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Staff Reporter

It's been four years since the dream of a Community Stadium in Bedford started to become a reality. Two years ago the stadium was officially unveiled to the public at the October 3, 1997 Homecoming football game. But the work on the stadium, and the fund-raising, is far from finished.

"The biggest part of this phase is the concession stands," said Gene Stock, Chairman of the Bedford Community Stadium Committee. "The Band Boosters are doing that."

Also being completed is the sidewalk at the west end of the stadium and the recognition wall at the east end.

Indiana Cutstone donated the limestone recognition panels and Brescol Brothers Masonry donated the labor to install them. Chuck Faller, Tom Bruechert, Chad Bruechert and Stevenson Building and Supply made in-kind donations of labor and materials for the sidewalk.

"All that's left to be done is the rest rooms," Stock explained. "They will be under the bleachers. That will be started as soon as we get this paid off, unless someone comes forward to do it."

Stock stressed the fact that what has been done on the stadium in the past two years is far from being paid for.

"People think it's all paid for," he explained. "So we have to communicate to them that it's not. We're about halfway there, we have about 55 or 60 percent in pledges. But the big message is that we need more money."

There are several ways in which residents can get involved in the Community Stadium effort. The "Buy a Brick" program is still in full swing. For \$100 a 4" x 8" inscribed brick can be purchased that will flank the sidewalk that runs throughout the stadium. A double size brick can be purchased for \$200.

"It's one of the most popular things, people love to walk by and look at them and read all the names," said Steve Lennex, one of the many volunteers who have worked on the stadium. "When we get those recognition plates up, that will be the same way."

There is also the "Million Dollar Club" for contributors of \$1,000, the "Touchdown Club" for donations of \$5,000 to \$9,000 and the "Champions Club" for donations of \$10,000 or more. All members of these three clubs will have their names included on a plaque on the recognition wall.

Area companies are still donating many services and equipment to the stadium project, but Stock stresses that individual involvement is the key to success.

"If we can get 1,000 people to donate \$1,000, that's a million dollars," said Stock. "We know companies get hit up every day, so we want to get as many individuals involved as we can."

And if you don't have the money to make a financial

contribution, there are other ways you can take part.

"The big message is that we are not done, and we would appreciate and welcome help," Stock said. "Like the band boosters really need physical labor getting their things done. You don't have to have money. Just be on a call list to help when needed. We've had people who couldn't afford the money, but there are other ways to help us out."

Especially in need of assistance are the Band Boosters who are trying to construct the three new concession stands, two on the home side and one on the visitor's side.

"When the Community Stadium project started, concession stands weren't included in Phase I," explained Debbie Turpening, Bedford Band Boosters President. "So we decided to jump on the band wagon and take this on ourselves, instead of trying to work out of tents."

The Band Boosters took out a loan through the schools to finance the construction which began in August.

"We were hoping to be done for this football season, but due to delays in the bid process and construction, we won't be open until track season in the spring," Turpening said.

For now the Band Boosters are working concessions out of the baseball concession stand, and hoping to get more volunteers to complete the three new facilities.

"Our main focus is getting the buildings done before winter comes," Turpening said.

She explained that it will be an ongoing process to raise funds to pay for the new concession stands. The Stadium Committee donated 23,000 Bedford Bars to the Band Boosters to help them raise funds and a new batch is on the way from Morley Candy for anyone interested in purchasing the candy bars.

Kroger has donated tables for the insides of the stands and Gary Douge donated all the labor and electrical. Also, Turpening was thankful to Chuck Faller and Tom Bruechert for the extra time and effort they put into the foundations for the buildings. All of this proves that the stadium is definitely a community effort.

"I think it's really a testament to our community that we got so many people involved," Stock said enthusiastically. "We've never had anything stolen or any damage done. Contractors were just amazed. People were very respectful."

