

NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDING OPENS

• *TODD COUNTY STARTS YEAR WITH NEW SCHOOL*

By 2011, it was determined that because of the increased student population in the two elementary schools in Mission, a new building was probably inevitable. Classrooms were overcrowded and several trailers were being used at North Elementary for classes.

That fall, a Facilities Planning Committee of Board Members and Administrators began preliminary plans for the new home for the K-5 students. They visited other recently erected schools across the state for ideas about the new building.

Land was purchased just south of the Middle School and on August 4, 2012, North Elementary students turned the first shovels of dirt for their new classrooms.

Design of the \$15.5 million facility was by Great Horse Architects of Minnesota. The entrance of the building features



singing Meadowlarks from sacred literature of the Lakota Oral Tradition.

Inside, the above and below connection of Lakota Star Knowledge, compliments the large central commons area, which is also the lunchroom. Three halls, with 10 to 12 general education rooms in each of them, branch out from the commons area. The facility is built to hold 730 students and the gymnasium will seat about 750. Roberta Bizardie and Bobbie Cox are the principal and assistant principal, respectively.

Administration was aware that along with a new building came new opportunities for improving school climate and academic achievement. Plans were made for a three-year Responsive Classroom Initiative and 1003a grant funds were used to provide Responsive Classroom training for all instructional staff before school started.

Responsive Classroom is a research and evidence-based approach to education that leads to greater teacher effectiveness, higher student achievement, and improved school climate. The approach is one that encourages safe, challenging, and joyful learning environments.

On Wednesday, August 27, 2014, the doors of Todd County Elementary School opened and 650 wide-eyed students happily entered their brand new classrooms.

