



SEWARD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Community donors make Saints athletics upgrades a reality *French Family Field named at Monday trustees meeting*

Some of Seward County Community College's athletic facilities will get a facelift and a new name following the Monday board of trustees meeting. It's fitting, noted Director of Athletics Roy Allen, given the outstanding performances, national rankings, and individual honors for players and coaches in multiple sports during the 2017-18 year.

"We've been checking the boxes of our goals," he said. "And of course, one of those is positive engagement with the community."

In recognition of donated construction of a press box and improvements to the dugouts and ancillary areas, the softball complex will be renamed French Family Field.

"With the generosity of owner Bill French, French Construction is near completion of construction of a press box at the softball field at no cost to the College," the administrative proposal noted. "This a significant goodwill donation for the College and our Softball program. They have also donated paint for the dugouts, concession stand, and storage area so that all components for the softball complex match in color."

Allen said the gift provided more than material support to the program.

"This is the first time the softball program has received a gift like this, and I've gotta tell you, it encouraged our athletes and coaches," he said. "We've really focused on getting our student athletes out in the community to do service work all year, and this just demonstrates to the student athletes that giving back is a way of life."

The board voted 5-1, with Vice-Chair Marvin Chance voting "no," to name the complex "French Family Field."

Fans who attend sports events in the Greenhouse gymnasium will enjoy a significant experience upgrade next season, with new bleachers and video scoreboards to be installed over the summer.

"Several years ago, administration became aware of accessibility issues regarding the bleachers in the gymnasium. As a result, it became one of the many capital projects that are assessed each year for funding. Until now, the combination of cost and prioritization level caused the project to be tabled to subsequent years," noted Vice President of Finance and Operations Dennis Sander in the administrative report. "After the 'first wave' of projects listed for the 2017 capital projects lease were completed, funds from that lease were still available. At the January, 2018, meeting the Board identified and approved the bleachers project as one of the final capital lease projects.

Director of Facilities Roger Scheib, Director of Athletics Roy Allen, and Sander met with consultants, and from those discussions developed bid specifications for the replacement of the bleachers. Administration recommended purchasing the bleachers, including removal and installation, for the gymnasium from Kansas Contract Design, of Wichita, Kansas for \$144,755.00. Scheib also traveled to various colleges in Kansas to view bleacher systems installed by this company.

Following a motion by Chance and a second by Stacy Johnson, trustees voted unanimously to approve the bleachers purchase.

The 20-year-old scoreboards in the Greenhouse have served the college well, but have become difficult to maintain and operate, Allen reported.

“New scoreboards are needed before we have more malfunctions in the middle of one of our sport seasons,” he noted in the board narrative. “The cost to replace the current scoreboards with static, box scoreboards, is approximately \$65,000. This again, doesn’t solve our wiring problem, and continues to limit us on what we can do as far as customization is concerned.”

Moving to fully customizable, energy efficient videoboards would increase the price, so once again, Saints fans in the community stepped up to fill the gap to meet the \$118,000 cost. Funding for two new videoboards, one measuring 10 x 17 feet, and another measuring 7 x 10 feet, will be drawn from the following sources who made generous contributions: Pepsi-Cola, Great Western Dining, Freddy’s, Saints Booster Club, facilities funding from SCCC, Hampton Inn, Old Chicago Pizza, and the SCCC Foundation.

Allen said the new videoboards will transform the Saints experience.

“They allow us the uninhibited ability to show video replay, highlights, advertisements, and messages throughout the games,” he said. “At 170 square feet, the main board would have room to hold players stats during play, while also displaying highly valuable sponsor logos and messages. Future advertising revenue received will go to the reimbursement of the SCCC contribution until complete. When the contribution is paid the revenue will go to defray costs of the programs.”

The college will also see institution-wide benefits, as the boards can be used for other activities: at graduation, intramurals, Welcome Day, and banquets.

“They could even open up opportunities to have youth movie nights with the Saints,” Allen noted. In alignment with the administrative recommendation, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase.

“We are continuously working to collaborate with our community partners and foster a culture of philanthropy,” said SCCC President Dr. Ken Trzaska. “These changes to facilities on campus truly reflect that spirit, and in turn create tremendous gratitude among the SCCC team members.”