

VIP FOCUS

New school grants yield positive results UDIM is helping schools “get milk”

A new school grant program unveiled by United Dairy Industry of Michigan (UDIM) is helping schools bring their milk service into the 21st century! The 2007 New Look of School Milk Equipment Grants (NLSM) provide Michigan schools with \$1,500 to \$4,000 for new milk cooling equipment when a school converts their meal line milk service to eight ounce plastic bottles in at least two flavors.

Over 100 Michigan districts responded to the Equipment Grant offer in the first two months. By the end of May, while most Michigan schools typically have not opened milk bids, 32 schools have already committed to make milk students' beverage of choice by implementing the NLSM this fall.

Since the grant announcement, school marketing specialists have made personal visits to 83 school food service directors to help assess dairy service and cooler equipment needs. Providing technical assistance to improve the quality of their milk service helps to achieve the goal of getting kids to drink more milk. This is important since dairy foods supply three of the five nutrients USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans say are too low in kids' diets: calcium, potassium and magnesium. Adopting the NLSM is an easy way for schools to start implementing their district's local wellness policy by creating healthier school environments.

In a school milk package preference test, 51

percent of schoolchildren said they would choose milk over other beverage options when the milk was presented in a plastic bottle. Two-thirds, or 67 percent, said that milk in plastic bottles “had a better flavor” and “was easier to open” than milk in paper cartons.

Thousands of Michigan students are enjoying colder milk as a result of onsite education to school food service staff on proper milk care and handling. Over 400 cold milk temperature kits have been placed in schools and, with the placement of milk barrel coolers, unrefrigerated milk service on counter tops has been discontinued in 25 locations. Nutrition information on topics such as flavored milk, the benefits of school breakfast and coordinating nutrition education between the cafeteria and classroom has also been shared.

Michigan food service directors are excited about increasing milk consumption by serving students ice-cold milk in plastic resealable containers, in multiple flavors and displayed in attractive merchandising equipment. It's the right thing to do because it's good for kids. The directors realize that by making the healthy option of milk more appealing, students will be encouraged to drink more milk, more often.

This message brought to you by United Dairy Industry of Michigan. To learn more, contact Sharon Toth at 800.241.6455, ext. 212.



UNITED DAIRY INDUSTRY OF MICHIGAN



What's in focus...

Doing business with MASB's VIPs is good business. Your Very Important Partners help bring quality professional development and urban conference scholarships to you. This publication will bring you valuable information on what matters to your district— from your VIPs.



What impact will the new consolidation bill have on Michigan schools?

Consolidating, or sharing services, is nothing new for Michigan districts. They've been working together for years to cost effectively provide the highest quality services in a number of areas, from shared purchasing programs and administrative systems, to bus maintenance and distance learning classes. House Bill 4592, however, will raise the bar for many school districts regarding consolidation. If passed by the Senate, Michigan school districts will have six months to evaluate consolidation opportunities and prepare a report detailing their findings.

School districts will be required to conduct a planning activity to identify if and how they can consolidate services in the following non-instructional areas: transportation, human resources, technology, professional development, business office, purchasing, legal services, food services, printing, shipping and receiving, among others. This is a consolidation of services, not districts; the aim is for districts to find additional ways of working together to achieve quality, cost-effective outcomes.

We recommend that districts begin with the end in mind. Identify other districts and/or ISDs to collaborate with, discuss goals for shared services, communicate with stakeholders and brainstorm with appropriate leadership to see if there's potential for shared services. It's important that the entities with whom you partner have similar policies and procedures. For example, it wouldn't make sense to discuss sharing transportation services if your school calendars weren't similar.

Once you've identified a group to work with, develop a detailed analysis of the current costs of each of these services and the parameters

surrounding them. For example, what are your district's expectations regarding technology support? Do you have someone at the building level serving as the first point of contact for questions? This is a good thing to discuss if you are considering sharing services with a district that doesn't have a similar support structure.

