

# Initiative: Issued Laptops Welcomed by Students

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campus or away." In mid-August, SISD Trustees unanimously approved to launch the 1-to-1 initiative program by entering into a 3-year lease agreement with Apple, Inc. for the computers, at an annual cost of \$188,065 per year. SISD officials agreed to a 700 computer lease agreement, at a cost of \$736.77 per computer. The contract, according to school district officials, will allow for SISD to purchase the laptops at a cost of \$1 per computer at the end of the lease term, if the school district chooses to do so. "We are thankful for the (SISD Board of Trustees) for this opportunity," said Chappell. "Our teachers have taken part of some training, and will continue to train, into how these laptops can be an extension of the classroom. They'll never replace the role of our teachers, but they can add to how our students can further their education."

SHS students, on Monday, received their respective laptop computers, which included a protective carrying case, power supply/charger, and student identification tag.

Seminole High School sophomore Jimmie Vaughn said he likes the idea of the laptop program and that the school-issued computer would be beneficial.

"I think it will make online assignments more accessible and help me be more organized," said Vaughn.

Katie Ray, who teaches audio/video productions, digital/interactive media and Principals of Information Tech at the SHS campus, said the student laptops should eventually replace desktop computers in her classroom next school year, and would allow for students to continue their work away from the school setting for most of her projects.

"After this (school) year, (students) will more than likely be using their laptops in my room," she said. "We are keeping our desktops (this year) because we already have projects on them."

SISD Technology staff members, prior to the Christmas holidays, spent several weeks preparing the laptops for student use by installing various software programs needed for day-to-day work by students on the computers, as well as various security programs and measures to secure and monitor student-use of the computers both inside and outside the school setting.

Sentinel Photo/Dustin Wright

## ISSUING THE LAPTOPS

Seminole HS staff members Patricia Lira (left) and Perry Phillip assist SHS student John Paul Sales with his school issued laptop computer during a Monday distribution at the Seminole High School campus. The laptops are being leased by SISD for a 3 year period as part of a 1-to-1 technology initiative program.



# Expansion: Facility Work Discussed Monday

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nary design of the proposed facilities and are now in the process of reviewing those designs with our team, as well as those designated with the design process from the hospital district," said Edwards.

Edwards anticipates to have drawings and renderings available for the board's viewing by Jan. 28.

SHD officials learned in early December that funding for the project would have to come through a general obligations bond election process with hospital district taxpayers, which is initially being targeted for May.

"We are in line for having everything together for a May election, but if it looks like we may need some more time to sell this to the public, we will also be ready for November," said Edwards.

General obligation bond elections, per Texas election laws, can only be conducted during the May municipal election process or during the November general elections process.

Billed as a "Phase II" project, McKinstry and Seminole Hospital District officials are proposing the addition of a new emergency room facility at the hospital campus, which would expand from its current four room floor plan to an eight room service center.

Included in the expansion would be four ER patient rooms, one

cardiac room, two trauma rooms, one ISO room, two storage rooms, three treatment rooms, and four urgent care rooms. In addition, the ER facility would see an enlarged waiting area -- with a capacity of 35-to-40 people -- and separate entrances for ambulances and patients/visitors.

Preliminary expansion talks also included the proposed construction of new, larger Obstetrics/Labor and Delivery rooms, two new operating rooms, two new recovery rooms, four staff offices for the OR department, new radiology facilities with room for CT, MRI, Mammography and R&F machinery, and renovations/repurposing existing space within the Memorial Hospital campus.

The proposed additions, according to White's presentation, would see the expansion of facilities to the south and west of the Memorial Hospital campus' current emergency room facilities, as well as the addition of a second floor to the campus' two patient wings.

The additions, according to both hospital district and McKinstry officials, will not add additional patient rooms to the local district, which is classified as a "Critical Access Hospital" and may have no more than 25 patient beds, according to Medicare reimbursement guidelines.

Hospital district officials are also

considering the addition of an Alzheimer's patient wing to the Memorial Care Center facilities, which will first house the hospital district's emergency/operating rooms during the early phases of the construction/expansion process.

