

EMT courses, nursing classes come to fruition

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As part of their agreement with Nocona I.S.D. while searching for investors to create a new sports complex on district owned land off FM 1956, the Sports Complex Committee committed to help expand the district's vocational-technical opportunities for district residents.

Monday night Donna Culpepper, executive director of the Nocona Economic Development Corporations and a member of the Sports Complex Committee, announced that beginning in October they would begin "a school without walls."

Beginning Oct. 12 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) course will begin here, then in January, she and Randy Duckworth, another member of the Complex Committee, reported to the board, there are plans to start a nursing classes.

Last spring Ms. Culpepper, Duckworth and Tony Dirker approached the school district about leaving 40 to 45 acres of the 100-acre tract of land purchased three years ago as a potential future site for a new high school.

They were proposing to construct four high school sized baseball fields, four high school sized softball fields, two soccer fields and a football field – geared towards select team sports and tournaments.

At the time, they noted

about our sports complex, we talked about a vocational/technical school. We said that we would start a school, a school without walls.

"We're keeping our part of the bargain," she announced.

Since then Mrs. Culpepper has been selected to participate in a national financial investment planning project which is formulating the investment portfolio to solicit investors to fund and operate the sports complex.

The EMT program will be conducted under the auspices of the First Responders Training Program, Mrs. Culpepper told the board. They are aiming for 10 select students with the goal of having at least eight complete the course and pass their state certification exams. With an eighty percent success rate, the local school can be locally certified.

"It's a 12-week program, but because of the holidays it probably will not complete until January because they will take a week off for Christmas and week off for Thanksgiving," she said.

"We have all of the equipment in place. The hospital is working with us very well," she added.

While neither the EMT nor the nursing programs will result in the creation of taxable property, she noted that

VFW and Knights of Columbus have stepped up and offered to assist with scholarships for those students unable to finance the training on their own.

"The nursing home is looking at some of theirs so they can complete the course and bring those skills in," Mrs. Culpepper said. "We're looking at those types of individuals that we know for sure can complete this program and compliment the town."

Cost of the EMT course is \$1,400 per student.

The nursing program will initially be conducted under the auspices of the Dallas Institute of Nursing with further details to be released in the coming weeks.

Already both Nocona General Hospital and Grace Care Center are exploring options to subsidize employees expanding their skills by becoming nurses in a scholarship-work contract arrangement.

As for the development of the sports complex, Duckworth teased the board commenting, "We're still looking at starting construction in January."

Duckworth noted there continues to be progress in securing investors and grants to finance the program, including the addition of a building to not only house the additional

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statute, have to be used for economic development. She informed Supt. Dr. David Waters, "I really want to capture that for us. I'm going to work with Dr. Waters next week, that he doesn't know about, there's going to be a new program, in the county that's really needed," she said as the board chuckled at their superintendent's facial expressions in learning her plans.

"Don't get scared," Mrs. Culpepper teased. "it's going to be okay. I'm going to ask Dr. Waters to spearhead this because this is a great program. And you're going to be the man, I'm telling you," she smiled as the board continued to chuckle.