

# Field

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“Kindle’s Korner” columns printed in the *Press and Dakotan*. The subject of Crane-Youngworth Field was then talked about at the school board meeting held this past Monday night.

## THE ISSUES AT CRANE-YOUNG WORTH

“We have a structure that is almost 90 years old, and with that comes wear and tear and deterioration, which are all happening,” Kindle said. “There are areas of the stadium that are deteriorating faster than other areas. While it’s not unsafe right now, the engineer firm is not willing to go any further out than five years, which tells us that we have a window to get something done.”

In a walk-through of Crane-Youngworth Field on Friday, Kindle pointed out several areas where the concrete has broken away and the rebar is exposed. He noted that the concessions area and bathrooms under the stadium are grossly inadequate for the needs of the people attending events at the facility. He also noted the exposed electrical wires, which he said are not up-to-date and cause a lot of electrical issues for the district.

At one point during the tour, Kindle reached up to point out a crack near a sign and had a large chunk of concrete break off in his hand.

“I didn’t even pull on that,” he said. “It just came off in my hand. The thing is when people come to a game, they are not looking at the underside of the stadium, they are excited to get to the game. It is the school district’s responsibility to make sure that we provide a safe facility. And while it is still safe right now, five years from now we don’t know what we will be facing.”

While the grandstand area is in need of many repairs, Kindle said it isn’t the only issue facing the school district.

“We have drainage issues on the field where we have some crowning and other areas that dip,” Kindle said. “Interestingly enough, our football players could tell you where those poor spots are on the field. Marching band students could also tell you where the rough spots are on the field.”

Because of all these issues the district is faced with a decision: tear down Crane-Youngworth Field and rebuild at the current location or renovate Williams Field located next to the high school and move the facility there.

“We don’t believe the public would be too interested in putting a lot of money into a 90-year-old structure to rehabilitate it, and then maybe 15 years from now the rehabilitation would need additional work and we would be back at what do we do now,” Kindle said. “My guess would be the public — and I can’t speak for the school board — would choose that we would really take a look at replacing the stadium itself. The question is going to be, which location do they prefer?”

## WHAT WOULD IT COST?

“We know that we have some price quotes that give us estimates right now to go in there and completely tear the stadium down and start over building a new stadium having adequate bathroom and concession spaces at Crane-Youngworth,” Kindle said. “We would do some bleacher stadium work and make use of some of the existing



Yankton School District Superintendent Dr. Wayne Kindle pointed to this crack near a sign during a tour of Crane-Youngworth Field Friday — and a small chunk of concrete fell off debris fell out. Wiring issues and inadequate facilities are also problems faced at the facility.

KELLY HERTZ/P&D

bleachers we have there and tie it into the new stadium. That cost estimate came back at an estimate of roughly \$1.9 million.”

If the district were to move to Williams Field, the estimated cost is \$2.4 million.

“The difference is that, while some things that would remain the same — such as dirt work and grandstand costs — at both places, the other expenses at Williams would include relocating existing bleachers, new lighting, sound systems, scoreboards and landscaping,” Kindle said. “We would have to relocate the fence and how the entrances are designed for entering that field for football, because we don’t want people all over the track. We do not have scoreboards (at Williams Field) that would accommodate our football needs. Field lights would be needed. The public announcement system would have to be updated. There are irrigation issues we would have to address and we would have to redesign how we do ticket sales there. We also feel that we would need to do landscaping for wind protection out there because there is nothing out there to the north.”

“What we have suffices for track, but there would need to be updates for football.”

Kindle said the school district has looked into what the feasibility would be of moving existing infrastructure from Crane-Youngworth to Williams Field.

“We have talked about moving the scoreboard and have talked to Daktronics,” he said. “The scoreboard may be possible to relocate, but there are things that would have to be redone. The field lights we have at Crane-Youngworth have been there a while, and my understanding is it is a much bigger problem to move lights than people think. Plus, the lighting at Williams would be different than what we need currently. Also, there are new regulations on what are required for lights in terms of heights and other lighting considerations. No matter how many times you move or who moves, you will damage something when you move it.”

In terms of the field itself, the cost estimates for installing field turf at either Crane-Youngworth or Williams Field would be the same: \$800,000

(this cost was included in both estimates).

“Currently, we spend about \$25,000 a year maintaining Crane-Youngworth Field,” Kindle said. “The field turf we would be looking at has a life expectancy of 12-15 years. If you take \$25,000 by 12-15 years, you are looking at \$300,000-375,000 that the district would spend if we continue to have a grass field. In addition to that, we have budgeted already — and have not spent — \$180,000 for field work at Crane-Youngworth. When you add those two figures together, you have roughly \$500,000 that we are going to have to spend on maintenance and repair work at Crane-Youngworth. I don’t see a disadvantage to going to turf.”