Edwards stated a geology testing of the Seminole Hospital District grounds for the proposed expansion/renovation project was to be conducted on Thursday, while civil engineers would be on site next week for their assessment and study of the proposed project.

## Phase I Project Moving Forward

Also in Monday's meeting, SHD officials were updated by Edwards on the district's Phase I project with McKinstry.

Back in December, hospital district board members unanimously approved of the \$2.77 million infrastructure renovation project for hospital district facilities.

The energy savings infrastructure remodel project is anticipated to include renovations to HVAC, controls, lighting and other utility systems within the Seminole Hospital

District, which include the Memorial Hospital campus, Memorial Health Care Center, Memorial Place Assisted Living Center, and the district's medical clinics and records storage facility.

The "Phase I" project, according to McKinstry figures produced in Monday's meeting, projected the SHD to save \$58,267 in annual energy savings, while an annual savings of \$135,000 are being projected by the company on reduced repair costs and future avoided capital expenditures in relation to infrastructure issues.

The SHD is also anticipating a \$17,942 incentive from utility providers for the project, according to McKinstry figures.

The \$2.77 million guaranteed maximum price for the project by McKinstry will be funded by the Seminole Hospital District through a revenue bond agreement with Government Capital Corp.

"We are working on finalizing our end of the project plans and hope to have them in your hands by Jan. 28, and in the hands of the (Texas Dept. of Health) by Feb. 4 for their

review, which could take up to 60 days," said Edwards. "At this point, we have been in communications with the TDH about your project and don't expect to run into any issues with this."

Edwards stated the company plans to begin work on the project in April and be completed with it by late August.

According to figures, SHD officials are anticipating to pay, on average, \$220,000 in annual payments on the revenue bond, with an interest rate quoted at being between 3.76 and 3.8-percent.

Company officials, in their mid-October presentation to SHD board members, said they could save the district between \$44,000 and \$54,000 annual in energy savings through energy management control system upgrades, HVAC equipment improvements, lighting improvements, computer power management, water conservation measures, and other energy management practices.

According to the company's October figures, the SHD could earn \$650,000 to \$800,000 for self-

funding facility improvements over a 15 year period, through the project.

A bulk of the \$2.77 million project will be conducted on the replacement of HVAC equipment and the addition of direct digital controls (DDC) to the Memorial Health Care Center. According to figures, the cost associated with that portion of the project was quoted at \$1.24 million.

An additional \$668,646 is being anticipated for work on controls upgrades for the Memorial Hospital's main campus.

The work includes the installation of a new open protocol energy management control system, the installation of new air handler units to reduce the amount of outside air entering into the facility, and removal of existing outside air supply fans, just to name a few.

The hospital facility, as well a majority of the district's other facilities, will also see the retrofitting of existing lighting fixtures with more "energy efficient" systems and the installation of programmable digital thermostat systems.

## News Brief

### Windbreak Tree Orders Being Taken

The Gaines County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring a windbreak tree project in cooperation with the Texas Forest Service for 2012/2013.

You may place your order for trees in person at the Gaines County USDA/FSA Service Center located at 1301 South Main. Payment must be made when your order is placed.

This year's evergreen trees are: Afghanistan Pine, Austrian Pine, Pinyon Pine, Oriental Arborvitae, Lacebark Elm, Four Wing Saltbush, and Italian Stone Pine, Desert Willow. Evergreens are sold in multiples of 30 seedlings.

Hardwood Species available include American Plum, Black Cherry, Green Ash, Hackberry, Honey locust, Bur oak, Chinkapin Oak, Post Oak, Shumard Oak, Osage Orange, Pecan, Red Mulberry, Redbud, Sand Plum, Aromatic Sumac, Smooth Sumac. Hardwoods are sold in multiples of 25 seedlings.

Delivery of the seedlings is scheduled for Thursday, February 28, 2013. All orders will need to be placed by noon on Wednesday, February 20, 2013.

Windbreak trees provide a variety of benefits ranging from controlling wind erosion in fields to decorating around homes.

For more information please contact the Gaines County Soil and Water Conservation District located at 1301 S. Main in the USDA/FSA Service Center or call 758-3722, extension 3.

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