tool. Jerry Cantu, who teaches media-technology courses, has been working with designers to make sure equipment his classes use will be included so that his students can have real-life broadcasting experience.

Cantu said the current R.L. Anderson Stadium does not have room to accommodate his classes' needs. His students have worked to broadcast volleyball and basketball games, which are aired on the district's local-access television channel, he said.

"This will give us additional programming, and the students are totally responsible," he said. "They do all the camerawork, switching, play-by-play and commentary. It's real experience, and there's no do-overs on this. It's live."

Michael Crain, a project superintendent working on the stadium, said a lot of details were considered when working out the sight lines. The seating is curved so a play at the home team's 5-yard line can be seen clearly by someone sitting at the visiting team's 10-yard line.

"There really is not a bad seat in the place," he said. "They really tried to think everything through."

Some residents from the subdivision next door have called school officials concerned about noise from late-night games. Courtney Megli, who has lived in Holland Estates for three years, said a few of her neighbors have moved, partly because of the stadium. But Megli said she'd rather have a school-related development than something attracting more traffic and noise.

"It's better than a Super Wal-Mart," she said.

Perdue said the district is doing its best to be a good neighbor. A bowl-shaped design will help enclose noise within the stadium, and the lights will also be neighborhood-friendly, he said.

R. L. Anderson Stadium, at 1015 E. Broad St., will continue to be used for football, soccer and other sports at the district's three -- soon to be four -- high schools.

Officials hope to one day host a marching-band competition and maybe a festival or two at the stadium.

"The bands are really going to enjoy this stadium," Perdue said. "It's very nice with a Jumbotron to watch themselves on. Not many stadiums have that."

IN THE KNOW

Mansfield ISD Stadium

Capacity of 11,000

Two full-sized, home-side locker rooms that can be subdivided

Two-level press box with community room

Natatorium

Capacity of 862

50-meter competition pool

1- and 3-meter springboards

900-square-foot weight room

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