

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



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FEDS GIVE GEARY COUNTY SIX FT. RILEY SCHOOL BUILDINGS DOLE-INITIATED STUDY PROMPTS \$5.2 FEDERAL FUNDS FOR REPAIRS

WASHINGTON -- Officials from the Geary County School District and the U.S. Department of Education signed documents in the Washington office of Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole today transferring to the school district ownership of six school buildings on the grounds of Ft. Riley, KS. The district will also receive \$5.2 million in federal funds for substantial and badly-needed improvements to the buildings.

The transfer and repair funds were prompted by a Department of Defense study, initiated by Senator Dole, that concluded the federal government should pay for the repairs as soon as possible. The action follows 20 years of efforts by Geary County School officials to achieve the needed improvements.

"It took longer than we all hoped but it's nice to know that the students and teachers at the Fort Riley schools will finally start to see long-overdue improvements in the conditions at their schools," Dole said.

"Government bureaucracy is known for its slow movement, but 20-years must qualify for some kind of record," Dole added.

"This has been a long time in coming, but the action we have taken today is a positive step in the right direction. The bottom line is, this is good news for education," said Senator Nancy Kassebaum, ranking member of the Senate Education Subcommittee.

The documents sealing the action were signed by Senators Dole and Kassebaum, Acting Assistant Secretary of Education for Elementary and Secondary Education Dan Bonner, and Mary Devin, Deputy Superintendent of Geary County Schools.

(MORE)

The buildings to be transferred are Custer Hill Elementary, Fort Riley Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, Morris Hill Elementary, Ware Elementary and Fort Riley Junior High School.

The \$5.2 million in federal funds will pay for a wide range of improvements, led by new classroom construction and library improvements. Also included are overall electrical system checks, roof repairs, kitchen repairs and improvements, heating/air conditioning repairs or replacements, and handicapped access construction.

Fort Riley Junior High will undergo the most substantial changes. Sixteen classrooms housed in seven temporary buildings will be removed and replaced with a new building. Installation of air conditioning; construction of foreign language, communications, drama/speech and four math classrooms is also slated. A physical education center will be added.

Geary County has sought since 1969 to make substantial improvements at the Junior High. The logjam was broken when the Defense Department's Office of Economic Adjustment and the Department of Education, at the behest of Senator Dole, prepared an analysis of the schools at Fort Riley and found their facility requirements of "an emergency or serious nature." Noting the state and local school district lacked the funds for the improvements, the study recommended, "that the U.S. Department of Education budget for these facility requirements at the earliest possible date."

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