Hold meetings with the administration of the various areas (i.e., transportation supervisors) to identify potential areas for collaboration and to consider the biggest obstacles. Meet with the district leadership throughout to review what has been identified to date and, based on the findings for all of the non-instructional services, identify potential opportunities to share services.

Finally, it's important to develop transition and implementation plans. When would you begin sharing these services? How will you communicate this plan with staff, students and the community? How will you deal with issues that will inevitably arise? Establish an evaluation process to assess the success of the collaboration.

These reports are then submitted to your ISD, who review the reports and ultimately submit them to the Michigan Department of Education.

There's an old proverb that states, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go with others." Michigan school districts have long consolidated a variety of services successfully. This new legislation takes consolidation to the next level.

This message brought to you by Plante & Moran, PLLC. For more information regarding consolidation opportunities, please contact Judy Wright at 248.223.3304.

plante
moran

Learn more about all of MASB's VIPs at the
School Services Exhibit Show
Grand Opening, Nov. 1 @ 3:30 p.m.
Amway Grand Plaza Hotel & DeVos Center®



Farmington Public Schools community thrilled with new, redeveloped outdoor athletic facilities

On Aug. 3, 2004, Farmington Public Schools voters overwhelmingly passed a \$25 million bond to redevelop outdoor athletic facilities at three high schools and four middle schools (Farmington High School, Harrison High School, North Farmington High School, Dunckel Middle School, East Middle School, Power Middle School and Warner Middle School).

A 26-member committee of residents, parents, coaches and other district staff led the charge for this ambitious and comprehensive project that included two synthetic turf fields at each high school and redevelopment of running tracks and fields, and stadium facilities at all seven secondary schools. Data demonstrated that the increased use of outdoor facilities such as the number of girls' sports, the addition of sports such as lacrosse, competitive marching band programs and the increased number of youth programs, created the need for more field access which grass fields couldn't support.

The district selected McCarthy & Smith, Inc. to provide construction management services and URS Corporation as the architectural firm. McCarthy & Smith, URS Corporation and the district worked as a team to coordinate each phase of the process (bond phase, design phase, bid/award phase, construction phase, and occupancy/warranty phase) with the least amount of disruption to students and the community.

"We believe in the team approach from project in-

ception to completion," said Bill McCarthy, president of McCarthy & Smith, Inc. "It's vital during the planning phase to have the owner, construction manager and architect agree on the breadth of scope, cost and expectations. All of us, working together, yielded optimal project results."

Construction began in the summer of 2005 and will be completed this spring. Each high school received:

- two new synthetic turf fields
- new/refurbished stadium facilities
- new softball fields
- new baseball fields
- new athletic buildings (concession, restrooms, team rooms, softball and baseball press boxes)
- new running track and field event areas

Each middle school received:

- new natural turf fields
- new restroom facilities
- new running track and field event areas

McCarthy & Smith, Inc. has worked with Farmington Public Schools since 1988. In 1997, the district passed a \$95 million bond issue. McCarthy & Smith continued providing full construction management services to the district.

This message brought to you by McCarthy & Smith, Inc. For more information, contact Deb McCarthy, 248.427.8400.



Tornado aftermath: Greensburg Web site connects residents with each other, the nation

Friday, May 4 was a day like any other spring day for the small town of Greensburg, KS, population 1,400. The school year was winding down and students and staff were looking forward to a busy weekend. No one had any idea that tragedy was around the corner.

At 9:38 p.m. tornado sirens pierced the air with deafening foreboding. Residents had only minutes to take shelter in basements and storm shelters. The F5 tornado was 1.7 miles wide. It moved slowly—staying on the ground for 10 excruciating minutes.

When residents emerged into the darkness, all they could see was total destruction. Ninety-five percent of the town was destroyed.

Greensburg High School teacher, Marshall Ballard, lives 10 miles east in Haviland. As the English and journalism teacher, he is also responsible for the school district's Web site. "We didn't have a [crisis communication] plan," said Ballard.

However, what they did have was a Web-based content management system called SOCS that allows users with password access to post articles from any location with a computer and the Internet.

Simplified Online Communication System (SOCS) is provided by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES).