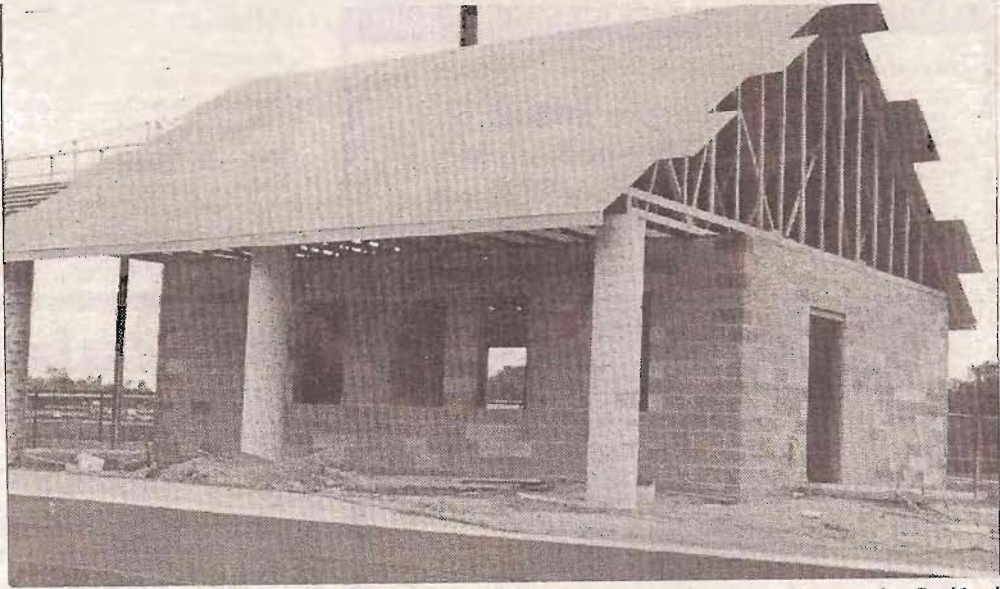
Even though the last home football game will be played October 8, life at the stadium will be far from over for the winter. There is still the work to be completed on the sidewalk, recognition wall and concession stands. The physical education classes will continue to use the field and there are always walkers and runners using the track in the evenings. Little League football games are still taking place and in the spring it will be track season once again.

Hopefully construction of the new rest rooms can begin in the near future, and possibly even locker rooms. And there is always the need for fund raising. When the stadium is completed, what will the Bedford Alumni Association turn their attention to next?

