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**(Neb.)-Construction underway for Armstrong project**



By: Andrew Lacy Posted at: 04/08/2013 04:30 PM

**CHADRON** – The renovation and expansion of the \$16.2 million Armstrong Gymnasium Events Center has officially begun at Chadron State College.

The project, which has gone through several phases, finally saw tangible change last week when workers from Adolfson and Peterson Construction based in Aurora, Colo., started demolition of the natatorium.

The roughly 6,250 square foot natatorium will become a strength and conditioning center, which tentatively will include 16 platforms, seven double racks and two half racks, a small cardiovascular and recovery space and a free weight exercise area. The new weight room will also feature a 5-yard by 28-yard turf area alongside the east wall for conditioning, stretching, drills and footwork.

While many of the new offices and locker rooms in the Events Center have been named for donors, Chadron State Foundation executive director Connie Rasmussen said the weight room will feature a plaque commemorating all former student-athletes who donated more than \$2,500 to the facility.

Demolition of the swimming pool has been a quick process, facilities coordinator Blair Brennan said. The lip of the pool was removed and the remaining footprint of the pool will be filled with foam sheeting to provide stability. Once the foam is installed, rebar will be installed and concrete will be poured.

Brennan said after the concrete floor has cured, rubber flooring will be installed and equipment and finishing work, such as walls and windows, will be completed.

The current weight room, which is on the second floor of Armstrong, will remain operational for as long as possible. Once the new weight room is finished, the current weight room will become a mechanical space and house air handling units for the events center, Brennan said. An open house for the new weight room is scheduled for Sept. 20.

While the weight room is anticipated to be completed in mid-September, several other areas of construction will be overlapping at the Armstrong site, Brennan noted.

In May, the south parking lot will be demolished. That area is where the new arena will be constructed. In addition, earthwork and structural work for the new arena, athletic offices and locker rooms will begin.

"This will most likely be a 20-month project and so we are going to have to work all the way around the current Armstrong Gymnasium," Brennan said. "We need to maintain it as a competition space."

Brennan said he hopes the arena will be completed in the winter of 2014 and be ready for the opening of the 2014-15 men's and women's basketball seasons.

The horseshoe-shaped arena, which will run east to west, will seat more than 1,800 spectators on the north, south and west sides, Brennan said. The public will enter the mezzanine level on the southwestern corner of the

arena and enter the stands from the top. More than 600 of the seats will have collapsible backs to them.

Six basketball goals will be fixed to the roughly 35-foot ceiling, so the court can be split into two 84-foot competition spaces for high school games.

Brennan also said scoreboards will hang on both the east and west walls.

While the construction of the arena will begin shortly, Brennan said several other projects will also occur over the next 20 months.

They include the athletic offices, men's and women's basketball, volleyball and football locker rooms, a sports medicine room, an equipment room, and an audio and visual room.