



Church Street Receives \$400,000 To Go Toward New Roof

TUPELO, Miss. — For nearly 90 years, Church Street School faithfully served the Tupelo community by educating and molding the students who entered the doors of the historic building.

Although it hasn't been used as a school site since 2012, it continues to benefit the Tupelo Public School District by housing the finance and human resource offices, while next week expanding to include innovative programs design to assist students. It also entertains the needs of the community by hosting Pied Piper events and various Boys & Girls Club functions.

In addition, it's used as a training facility for all departments and also houses the English As A Second Language coordinators. There are even discussions to possibly consider relocating other administrative offices to Church Street.

To help facilitate this plan and maintain the upkeep of the campus, the school district learned Friday it will receive \$400,000 from the State BP Settlement Fund to go toward a new roof at Church Street.

The driving force behind this funding was Mississippi state Sen. Chad McMahan.

He, along with fellow senators Hob Bryan and Shane Aguirre, with assistance from city councilwoman Nettie Davis, worked tirelessly with Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves to secure these much-needed funds for Church Street, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

“We invited Tate Reeves to come up and see the school, and we explained the historical significance,” said McMahan, a 1990 graduate of Tupelo High School. “We want to keep the school in production where it’s usable because we feel it’s a worthy cause for the Tupelo Public School District.”

McMahan, who serves District 6, said what makes this funding even more special is the fact it was a bipartisan effort.

“Shane and I are republicans and Hob is a democrat, but we put our political differences aside to do what’s best for the community and school district,” he said. “We worked together for the betterment of Tupelo to encompass the Tupelo Spirit.”

It’s a philosophy that mirrors new TPSD superintendent Dr. Rob Picou’s vision of customer service, innovation and relationships.

“On behalf of our school board and community, I would like to personally thank our legislative leaders and welcome them into the One Single Heartbeat,” Picou said. “It is always good when we can do the right thing for the right reasons. Our school board has also set aside funding to address lighting and other needs around this historic Tupelo treasure.”

As soon as funds are transferred and the board approves the designs, TPSD operations director Charles Laney said the bidding process will begin.

“Once construction starts, it will take 60-90 days to complete,” he said.

Church Street originally opened its doors in 1923 but was completely destroyed by the 1936 tornado. The current Art Deco style facility opened in 1938.

It gained fame thanks to visits by two presidents — Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman.

“The rest of the state should be paying attention to the entire Tupelo Public School District on the dividends it’s getting from all its investments,” McMahan said. “We have a great health system, the lowest unemployment in the state and an educated workforce. It goes back to the relationship and commitment between the community and district. It’s a model everyone should follow.”

-www.tupeloschools.com-