When the news reports started coming in, Ballard

tried to drive to Greensburg, but the roads were already blocked. Some Greensburg residents were bused to the Haviland High School.

"It was chaotic," explained Ballard when he entered the gym. "It was really unorganized and they [Red Cross] were trying to keep track of people on paper."

"I was starting to get worried," he continued. "It wasn't until 2:30 or 3 before I saw my first high school kid." By 3 p.m. a mandatory evacuation was ordered and more people started pouring in.

Eventually, the residents were placed in surrounding towns with family and friends. "I figured that wherever they were put, they could get access to the Internet," said Ballard.

In the early morning hours of May 5, he posted his first article entitled, "Just Pray!!!" from his home computer. It was more than a plea for help. His purpose was to post emergency contact information. At that time, it was the Haviland High School phone number. Friends and family had to call that number to locate loved ones.



Tornado, continued on next page

Tornado Aftermath

The aftermath is devastating to students, staff and the entire community. This photo shows what's left of Greensburg High School on June 19, 2006.



Tornado, continued from previous page

The superintendent, principal, guidance counselor and other staff members were all residents of Greensburg. The media began making demands on Superintendent Darin Headrick at a time when he needed to focus on his family and the needs of the school district.

Ballard became the communication life line filtering information to and from the district and posting updates on the Web site. His cell phone number was posted as the district contact number. In the first few weeks he had over 200 text messages.

Although school was cancelled for the rest of the year, events like golf tournaments and graduation still went on. Ballard continued to post articles on their Web site providing meeting places, donation updates and schedules.

Another form of communication came from the

article feedback feature on SOCS. Readers can post comments to an article, and once reviewed and approved, these comments are posted for all viewers to read. From across the nation people offered up prayers, donations and personal stories. Over 120 comments were posted. They were coming in faster than Ballard could approve them.

Ballard continues to update displaced residents by posting articles on their Web site. Earlier reports stated that portables would be set up south of town, but Superintendent Headrick decided to have the portables set up on the former school site.

“The plumbing and parking are already there,” Ballard explained. “Besides the kids are all displaced; they want to go to school in Greensburg.” School is set to begin Aug. 15. Transportation for students in surrounding towns is currently being arranged.

Ballard said one of the smartest things they did was switch from a static, html-based Web site hosted on

the schools’ servers to SOCS, a news-style, content management system Web-hosted by FES.

Although their servers did survive the massive destruction and all the students’ information was retrieved, they wouldn’t have been able to maintain a Web site without a Web-hosting service.

“With SOCS, I had access to our Web site from my house,” said Ballard. “If we had all of it on one computer at the school, we would have been up a creek.”

This message brought to you by SOCS and the Foundation for Educational Services. For more information, contact 800.850.8397 or visit <http://socs.fes.org>. The Greensburg USD 422 Web site is www.usd422.org.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://www.usd422.org/>. The page header includes the Greensburg USD 422 logo, address (401 S. Oak, Greensburg, KS 67054), and the name 'Rangers'. The date is Tuesday, May 8, 2007. The main content area features a large article titled 'IMPORTANT GHS INFORMATION!!!!!!!- updated 5/7/07'. The article text reads: 'The administration of GHS would like to send the message of hope and perseverance. In the spirit of not dropping our heads and letting this tragedy get us down, GHS would like to encourage the Ranger student athletes to continue to compete in their respective sports. We would also like to relay to seniors that we will hold a graduation ceremony. Details about graduation will be posted as soon as we get everything arranged. . . read more [E]'. Below this is a section titled 'JUST PRAY!!!' with text: 'THE AMERICAN RED CROSS HAS SET UP RELIEF STATIONS IN MULLINVILLE AND HAVILAND TO AID THOSE AFFECTED BY THE TORNADO THAT DEVASTATED GREENSBURG, KANSAS ON MAY 4, 2007. IF YOU ARE ATTEMPTING TO REACH A LOVED, PLEASE CALL HAVILAND HIGH SCHOOL AT 620-862-9890. PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR ALL OF THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES, THEIR HOMES AND . . . read more [E] 35'. To the right of this section is a box titled 'Greensburg Future Fund Established' with text: 'A fund has been set up (should be open by noon on May 8, 2007) to help with the disaster in Greensburg. After many calls and offers of help and donations for the school, we have set up a fund through South Central Community Foundation. The fund is called the Greensburg Future Fund and will allow people to donate towards the future of . . . read more'. The right sidebar contains a weather widget for Greensburg, KS (55 degrees), a calendar, a menu, a PowerSchool logo, a 'BIG WELL' logo, and a 'Literal Translation' box with buttons for Spanish, French, Korean, Chinese, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Japanese. The bottom section of the page is titled 'CURRENT HIGHLIGHTS' and lists 'DDE Staff Members' (Greensburg High School Staff) and '2006-07 Scholarship Deadlines' (GJH Staff Members). Below that is a 'MORE HEADLINES' section with categories: 'BIRTHDAYS: GHS:' (GHS Birthdays), 'HIGH SCHOOL: INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY:' (Rangers Crank Out Awards at Tech Fair, Crankin' it out, Make a Difference Day [E]), 'WEEKLY CALENDAR', 'HIGH SCHOOL: ACTIVITIES:' (Junior High Volleyball Captures Championship [E]), and 'JUNIOR HIGH: ATHLETICS:' (Junior High Volleyball Captures Championship [E]).