## GOING TO THE PUBLIC

“The debate of if we should rebuild at Crane-Youngworth or move to Williams Field is something we are going to bring to the public, in the form of a survey of some kind,” Kindle said.

Kindle said the debate is one he hopes the community gets involved in.

“Throughout this process, we want to make sure we take an input from the community, but more than that, we want to be transparent with the community as we start having these discussions,” he said. “I would like to put together some public forums where people can come, see the slide-show and give us input. Also, we will be putting together a survey that will ask the public about their choice of location and other questions we want to include in there.”

He said that while he has a personal preference, as superintendent of the schools, he wants to make sure that whatever the school district chooses to do, it will reflect the wishes of the community.

“There are a lot of really great memories for the Yankton College folks and for the community of Yankton for having played all of their games at Crane-Youngworth — all of the different events that have taken place there — our community members have a lot of pride in their school and facilities,” Kindle said. “The Crane-Youngworth facility has a

tremendous history for the community and the school; however it has come to the time where the community needs to help us determine what needs to be done.

“We have kind of a short window — three to five years. We will move forward with some kind of project in the next few years and leading up to that we want to make sure we give our community members plenty of opportunities to provide input and be part of the process through committees or helping raise money and determine what the future should be.”

He said he knows that there are advantages and disadvantages to both locations.

Kindle added that the district plans to go to the public for input beginning this spring.

“I would like to get out to community groups and visit with them, I want to have some forums in the high school theatre where it is big enough for people,” Kindle said. “We want constructive criticism. We want to hear good ideas, constructive ideas and opinions on where people think it should be located. In addition to finding out what the public wants, we are going to be talking to our students to find out what they would like us to do.”

Kindle said he is not sure which direction the community will choose to go.

“If a lot of alumni take part in the survey, particularly those who have taken part in the Crane-Youngworth tradition, they will have strong feelings on where they want to see this project go. On the other hand, who knows?” he said. “The bottom line for me is, you can’t ignore a 90-year-old facility that needs something done. Crane-Youngworth has given us many, many great years, but the time has come where we need to make a decision on how we move forward for the next 90 years.”

## THE TIMELINE MOVING FORWARD

Following the public forums and surveys, and once the decision has been made to rebuild at Crane-Youngworth or move to Williams Field, Kindle said the school district will have to be proactive in order to complete the project within the five-

year window given by the engineers. “This coming year, we would need to put together a budget plan through our capital outlay fund which addresses what needs to be done, either at Crane-Youngworth or, if we would choose to relocate, at Williams Field,” he said. “In 2016-17, we would do the scope of the work, get the specs, bid the project and then, in the fall of 2017, we would begin demolition of the grandstand and also begin work on the field.”

He noted that because this is a capital outlay project, and because the district would try to spread the scope of work over three budget years, YSD would not need to go to the public for any additional bond or certificates.

“Where we have had issues has been with the General Fund,” Kindle said. “General Fund primarily funds your staffing and programming for your schools. The Capital Outlay is for facilities and allows us to repair and build structures, and buy computers, chairs and busses. We have a really good capital outlay plan. We put together a 5-year capital outlay plan each year and we are able to project our revenues fairly accurately. Therefore, we feel confident that we can handle this in house.”

Kindle also said he hopes to put a committee together this spring that could run a capital campaign where potentially the \$800,000 needed for field turf could be raised independently.

“If we would be able to raise the money, then we would not have to expend as much out of our capital outlay fund,” he said. “When Williams Field was built, there was a capital campaign. The district contributed a good amount of money towards that project but they also raised money privately for that project. I have already had interest expressed in the turf committee and confidence that we can raise the funds needed. If we can raise the \$800,000, it would be wonderful; if we don’t raise it all, we have an obligation as a school district to meet the needs for the field one way or another.”

## NO RIGHT OR WRONG DECISION

Kindle said that the district is in a unique position in that it has two viable locations for the facility. But, it doesn’t come without questions that need to be addressed.

“The other concern we have with Crane-Youngworth is, if we were to relocate, the district has some responsibility to do something out there, and we don’t know what that would be,” he said. “Plus, we have the not-so-old fieldhouse and concession area on the north side. What do you do with what we leave behind? Maybe that needs to be renovated, if that be the case, but those issues remain if we leave Crane-Youngworth and the property.”

No matter the decision, Kindle said he knows it will be the right one for Yankton and the Yankton School District.

“This entire project will benefit our community — not just the school, not just the football team, not just dance teams or bands,” Kindle said. “When we have an event that we host in the school district, it brings people to Yankton. We can look at opportunities for exciting our younger kids that want to be on that field someday, that they can get on that field and experience a new, renovated facility and yet understand that prior to that we had a great stadium that wore out. I guess this is progress moving forward. It becomes inevitable with aging facilities.”

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