

A Look Back At The Project Several Years In The Making

After a process several years in the making that included two bond elections and 16 months of construction, the Rice Junior High School is complete.

Ground was broken on the facility on March 10, 2008.

The keys to the facility were handed over the district on July 1.

An original bond election that would have funded a new high school in Altair and renovations to the existing high school to be used as a junior high was defeated in May 2006.

The Rice School Board modified their plans to call for a new junior high in Altair that would house seventh and eighth graders.

That bond passed in May 2007 and raised nearly \$17 million for the project to include classrooms administration area, science and computer labs, a library and a new band hall, auditorium and gymnasium.

Following are excerpts from the Headlight's coverage of the process.

February 23, 2006:

The Rice C.I.S.D. Board of Trustees voted Monday night to call a bond election on May 13, 2006 for the purpose of constructing a new high school and renovating the existing high school to be used as a junior high for the entire district.

The measure was passed by unanimous vote.

The school district will ask voters to pass a bond election in the amount of \$14,755,000. The estimated total cost of the project is \$15,755,000 and includes \$500,000 in contingency funds as well as \$500,000 for utility work.

The district plans to use \$1,000,000 from its fund balance for the project.

Early plans for the construction project had nearly a \$20,000,000 price tag and included some work at the Eagle Lake Primary School.

Officials felt this was going to be too much and trimmed the project down.

May 18, 2006:

The Rice C.I.S.D. bond election held on Saturday, May 13 failed by a margin of only 36 votes, 434 against with 398 for.

In Eagle Lake the vote was 275 for and 164 against; Sheridan, 49 against and 30 for; Garwood, 203 against and 46 for; Early voting 18 against and 47 for.

The bond was tabbed to build a new high school and convert the existing school into a junior high for the entire district. All junior high and high school students would have been on the Altair campus if plans had gone through.



Ground was broken on the new facility on March 10, 2008.

From March 15, 2007:

The Rice School board voted unanimously on Friday to call a bond election on May 12.

The election will ask voters to decide yes or no on two bond propositions totaling about \$16.65 million.

The first proposition will ask for just over \$12 million for construction of 16 classrooms, two science labs, two computer labs, a library, gym, administrative area and band hall. This area will be used for seventh and eighth grade for the entire district.

The second proposition asks for an additional \$4.6 million for construction of a 500-seat auditorium with a lobby-type area that would be used as an eating space for the seventh and eighth grade. The area would also include space for a kitchen if the district wanted to add one later.

The board also passed a resolution effectively tying the two propositions together. The resolution specifies that if only the second proposition passes, then the district will not go forward with the project.

The vote on Friday came after a series of special meetings held to discuss district facility issues that needed to be addressed after the failure of last May's bond election.

Trustees have said that they feel this election package will be a compromise with voters who narrowly defeated a bond election a year ago. Board members said that they had heard from constituents who did not like the idea of sixth graders being on the same campus with high school aged kids.

May 17, 2007:

Nearly 1,000 voters turned out in the Rice CISD election and passed both propositions of the bond election. Proposition 1 passed with 566

for and 377 against while Proposition 2 passed with 545 for and 392 against.

About \$16.5 million total in bonds will be issued to raise money for the construction of a seventh and eighth grade campus in Altair.

Proposition 2 will allow for the construction of an auditorium that will have a space for a cafeteria for the seventh and eighth grade.

"The next step is to get everyone together and get the process started," said Rice Superintendent Michael Lanier.

"The main thing is that now we

are moving forward, and I am very pleased. I think this will benefit the kids for a long time to come," he added.

February 14, 2008:

The Rice School Board approved the selection and ranking of contractors for construction of the new junior high facility in Altair.

Based on information submitted by three contractors, they were ranked using a scoring process, which used price, and references from the contractors and certain subcontractors.

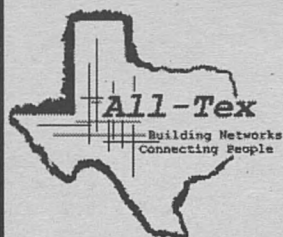
Drymalla Construction Com-

pany, out of Columbus, was the top ranked contractor that submitted a proposal.

The next phase of the process is working with the architects and contractor to negotiate a final contract.

This phase is expected to be completed by the beginning of March.

Drymalla's proposal indicated that they would need 15-16 months for project completion and has said that they will guarantee a finish date of 16 months, regardless of weather conditions.



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