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Friday, January 11, 2008

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## YMCA bigger, better and coming along Construction progresses; funding still needed

BY AJ COLLEY

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Grant County Family YMCA Executive Director Mike Roorbach calls the construction of the new YMCA facility at the Memorial Coliseum "a God thing."

He said this while standing in the middle of the original coliseum, being converted to a modern facility, equipped with a mezzanine for gymnastics overlooking the basketball court and stage.

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"I feel like this is going to happen, and I'm just steering the boat," he said.

The new facility - Star Financial YMCA - will overlook the river and will be completely contained to one level. The project still needs money, but much less than it did a year ago. At the beginning of 2007, the YMCA still needed to raise about \$3.5 million. As of Friday, that number was about \$700,000.

Star Financial YMCA should open in August, with a grand opening ceremony

[+ Zoom Photo](#)



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TAKING SHAPE - Laborers with Bowman Construction clean up after pouring cement in the swimming pool area under construction at the new YMCA facility being built on the site of the Marion Memorial Coliseum.

[+ Zoom Photo](#)



on Labor Day. As of this week, construction was two weeks ahead of schedule. Roorbach is awaiting word from YMCA consultants to see what sort of programs the new building could offer and how many staff members they would need.

Walking through the construction site with donor Jim Sutter, Roorbach smiles as he points out what the different areas will be when the project is complete.

Although there's no water in them, the pools are taking shape. There's one lap pool, one warm-water therapy pool and a spray pad that simulates outdoor sprinklers. One wall is complete windows, which Roorbach happily points out.

"Wouldn't that be fun - to be in 90-degree (water) and look out there?" he asked, looking at a pile of snow in view of the window.

The new facility's fitness area will be five times the size of what the current Grant County Family YMCA has. One part of the room is sectioned off for more private workouts for beginning exercising.

Plenty of office space was created in the new building, as well.

"(There's) a lot of room for growth," Roorbach said. "That's the important thing for me."

Roorbach and Sutter appeared happy to maintain some of the new building's history. Old plaques, signs and doors are being incorporated into the new building's design.

Sutter showed particular interest in part of the original building that reads, "Dedicated to the memory of the soldiers of all wars."

"There's a lot of history here in this building," he said while standing in the main arena.

Roorbach said Sutter has done a lot for the new YMCA. Marion City Council member Steve Wright agreed.

"When we first started talking about this whole project, I remember Jim Sutter coming down to the (city council) meeting and didn't even have time to put on his socks," Wright said.



NEW LOOK - An artist's rendering shows what the inside of the Memorial Coliseum will look like once the renovations are complete. The seat and stage area will remain from the old building, but there will be a new wood floor.

Sutter was watching the council discussing the coliseum and the future of the YMCA on television. He showed up to the meeting and told them the YMCA was important to the community and they needed to make the project work, Wright said.

Roorbach joked that Sutter might know more about the project than he does, at times - Sutter has remained informed about the construction. He's also modest about his contributions.

"There are hundreds of people involved in the project," he said.

Every person who donates \$25 or more for the project will be recognized. Based on contribution levels, people's names will appear in a book of faith, walk of faith or wall of faith.

**Originally published January 6, 2008**

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