

The Parkersburg News and Sentinel

A salute to those who care

There are two types of people in this world: those who are interested in the fleece, and those who are interested in the flock.

It's those in the latter group that have a sense of community and do what they can to make their hometown a better place to live.

It has been my pleasure to work with several such groups as they attempt to solve the stadium woes that have befallen Stadium Field and the Erickson All-Sports Facility.

Start with the PHS Stadium Field Committee. For years, most of their good deeds were done outside the public spotlight. It is the members of that committee who maintained the stadium, transforming an aging facility into a modern-day stadium that many believe is the best place to watch a game in the Mountain State.

When the stadium bleachers were condemned, committee members put their names on a loan to assist in the financing of repairs.

Recently, they have been joined by five local businessmen – Dr. Joe Weaver, Chris Campbell, Curtis Miller, Jason Minnite and Vince Conley - who have taken it upon themselves to raise money so the stadium can be open in time for Parkersburg High's Sept. 20 football game vs. Capital. They have used their resources and their connections to supplement the work the committee members have been doing.

As a result, we may be on the verge of the news for which we all have been waiting.

It's sad to see a community icon sit empty. It's embarrassing for the state's most successful high school to have to play a home football game in Ohio. Yet, rather than do nothing about the situation, members of these two dedicated groups have provided the leadership that will allow the stadium to open, likely sooner rather than later.

Yes, only one side of the bleachers will be open. But that's better than the status quo. At least the senior members of the Big Reds will get to play their final games where they are meant to be played.

Then, there is the Erickson All-Sports Facility, which was nothing more than a piece of industrial land when Charles O. Erickson donated it for the construction of a stadium that would serve as the home for Parkersburg South and the Erickson board of directors saw to it that would happen.

That was 20 years ago and Erickson continues to be a work in progress. Recently, it has seen a lot of progress. Local insurance agent Jay Jones has spearheaded an effort to give the South athletes who call Erickson home a locker room in which they can take pride. He's also managed to double the size of the visitors locker room and to build a private place for the officials who work games there to dress and rest.

All are long overdue and much-needed improvements.

It's those who are interested in the flock who make a difference and keep our community strong.

The next time you see any of those who have worked tirelessly on behalf of our youth, take a minute to thank them.

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