

## **Joint Hearing of the House and Senate Capital Budget Subcommittees**

### **Miscellaneous Grant Program:**

### **Garrett County – High Schools Athletic Facilities Renovation**

### **March 9, 2021 Hearing Testimony**

#### **Southern Garrett High School – Stadium Lighting Project**

**Cost:** The purpose of the project is to provide Southern Garrett County High School with outdoor lighting for our new, community multipurpose stadium. The lights will aid with many different programs in the southern Garrett County school community. Without lighting our new stadium will be severely limited on its impact for our athletic and civic groups in our school communities and the cost will be too great for our community to overcome.

The field is utilized by high school football, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, boys and girls track and field, and marching band. It is also utilized by youth league boys' and girls' soccer, football, boys' and girls' track and field, baseball, and softball teams. Our youth and many of our high school programs will be denied access due to time constraints. A lack of lighting would virtually eliminate our abilities to have outside civic groups use our stadium as all the daylight time would be taken by our school sports programs, leaving no time for outside groups in the dark. This harms civic organizations such as Relay-for-Life and Cindy's Fund, as well as local concerts and civic gatherings. Having no outdoor lighting drastically limits the time that we can use our stadium for all of these events and practices. Currently we have to schedule home contests during school hours or Saturdays as we have to get them over with before dark. Below is outlined the benefits of having the lights. Lights help us to impact thousands of students in the southern Garrett County area. No lights means we can only accommodate several hundred; this is a drastic drop in who we can accommodate. Our athletic department is reliant on gate receipts to pay bills so that we can offer a multitude of sports across the seasons. The inability to play in the prime times has reduced our outdoor revenue by 70-80%. This creates a situation where we have to take the hard look at potentially cutting sports from our program offerings. We are about providing opportunity, not limiting and so this lighting project is vitally important our community and school endeavors.

**Benefits:** The benefits to having lighting for our athletic offerings are numerous. Stadium lighting would impact over 1,000 students and athletes who range in age from 5 years old up to 18. It also allow us to host various civic activities for our adult community. Local cancer fundraisers have been held at our location, however they have to organize in the day light as lack of lighting limits the time frame they can utilize the area. This project will allow us to offer our community what so many other communities have; we will have a safe, well lit, and prideful stadium that the Southern Garrett High School community will be able to utilize well into the future. Further, this project will allow us to grant access to field usage to our outdoor

youth programs, giving us, as a school, better opportunities to help those young kids grow in concert with the mission of our high school athletic offerings. This also allows for us to open up our indoor spaces to youth that could use them for training when we otherwise have to deny requests due to our outdoor sports needing to be inside if it get too dark to practice.

This project will greatly enhance the opportunities that we can provide the youth of southern Garrett County. Our high school is essentially our community recreation center. We take great pride in having filled that role for many years. This project will greatly enhance what we are striving to do in giving our kids the best possible situations to train, grow, and learn in our true community facility.

### **Northern Garrett High School – Stadium Lighting and Bleacher Project**

The purpose of the project is to provide Northern Garrett County High School with an updated lighting system and new bleachers for our new community multi-purpose stadium. Our facility has become the outdoor recreation center for the northern end of the county.

The field and track are utilized by high school football, boys' and girls' soccer, baseball, softball, boys' and girls' track and field, marching band, and ROTC competitions. It is also utilized by youth league soccer, football, baseball, softball, and track and field. Our facility has also been host to youth summer camps and Relay for Life cancer events.

The need for updated lighting and the need for ADA compliant visitor bleachers will make it a much safer facility. The upgraded lighting will not only improve the quality of nighttime activities, but can also project lighting to other areas such as some practice areas around the stadium. New visitor bleachers will help improve the seating capacity as the current bleachers are too low and are not often occupied due to lack of visibility of the field.

This project would create such a positive impact on many students and athletes and others within our community. The cost of this project would be too great for our community to overcome.