

# Construction begins on first student union at STHS

By Kathryn Reed

Five years ago when Ivone Larson became principal of South Tahoe High School her dream was to get rid of the building in the middle of campus that originally housed the auto and wood shops.

That wish came true this summer. And an even bigger dream was realized Monday with the ceremonial groundbreaking for the Student Union. The nearly 20,000-square-foot L shaped building should be ready for students for the 2012-13 school year.



A year from now a student union will cover the dirt at South Tahoe High School.

Photo/LTN

No one was particularly fond of the structure.

“The shop building was the biggest piece of crap on this campus,” architect Steve Newsom said.

He added the new building will “reinforce the pedestrian traffic spine here. Ultimately, it would be great if that were

a covered walk.”

The structure is a joint endeavor between Lake Tahoe Unified and South Lake Tahoe because of the grant from the state to fund the building that is situated behind the gym and in front of the Stadium View building.

The city will have access to meeting room space, which is something the town lacks. The three rooms may be opened into one.

In 2008 when voters passed Measure G, the school facilities bond, the budget called for \$3.5 million to renovate the building. Then the prospect of the joint use grant from the state surfaced and was applied for. That brought in \$4 million in matching funds.

Now the budget for the Student Union is \$9.5 million. This is a rendering of the Student Union.

“This will pull people together,” Superintendent Jim Tarwater said July 25 during the festivities.

This will be the first time there will be room to feed all the students. Plus, it gives them a gathering spot instead of being dispersed throughout the campus.

Tarwater said the student culinary arts program would be able to provide breakfast and lunch fare for meetings and events, with the district’s food services backing up the students.

Nothing of the old building remains. It’s a dirt plot waiting for a foundation. About 75 percent of the structure was able to be recycled at South Tahoe Refuse.

This will be the final entirely new building to be erected at South Tahoe High.

The sports medicine facility will be an 8,000-square-foot addition to the gym. Plans for it are headed to state agencies

next week for approval.

In addition to the ground breaking, city and school district officials also toured the Theater Arts and Design Academy that will open next month at the start of the 2011-12 school year.

Expect the first performance in the new theater this winter – probably in December.