Greensburg Web Page
A crisis communication tool
powered by SOCS.

Five keys to successfully pass a bond

A case study: Parchment School District

The number of school bond issues in Michigan has been dropping over the last year or two. The economy has slowed in many areas of the state, and public budgets are tight. It's a challenge to successfully pass a bond issue today.

Parchment School District had never passed a bond issue on the first try prior to February 2007. "The fact that this bond passed on its first attempt by a margin of 2-to-1 says that it really couldn't have gone better," said Michael O'Connor, Parchment School District's retiring superintendent. Applying the five key elements of a community-driven approach, and working hard at it, made all the difference.

At the foundation of this effort was the district's building committee, Kingscott Associates and a construction manager. The three worked hand-in-hand to plan a campaign strategy that stressed community involvement and clear communication. Here are a few examples of how Parchment used this process.

1. Organization

Develop an overall plan for the campaign and a schedule of activities. For example, Parchment's planning committee was able to incorporate the results of an earlier community phone survey into the plan. It was very helpful in keeping the plan focused on the community's needs and concerns.

2. Involvement

To ensure community involvement, you must identify key citizens (i.e., community leaders, parents, senior citizens, students) to lead or serve on the various committees that will implement the campaign. Community leaders from diversified elements of Parchment were recruited to lead the bond campaign effort. They served on the financial committee, building-level committees and the public relations committee. These citizens were the foundation of the neighbor-to-neighbor communication plan—the campaign committee didn't rely solely on expensive materials such as mailings.

3. Information

It's important to use clear, concise and factual

information to define the needs. One of the earliest activities for Parchment was "see for yourself" tours of the school buildings. This created a first-hand awareness of the issues and a better understanding of problems, which ultimately built support for the bond. Web sites were another communication technique used by Parchment. The planning committee and the architect/construction manager team used a Web site to document their work and keep each other informed. The campaign committee created another Web site that kept the community informed of meetings and activities, answered questions, and reported results of community forums.

4. Commitment and Focus

After the community meetings and all the needs and concerns have been discussed, the campaign committee must focus on getting the bond supporters to commit and vote YES on election day. To demonstrate the strength of the campaign, Parchment's committee posted a

continually updated list of committed "yes" voters on the Web site.

5. Follow Through

About two or three weeks before the election is when most voters will make their decision. The campaign committee must concentrate support activities during this time. Parchment organized phone bank volunteers to make calls, particularly to all parents of current students, to identify the "yes" voters and remind them to vote.

These are only a few examples of Parchment's activities during their successful campaign. What's important is they used the five key elements of a proven approach and applied them with enthusiasm.

"Communication is the key, and you can never do enough of it...no matter what," said Ruth Rowe, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, Parchment School District.

