

## Stadium repairs not authorized yet

### If not an emergency, regular bid process required for fire damage

By Jimmie Covington

Friday, July 25, 2008

Following their attorney's advice, DeSoto County school board members on Thursday put off declaring repairs to the fire-damaged football stadium at DeSoto Central High School as an emergency.

"I think we need to do a little investigation before we authorize repairs," board attorney Keith Treadway told board members.

Education Supt. Milton Kuykendall said later the state auditor's office has not yet given approval for the project to be classified as an emergency.

Under an emergency declaration, officials could move ahead with the repairs without using the regular bidding process.

Kuykendall said he believes the auditor's office will approve an emergency declaration and that school officials will put things in place to move ahead with the project.

But, he said, "If it comes out we can't do it, we will have to go back and bid it ... We are going to fix it as expediently as we possibly can."

Robert Earl Phillips, district physical plant director, said the repairs are not expected to be completed in time for the scheduled home opener football game on Sept. 5. That game and possibly some other early season games will be shifted elsewhere.

A timeline for repairs and possibly a full cost estimate may be available today, Phillips said.

Partial loss estimates already exceed the \$25,000 deductible on the district's insurance policy.

The July 11 fire under the stadium bleachers burned or melted about 200 seats and damaged the press box.

Police arrested two young boys at the scene, one 11 and the other 12, and charged each of them as a "child in need of supervision." They were turned over to Youth Court.

Officials said the fire was started in high jump and pole vaulting padding that had been placed under the bleachers.

J. Stan Klenk, an engineer with Allen & Hoshall who has been assessing the damage, said one major structural beam and half of another one will have to be replaced along with about 200 seats.

-- Jimmie Covington: (662) 996-1406



© 2009 Scripps Newspaper Group — Online