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## Ground broken for Eastside High

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COEBURN — Wise County Schools Superintendent Jeff Perry likened yesterday's groundbreaking at Eastside High School to an American president's speech delivered at a time when this country was at its most divided.

Four months after the American Civil War's Battle of Gettysburg where more than 50,000 people perished, President Abraham Lincoln stood on the battlefield at the dedication of Soldiers' National Cemetery. He delivered a brief, now immortal speech about the catastrophic toll the country's division had taken.



“The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here,” said Lincoln, citing the enormous sacrifice those who perished had made for their country.



Perry repeated those words inside Eastside High's gym as students, faculty and staff, several elected officials and county employees watched.

He said the celebration was not a time to look back at Wise County's own divisiveness, but instead to look toward the future.

“Today is a signal,” he said. “That is a signal that there is hope, that there is a future, that there is energy in this community and within this school, and it is a signal that we will continue onward, this school will continue, this community will continue and that we will continue to live and flourish within this school.”

The 30-minute ceremony also included speeches by Eastside High Principal Dante Lee, county School Board Chairman Nolan Kilgore, board member Larry Greear, Board of Supervisors Chairman Bob Adkins, Supervisor Dana Kilgore and Thompson & Litton architect Bill Thompson. The event was capped with a ceremonial groundbreaking held in the school's courtyard.

Several of those who spoke called the ceremony a momentous occasion for not only the Coeburn and St. Paul communities, but also for Wise County.

While consolidation ripped communities apart last year, several speakers, like Perry, said the groundbreaking was a chance to focus not on the past, but the

future.

Nolan Kilgore said he has had several family members, including a son and daughter, graduate from Coeburn High School, and it was bittersweet to see that school cease to exist when Eastside was born. But, he said, progress sometimes requires sacrifice.

“My philosophy has always been we can respect the past, we can remember the past, but we must always look to the future.”

Lee said Eastside High was built in 1955. “Today, some 57 years later, we are planning for a major renovation and addition project,” he announced. “This legacy for Eastside High School will last for this generation and many more generations.”

The \$8.5 million project is expected to take 18 months to complete and will include installing the following new amenities: classroom floors, a front entrance, cafeteria, gym commons area, heating and cooling system, plumbing, roof and windows, bathrooms, doors and hardware, ceilings and administrative offices. New construction will include adding more science classrooms and labs, a media center, as well as adjusting parking and traffic patterns.

Thompson said he received input from students, faculty and the community regarding the renovations. Several of the designs incorporate Greek architecture, purposely chosen because of the school’s embrace of several Ancient Greek attributes, he explained. The school sits atop a hill much like the center of cities in Ancient Greece once resided. The school’s mascot, the Spartans, also bears tribute to that culture.

The school’s student body will relocate to St. Paul High School and St. Paul Elementary School during construction, which is expected to finish by January 2014.

Dana Kilgore told students she knows it was tough to adjust following last year’s consolidation and admitted it will be tough to move again. But, she continued, it will be worthwhile when they return next year and see their newly renovated institution.

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