This case study brought to you by Kingscott Associates, Inc. For more information contact David Martin (dwmartin@kingscott.com) or Glenn Nienhuis (gnienhuis@kingscott.com) at 269.381.4880.

Kingscott

Architecture, Engineering,
Interior Design

Community effort helps Novi Community Schools bond proposal beat the odds

In a time when finances are tight due to local layoffs and high property taxes, prospects looked grim for the bond proposals on the ballot this past May. Of the seven proposals for metro Detroit, all but one failed—Novi Community School's \$26.4 million bond for districtwide improvements passed with a 60 percent majority!

Getting information to the community is the key to a successful bond campaign.

Members of the community need to know where their hard-earned money is going before they vote, or else they'll vote "no" or not at all. Single adults, young families, empty nesters and senior citizens are affected differently by the passage of a bond for school improvements.

An effective campaign will present each group with a customized message. It will explain the educational needs of the district, how the bond addresses those needs, and how bond passage will affect them directly.

Informational meetings dubbed "bond coffees" provided a great opportunity for Novi Community Schools to present their message to voters. Small meetings were arranged at the homes of local residents where people could meet to find out why the

bond issue was necessary. Other initiatives included a dedicated Web page, community presentations, question and answer sessions, flyers and fact sheets.

"I really felt that this was a community-led bond issue," said Assistant Superintendent Gail Credit in a *Detroit Free Press* article. "It came from the community; it was supported by the community."

Fanning Howey was able to provide campaign assistance to the district in the form

of graphics for presentations, boards and signage to place throughout the community, and conceptual drawings, as well as moral support. A Fanning Howey office was established in Novi in 1999 and employees like George Kacan, a resident of Novi and a principal at the firm, helped to

distribute yard signs, set up bond coffees, and, of course, vote on Election Day.

Kacan commented, "Novi has a history of supporting their schools, even in the tough times. Parents don't vote no just because the school their children attend is already complete. They believe strongly in all of the district's schools to continue their support."

This message brought to you by Fanning/Howey Associates, Inc. For more information contact Sharon Poor, 888.499.2292, spoor@fhai.com.



Election software, continued from back page

campaign tailored to their community."

"The software just completed the final round of testing. It has been a complete success in the school districts where it was tested," Schmidt added.

French Associates understands that the first step to building anything is passing a bond. This new tool, developed for French by the marketing firm of Banach, Banach & Cassidy, will be an important part of French's pre-bond service to local school districts.

French Associates provides a full range of services to school districts. In addition to its lighthouse pre-bond services, French is the only architectural firm that provides complete pre- and post-bond marketing and communication counsel to school districts.

"Our goal is to help build a bond between schools

and the communities that they serve," said Schmidt. "Our new software gets this process off to a positive, data-driven start. We invite school districts that are considering a bond election to call us for information about using the software."

This message brought to you by French Associates, Inc. For more information, contact Christopher D. Schmidt, director of business development, 248.656.1377, christophers@frenchia.com.



MASB Mission Statement

To provide quality educational leadership services for all Michigan boards of education, and to advocate for student achievement and public education.

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New software from French Associates, available to districts this fall, can predict bond election success. The software will take the guessing out of campaign planning while helping school districts develop appropriate campaign strategies and targeted messages.

For many years garnering voter approval for a financial proposal has been little more than a crap shoot, with the odds of winning being slightly better than chance for most school districts.

Many districts lose their elections because they don't have a clear-cut strategy that's tailored to their community. They conduct haphazard campaigns and rarely understand who will support their financial issue and for what reasons. The new software can help districts avoid these and other campaign pitfalls, and greatly enhance their chances of winning at the polls.

Using a variety of data inputs and a questionnaire completed by any school district, the software will determine the probability of winning a bond election. As part of the assessment package, French Associates will also develop strategic recommendations for school districts. These bond campaign recommendations are designed to improve the probability of winning.

"For the first time, school districts can know their odds of passing a bond in advance," said Chris Schmidt, director of business development for French Associates. "Then they can use the data to design an effective

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