

# **St. John's purchases property for new school campus**

The Thomas family shares a long history with St. John's Catholic Prep, Frederick, so it was fitting that the school purchased more than 49 acres from The Charles B. Thomas and The George L. Thomas III Trust to build a new state-of-the-art campus.

The scenic property sits outside of Buckeystown six and a half miles from the school's current location on Butterfly Lane. Almost \$900,000 of the \$3 million purchase price was returned to the school by the Thomas family as a donation, according to Dr. Robert Pastoor, school president.

Ground will be broken in June for a \$25 million, 93,000-square-foot academic, administrative and activities facility with an expected completion date of fall 2009. The design includes a chapel, theater, music rooms, and advanced art, ceramics and graphics studios to enable the school to strengthen the visual and performing arts curriculum.

"The sale of the current property will pay for the bulk of it," said Diane L. Favret, executive director for institutional advancement, "and the balance will be raised through our Legacy Campaign and grants."

A planned 1,000-seat football, soccer, lacrosse and track stadium as well as a 1,000-seat athletic and convocation facility will enable on-campus athletic competitions for the first time in the school's history. A softball field, baseball field, tennis courts and several practice fields will be constructed as well.

The current school building, Prospect Hall, is a 1780 mansion listed on the area's historic register. The school has occupied the building since 1958, and the first portable classroom was added in 1994 to accommodate increasing enrollment. But the school "has outgrown its present facilities," said Dr. Pastoor. Classrooms were added to the gymnasium and six portable units brought in as well.

"The facilities are inadequate to provide the kind of education that is necessary today in the way of technology, science labs, media center, as well as regular

classrooms,” he said.

The new school, described as a “forward-thinking and technology-enriched campus,” is designed to house 500 students compared to the current 300 because of the increase in population in St. John’s recruiting area.

“As the only private, Catholic, high school in the Frederick area, St. John’s has been providing an excellent education in a Christian and nurturing environment for 179 years ... our intent is to continue providing an excellent, values-based education on an appropriate campus with a curriculum that will meet the needs of our students for the next 179 years,” said Ms. Favret. “These are exciting times for St. John’s. The school community is truly blessed with the support and dedication of this project from our board of directors, parents, alumni and friends.”