



TAKING ON A NEW LOOK, the Norcatur School (above) now sports a peaked roof. The contractor is Langness Repairs of Goodland. Deanne Langness (below) drilled holes for the new metal roofing, which was being added last week. — Photos by Deb Marshall

Volunteers help replace Norcatur school roof

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Norcatur has always been a town where people got things done.

Right now, they're doing something about the roof at the former Norcatur School. The school closed in 1985, then was purchased by the City of Norcatur to be used as a city building.

The city didn't have even half the money it needs to fix the roof when work started, but officials figure people will step up to volunteer, make donations and get the job done.

"Over the years, rain and snow have taken their toll on the flat roof," said City Clerk Deb Marshall. "The drainage system doesn't work, since it was built with the inside lower than the outer edges. Therefore, water has been just sitting on the roof looking for a hole, and we've had plenty!"

For the past few years, the Norcatur City Council has tried to get bids for adding a peaked roof, she said, but apparently no one was interested. However, this spring, the city contacted Allen and Deanne Langness of Langness Repairs in Goodland after hearing they had put a similar roof on the KNGN Radio building at McCook.

Mrs. Langness is the mother of Adam Spanier of Oberlin and a former band teacher at Decatur Community High School.

"After coming to Norcatur, checking it out and taking measurements," Mrs. Marshall said, "Mr. Langness devised a three-stage plan which would help the city with finances."

Total cost of the peaked roof was estimated at \$60,000 with volunteers working with the couple. The Langnesses are working on the section over the old grade school, which houses the city office, museum, library, the *Norcatur News Sheet*, the Royal Neighbors, exercise room and an all-purpose room for community events, as well as the

kitchen. The cost for that section is estimated at \$25,000 with labor and materials.

The former high school, which is attached, has the big gym used for dances, wedding receptions and the like. The high school as a whole typically is open just during the every-fifth-year Norcatur Alumni reunion. A new tradition most likely started last fall with a Haunted House sponsored by the Junior Class at Decatur Community High School.

"That went over really well with its first trial last year, and they are planning on it again this year," said Mrs. Marshall. "Also, the town's tornado shelter is in the basement of the high school. The big garage door to the basement is opened up if the siren has been sounded to let people get in and seek shelter if they don't have their own basement. By opening the big garage door, it is handicapped accessible."

"We currently have a little over \$18,000, so we are still short the amount needed even for the first section," the clerk said. "However, we have faith that the money is going to come in. People have been extremely generous. Donations have been received from the Citizens Alliance, Royal Neighbors, the Bank and multiple individuals. We have a special account set up, so it can't be spent on anything else."

Work began on July 12, with inmates from the Norton Correctional Facility coming to remove the old rock from the flat roof. Once the rock was off, the couple got right to work framing the new roof.

"They are doing a phenomenal job, and the community is thrilled they were willing to take on such a project," Mrs. Marshall said. "As a testament to how badly the roof repair is needed, just recently when the bad storm came through, we happened to have a large crew here as we were celebrating Adam Spanier's birthday, with plans to go up on the roof to work some more

after supper.

"Before we were finished with supper, the storm hit, and soon we had water pouring into an old leak in the city office. The next thing we knew, we had a waterfall in front of the windows in the museum, but with such a good, hard-working crew, everything was rescued and moved out of the way and the water was all cleaned up."

"When you have six or more inches of water on the roof with driving rain, there will be issues with leaking. We had multiple other leaks ... throughout the building. After that fiasco, the goal was to get metal put on as soon as possible."

"The workers now have metal on the most of the north side and over almost all of the museum on the south side, she said. Once this section is completed, it will be sealed off from the rest of the existing roof so that no water can get in."

The goal now, she said, is to continue working to raise enough money for the next two sections of the grade-school roof.

Helping with the construction have been Adam and Andrea Spanier and Troy Marshall. Carl Lyon has helped with his fork lift and he, Luke Bailey and Scott Hartzog moved some gas lines that were in the way.

"Our hope is to have enough money by next May so we can just finish the job," the city clerk said. "This project is being done entirely with donations, so any help is really appreciated. Past alumni are some of our bigger donors, as they want to see the building preserved. We really need to take care of this section in order to help preserve the high school section."

Donations may be mailed to City of Norcatur, Box 89, Norcatur, Kan., 67653, or through the Citizens Alliance, in care of Dennis Leichter, 1001 Rd O, Clayton, Kan., 67629. In either case, donations should be tax deductible. Specify on the check or in a letter what the donation is for.



ADDING METAL ROOFING to the new roof at the old Norcatur School was Allen Langness (above) of Goodland. The peaked roof (left) shows some of the work that has been done so far on the three-phase project.

