

By Robert P. Lockwood

The Diocese of Pittsburgh has selected Mascaro Construction Company, L.P., to provide General Construction Services for the Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School project to be located in Cranberry Township.

Mascaro will be working closely with Astorino Architects who serves as the architect for the new high school.

“Mascaro Construction is pleased to be involved with the construction of the new Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School,” said Jack Mascaro, Chairman of Mascaro Construction Company.

“The need for Catholic education in the North Hills area has grown exponentially over the last two decades, and this new facility located in Cranberry Township will help alleviate the increasing demands for quality Catholic education. We are proud to be part of the team that will help educate our young people and establish the proper values and strong Catholic beliefs they will need for the rest of their lives,” Mascaro said.

Mascaro has already begun providing preconstruction services on the project including cost estimation, value engineering and scheduling.

The project has recently moved from the design development phase into the construction document phase. Astorino Architects continue to develop the design through input from Diocesan staff and the various consultants involved with the project.

The project is being designed to meet the LEED Silver Certification criteria and therefore will contain many sustainable systems and materials that will protect the environment and reduce the life cycle cost of the building.

In keeping with Bishop David Zubik’s vision of the Church Alive across the Diocese, the Diocese of Pittsburgh has explored building a high school in the northern tier of the Diocese – the fastest growing population center in southwestern Pennsylvania.

This project has been closely aligned with the strategic planning of North Catholic High School in Pittsburgh’s Troy Hill neighborhood which saw the need to move the school to the Cranberry/Mars area where the population base is located.

North Catholic and the Diocese are continuing to work together to engage North Catholic alumni and supporters, and to broaden the base of support for the new school.

Father Kris Stubna, diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education, pointed out that while there are Catholic high schools available to families in several northern areas, many families in this region do not have easy access to a Catholic high school. Also, studies have indicated that the new high school will attract many students who do not presently attend Catholic secondary schools after eighth grade.

“With many of our elementary schools in that area thriving and seeing increased enrollments, there is even a greater need today for the new high school to be built,” Father Stubna said.

“We are creating a brand new high school program that will include the best of North Catholic, while bringing the very latest in educational programming, technologies

and thought to make this a state-of-the-art secondary educational institution,” Father Stubna said.

The new program, Father Stubna noted, will be designed around the five Marianist principles that have been at the core of North Catholic High School’s educational programs – formation in faith; an integral, quality education of the whole person; family spirit; education for service, justice and peace; and education for change.

“These are fundamental to who we are as a Catholic institution and they reaffirm our commitment to educate the whole person: mind, body and spirit. Our Blessed Mother will serve as the primary inspiration for this project and a key intercessor for our students. She will have a place of prominence which is clearly at the heart of the Marianist charism.”

The estimated overall project costs for the Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School is between \$62 to \$67 million. Of that amount, the hard construction costs are estimated to be between \$46 to \$49 million.

The Diocese purchased the property for \$8 million in early 2010 and has engaged the services of various consultants to prepare the design of the school. Some of the costs for the project are a result of needed road improvements in the area around the new high school.

Father Stubna said that alumni of North Catholic have raised about \$5 million in pledges and in-kind gifts, but it will require the support of many others to bring the project to a successful completion.

Much of this additional financial support will need to be realized over the next two months as the start of the construction is scheduled for later winter/early spring of 2012.

“There continues to be a growing interest from many in our community to see this project become a reality. We have the opportunity here to build a facility that can serve the greater needs of the parishes and the community in that region of the Diocese,” Father Stubna noted.

In preparation for the new school, programs from across the country have been studied and input has been gathered from many sources, including students and teachers.

“It is our hope that we are not just teaching our students information, but they will be able to participate in new and innovative ways with our business and corporate partners in business, science, health care and others,” he said.

The timing for construction of the new Catholic high school will depend on the success of the campaign to raise sufficient funds. Anticipated enrollment for the new co-educational school will be approximately 1,000 students.

“We are working hard to engage a number of stakeholders, including the current North Catholic High School alumni, as well as, a much broader base of support. We are hopeful that the importance of this project and the opportunity we have as a Diocese to serve more of our children and youth will encourage others to help us make this project a reality,” Father Stubna said.