

Story on Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School

By Robert P. Lockwood

Pittsburgh – The architects for the new Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School in Butler County have designed a “school for the 21st century” with a chapel dedicated to the Blessed Mother at its heart.

The schematic plan for the new school was recently released by Astorino Architects and Engineers. The school, which is anticipated to be LEED-certified, will be built on nearly 71 acres located on State Rte. 228 in Cranberry Township, across from the new St. Kilian Catholic elementary school.

Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School is now moving from the planning stage to the design/development stage with much work already underway.

The Catholic Institute of the Diocese of Pittsburgh has purchased the land in Butler County and has been in discussions with representatives of both Seven Fields and Cranberry Township concerning access roads and ongoing development plans.

The goal is to open the doors Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School for the 2013-2014 academic year. This is contingent on raising enough capital funds for the project to commence on schedule.

Bishop David A. Zubik had announced last April that the new school would be named for Cardinal Donald W. Wuerl of Washington, D.C. in recognition of his “18 years as bishop of Pittsburgh and his nationally-recognized leadership in Catholic education.”

The schematic design from Astorino Architects and Engineers for the new Catholic high school projects serving an enrollment of 1,000 students.

In addition to the chapel, the fully-accessible school building will provide two levels of classrooms, an auditorium, rehearsal rooms, gymnasium, offices, library and the full range of facilities necessary in providing a 21st-century educational environment.

The extensive plans for the new school also envision that the entire campus will serve as a resource for the diocesan community as a whole with adequate facilities to serve the vicariates and local parishes, as well as diocesan-wide events.

The new school will provide young men and women with a program that will incorporate the best of the educational program currently in place at North Catholic High School in the Troy Hill section of Pittsburgh, stated Father Kris D. Stubna, diocesan Secretary for Catholic Education.

“The new school will maintain the strengths and tradition of the current North Catholic High School program and provide a superb and competitive program in every facet of the curricular and co-curricular program,” Father Stubna said.

The chapel dedicated to the Blessed Mother represents the long-standing Marianist heritage of North Catholic High School that focuses on an education grounded in faith, family, spirit and service.

“Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School will build on the excellence of Catholic secondary education in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. This includes not only the heritage of North Catholic, but the reputation and quality of all our high schools throughout the diocese,” Father Stubna said.

A grant given to the Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School by the

Heinz Endowments was used to study and to identify best practices for operating a state of the art Catholic secondary school that prepares students for the 21st century.

“The new school’s curriculum will reflect the Marianist tradition and educate for adaptation and change,” the study reported. “The program will be designed so that students obtain the academic information and skills to think and communicate critically and creatively and to develop their interests and talents at their highest achievement levels.”

Cardinal Wuerl North Catholic High School is the largest building project undertaken by the Diocese of Pittsburgh in recent history. Construction costs are estimated at \$45 million and total costs of the whole project estimated about \$60 million.

Father Stubna added that there is a great deal of excitement and interest in the new high school, particularly from many families in that part of the diocese who desire to send their children to a quality, faith-centered Catholic high school. This new high school will provide greater accessibility to Catholic education for a growing area of the diocese

A fundraising campaign is currently underway to raise the capital necessary to obtain the financing for the project to proceed. These efforts have included an outreach to the alumni and friends of North Catholic High School, as well as efforts to engage others in the wider community and the diocese.

“Ultimately this project is about helping to make the Church Alive in the northern tier of our diocese by expanding our ability to provide Catholic education to many more of our families who desire a Catholic education for their children. In addition, it is our

hope that this new facility can help to serve the faithful from all of our parishes in that area of the diocese,” said Father Stubna.

According to Frank Orga, president of North Catholic High School, a group of friends and benefactors of the school recently contributed \$600,000 in a new challenge grant aimed specifically at the North Catholic family.

The grant provides “\$600,000 as a matching gift for new funds raised from our alumni and friends of North Catholic. This means that 100 percent of all new gifts will be matched and any additional dollars added on to gifts already pledged will be matched as well,” Mr. Orga stated. North Catholic parents and graduates are now conducting a first ever national phonathon to reach out to their alumni and invite them to help in making this new high school in Cranberry a reality.