



Kingman County Commission

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Architect's rendering of exterior improvements to Kingman County Activity Center. Credit: Bethany Thimesch, Studio 54, Kingman.

Kingman County moves forward on Activity Center project

The Kingman County Commission took the next step Monday in its long-term plan to upgrade and improve the Kingman County Activity Center, which is the county's number one venue.

County Commissioners accepted a bid from Commerce Construction Services, Inc., Wichita to give the nearly 40-year-old facility a significant facelift both inside and out. The project is the culmination of years of planning, which included input from a broad cross section of those who use the facility on a regular basis.

After being approached by users who urged the county to improve the venue, the county invited representatives from those groups, as well as representatives from local cities, schools and the public to form a committee in 2014 to evaluate the Activity Center and formally recommend how to improve it for the future. The committee was asked to create a long-term vision for the facility. The committee's three phase plan was presented to the County Commission two years ago.

The Activity Center, built in 1979, entertains thousands of people every year and can host multiple activities simultaneously because of its diversity. Its 20,000 square foot indoor arena has seating for 1,000 and is home to the Heartland Youth Rodeo and numerous other rodeo, livestock and equine events. In addition to the indoor arena, the facility also has two meeting rooms and a kitchen. These spaces are frequently reserved for reunions, receptions, birthday parties, events with a concession stand and business

meetings. The Activity Center is home to more than 400 events each year and generates approximately \$50,000 annually in rental fees.

“The renovation of the Kingman County Activity Center will give all citizens of Kingman County an excellent facility with a broader use for meetings and events,” said County Commissioner John Steffen. “It is time to position this facility for the future.”

The renovation approved Monday will include a total facelift of the building’s east exterior, which is the facility’s “front door.” A new single story, steel frame entry/vestibule will add approximately 270 square feet of finished space and make the entry ADA compliant by adding new concrete ramps and power doors. Three handicap parking spaces, sidewalks and stairs also will be built. The metal building panels will be replaced and a thin stone veneer will be added.

The interior work will focus on the meeting rooms, kitchen and bathrooms. There will be new lighting fixtures throughout and new plumbing fixtures and toilet partitions in the restrooms. An epoxy floor in all but the north room will reduce maintenance costs.

The goal in the north room is to create a modern, aesthetically pleasing meeting space that also accommodates the latest technology. A 2014 study commissioned by the Kingman County Economic Development Council indicated a need for more desirable meeting space in the community. The renovated room will have state-of-the-art audio and visual capabilities, new interior finishes and carpeting. A wet bar will better serve events that include beverages.

The kitchen will be updated with new countertops and cabinets and a fire suppression hood over the stove. The updates are designed to make this space more efficient and possibly allow creation of a commercial kitchen in the future that could serve as a small business incubator.

One of the main recommendations of the Activity Center Committee was to build an addition to the indoor arena space to better serve rodeo and equine events year-round. The project includes a new 4,800 square foot addition to the south end and will include a warm up arena.

“Quality of life and financial success are important to growing communities,” said Commissioner Carol Voran. “The repurposed Activity Center can provide both.”

The project bid approved by commissioners is \$774,179. Commerce Construction expects to take 180 days to complete the project. The project will be funded without a tax increase. The Activity Center is located at 121 S. Main in Kingman. Architect for the project is Bethany Thimesch, Studio 54 in Kingman.

“Renovating this community asset, without an increase in taxes, is the best thing we can do for our local economy,” said Alan Albers, president of the Kingman County Economic Development Council. “It will ensure that the Activity Center is here in the future, continuing to create wonderful memories for the next generation and continuing to create a sustainable economy for Kingman.”

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