

Team Effort

KC thanks big donors, volunteers who've helped athletic complex project

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Members of the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority stand with KCS D Board President Jack Peters. They are, from left, front, Max Persun, Ernie Peterson, Peters and Bill Kellander, and in back, John Rich, James Maguire, Jay Alexander, Linda Leonard, Jeff Burnham and Gayle Love.

LINDSAY DAVIS/THE EXPRESS

LOCK HAVEN - Keystone Central School District officials took the time last night to recognize individuals and organizations that are part of the "team effort" behind the physical education-athletic complex under construction at Central Mountain High School.

The school district invited those who had donated time or financial resources - or both - to an appreciation dinner at Durrwachter Alumni Center at Lock Haven University as a way of saying, "Thank you." The district plans more events to honor those who have contributed to the project.

"This has been a team effort. That's the way you get things done in sports and that's the way you get things done in life," said KCS D board President Jack Peters.

The Most Valuable Player of the evening was the Clinton County Solid Waste Authority, having made the single largest donation to the project. The authority has given at least \$385,000 in site preparation services. Authority members estimate those same services would have cost roughly \$500,000 if it had put the task out to bid at prevailing wages.

"I cannot emphasize enough how much we appreciate what the Solid Waste Authority did to help us. Otherwise, we might not have been able to do this project," said Peters.

He and Dr. John Dinunzio, interim superintendent, presented landfill manager Jay Alexander and Max Persun, who supervised the site work, with six commemorative gold coins - one for each of the landfill employees involved.

The coins were designed and made by students in Central Mountain High School's precision machine class. They feature a football helmet with the high school's initials - CMHS - engraved upon it. Also engraved on the coin is a hard hat with the solid waste authority's initials, CCSWA.

Those symbols and initials are super-imposed over a football field with the words, "2008-2009 Stadium Project," inscribed around the edge of the front face of the coin. The back of each coin is personalized with the employee's name.

"This wasn't, to my knowledge, any of our doing ... this was our students' idea," Peters said.

Alexander and Persun received coins, along with four other landfill employees - Greg Klotz, Chase Weise, John Welsh and Judd Welshans.

"These (coins) are very nice. It was mighty kind of them," Alexander said.

Though no representatives attended the dinner, the Carl Kephart family and Susquehanna Transit Co. of Avis were recognized for their support. Company President Carl Kephart Jr. and his son, Vice President Cam Kephart,

renewed the family's commitment to the district with a \$200,000 donation just two months ago. The company has provided bus transportation to the district for nearly 60 years.

Also recognized were members of the ad-hoc committee who have been working for several years, first on creating a feasible design for the complex and then finding nearly \$1 million- in addition to \$1.25 million from the sale of Painter Stadium to the City of Lock Haven and a matching \$1.25 million state Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program grant- to pay for it.

"We've had an ad-hoc committee of roughly 12 to 15 people, and by and large, most of them didn't have a dog in the show, so to speak. They were just so determined," Peters said.

"When Keystone Central (School Board) said, 'We do not have the money and we do not want to raise taxes to do this,' you people had the brass to say, 'We're going to do it.' And we have been so proud, at least I am, as a board member, that you people wanted to take on this commitment and came forward. This is something that Keystone Central needed desperately. I am so proud to be here tonight to say thank you," said board member Jeff Snyder.

Representatives of the Coach Don Malinak Stadium Fund and the Keystone Central Foundation were also there. The Malinak group has raised more than \$60,000 in donations, mainly from former Lock Haven High School football players, toward a goal of \$100,000 and naming rights for the football and soccer stadium at the complex. The Keystone Central Foundation is accepting donations to the project on behalf of the ad-hoc committee.

"We've talked many times in board meetings about getting the community involved in education and in the school system. You people just went beyond what anyone could've ever expected," Snyder said.

He took a moment to recognize Peters' contribution to the project, as well, which received another round of applause.

"Jack talks about being a team, and there's no 'I' in team. But I want to say something while he's standing right here. If it had not been for Jack and the amount of dedication and time he put into not only this project, but everything else this man does for Keystone Central, we wouldn't be here tonight to celebrate and we would not be where we are today," he said.

District officials also thanked:

- Members of the Mike and Paula Packer family, who have been working to raise \$100,000 in exchange for naming rights for the football field.
- Students who organized fundraisers for the complex, including Clay Allen, Zach Boone and Matt Bower, who recently donated \$1,794 from a spaghetti dinner.
- Henry Sorgen, manager of Highway Equipment Co. in McElhattan, who arranged for the state agency to lend construction equipment to Wayne Township Landfill employees preparing the site.

"It really rings true that it does take a village. This dream could not have come true without the support of each and every one of you," said Central Mountain principal Karen Probst

Even amid public controversy over naming opportunities for big donors, the spirit of the evening was one of teamwork - that nothing great can be accomplished alone.

"When we put our minds together, and we have one common interest - and I think that common interest is kids - look what we can accomplish," said CMHS vice principal and member of the ad hoc committee Steve Turchetta.

Tax-deductible contributions toward the project may be made to the nonprofit Keystone Central Foundation, P.O. Box 568, Lock Haven, Pa. 17745, or by visiting the foundation's Web site at www.kcfoundation.net and printing a contribution form to mail.