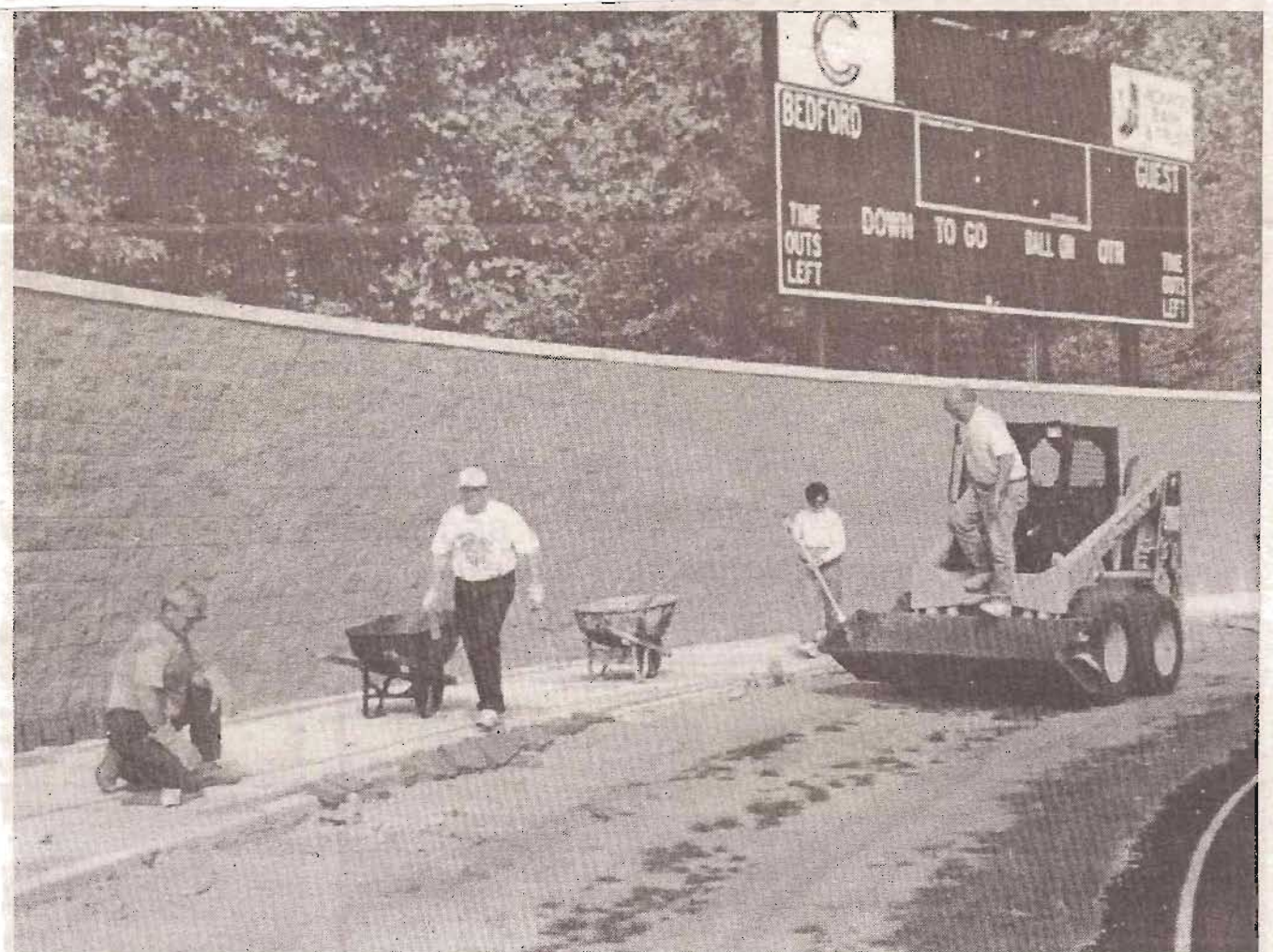
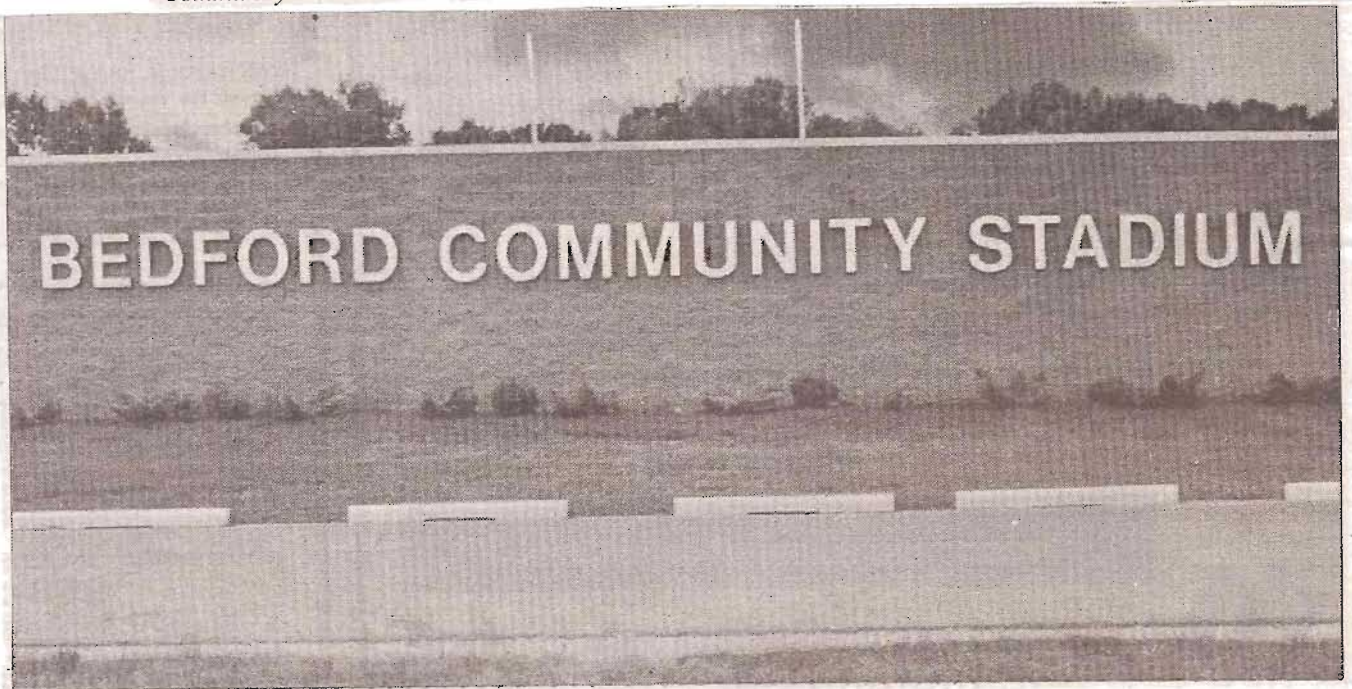
"We would like to do scholarships," said Stock. "We would like to have a hall of fame dinner and do other special projects that will encourage more social events"

If you would like to join the Bedford Alumni Association, you can call the Association President Andy Dobrzanski at 847-7141. To get involved with the Community Stadium project, call Gene Stock at 847-6358. To help the Band Boosters with the construction of the new concession stands, call Debbie Turpening at 847-7970.

Construction continues at Bedford Community Stadium



One of the new concession stands the Band Boosters are constructing at the Bedford Community Stadium.



Gene Stock, Steve Lennex, Marilyn Miller and Chuck Faller work on installing the brick pavers that flank the sidewalk at the west end of the stadium.