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## **A FIRST: BATTLE CREEK CENTRAL H.S. BEARCATS TO COMPETE & PRACTICE ON ONE, CENTRAL CAMPUS**

**Bloomfield Hills, Mich., September 16, 2009** — Improvements to the C.W. Post Athletic Complex, the first project under construction as part of the Battle Creek Public Schools May 2007 \$68.9 Million bond issue, is nearing completion. The other bond projects include Valley View Elementary School, Central High School and Central Field House projects.

TMP Architecture, Inc., Portage; Architects Incorporated, LLC, Battle Creek, and Foresite Design, Inc. of Berkley, designed improvements to the district's athletic complex. Construction managers are Skanska USA Building, Inc., Portage and Schweitzer, Inc., Battle Creek. The improved facilities will make history: the 2009-2010 Bearcat athletics season represents the first time that soccer, baseball, softball, tennis, track & field, and football will be conveniently located at one central downtown campus, adjacent the high school. Improvements to C.W. Post stadium include a complete tear-off and replacement of the track, reorganization of field events, and the addition of synthetic turf to the football field. Through an agreement with the City of Battle Creek, the school district was able to improve adjacent land to add competition baseball and softball fields, complete with dugouts, observation towers, and restrooms, and practice fields for each sport. A competition soccer field, two practice soccer fields, eight tennis courts and two 50-yard practice football fields were also added. The entire complex will be complete at the end of September 2009. Project cost was \$4,293,000.

The original 1961 complex hosted only football, track and field, and softball events and was shared by Battle Creek Central High School, W.K. Kellogg Middle School, as well as St. Philip Middle School and High School student athletes. Practice sessions, competitive events, and field limitations kept the original complex operating at maximum capacity.

Previously, baseball games were held at either the Battle Creek Area Math & Science Center or Bailey Park; soccer games were played at the Math & Science Center and tennis matches



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were hosted at Kellogg Community College. In addition to the condition of the aging facilities, student interest in participation, difficulties in coordinating available field time, transportation arrangements to and from practices, and communication about field location are reasons that the project was included on the May 2007 ballot.

"Not having all sports on one campus meant making sure, to the best of our ability, opponents knew that sites were scattered around town," says Karolynn Ferguson, BCPS Athletic Department secretary. "And just because the visiting athletic department was aware, didn't mean that parents or bus drivers received the message." Ms. Ferguson and Athletic Director Fred Jones agreed that many would-be spectators would arrive at the high school, be directed to the field house, only to find out that a particular game was in another location. "We had instances when a parent might show up at the high school, and by the time they made it to the Math and Science Center for their child's soccer game, the game was over," says Ferguson.

Rain cancellations resulting in rescheduled games, including busing and requests for officials, was not an easy task, particularly for those sports held at off-site locations. Many parties needed to be involved to make rescheduling work. With the new all-encompassing sports complex, costs for transporting kids off-site, repeated trips for rain delays and cancellations, will not be a factor. "Having all the sports on one site, our site, will help the transportation department and be a cost savings for the district. We won't have to pay tournament fees," says Fred Jones.

The site improvements will not only impact the Battle Creek Central High School students, but the community will also benefit. This summer, the district felt that a "payback" was in order for the investment made by taxpayers who approved the bond issue. They allowed other entities, including the Cereal City Track Club, City of Battle Creek Baseball League members, a baseball and softball clinic for grades 4 - 8, a soccer clinic for grades 4 - 8 and for 9-12, use of the new facilities. W. K. Kellogg Middle School and St. Philip Catholic Schools will continue to use the facilities.

Earlier this spring, the new facilities hosted District baseball, District softball, District soccer and All-City track events all on the same day. Fred Jones reports that although it was a "crazy day," convenience prevailed, as the number of site coordinators was less than normal, bussing wasn't an issue and spectators and officials were clear about the tournaments' location. "The only issue



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we had was parking, which will improve once the remainder of parking is completed with the high school construction," says Jones.

During construction of the athletic complex, nearby districts worked with BCPS in a spirit of cooperation. "Neighboring districts all worked well with us. We used Pennfield and Harper [Creek]'s baseball and softball fields for a tournament. Harper Creek used our softball fields for a tournament. We borrowed Harper Creek's and Pennfield's tracks while ours was under construction, and Harper borrowed ours while theirs was under construction. We have good neighbors," says Jones.

TMP, celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, has offices in Portage and Bloomfield Hills, Michigan as well as Columbus, Ohio. The firm produces a variety of projects for K-12 educational, college / university and municipal clients. Recent award-winning projects include two new LEED Silver Certified high schools in Michigan: Whitmore Lake High School, Whitmore Lake and Skyline High School, Ann Arbor. Some of the firm's current work includes various projects for Hillsdale College and for Portage Public Schools.

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