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SVVSD breaks ground: New Erie school is officially under way

By Victoria A.F. Camron
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ERIE — Susan Lamb teaches at Flagstaff Academy in Longmont, where her daughter Ashlyn is in third grade, but she's still glad to see construction beginning on Elementary School 26 in her Erie neighborhood.

"Ever since we've been here, it's grown tremendously," Lamb said Tuesday during the new school's groundbreaking event.

The new school, scheduled to open in the fall of 2011, will ease overcrowding at Erie Elementary and Black Rock Elementary, which opened in 2008.

Dori Van Lone, the St. Vrain Valley School District Board of Education director from Erie, said the school will be the most technologically advanced in the district.

"Some of these kids will go on to do great things in many areas of life," Van Lone said. "We should all be very proud of what's happening here today."

Lamb also is glad Erie residents will have a choice in curriculum, as Elementary 26 will offer both Core Knowledge and a traditional curriculum. Core Knowledge is a sequenced curriculum currently offered at most of the district's charter schools.

"It's going to be a wonderful opportunity to have another school in the area that has Core Knowledge," Lamb said.

Cyrus Weinberger, the school's principal, spoke admiringly of the St. Vrain Valley School District and its voters for having the forethought to build the school. Building Elementary 26 was part of the \$189 million bond voters passed in 2008.

Many other school districts are "facing difficult decisions" because of the economy, he said.

"Today, Erie is a burgeoning town steeped in history and tradition," Weinberger said.

Board of Education president John Creighton also thanked voters for approving the bond that is paying for Elementary School 26.

"It's clear to me this is not going to be the last time we're going to be here in Erie" for a school groundbreaking, Creighton said. But he advised voters to vote against Amendment 61 in November.

That ballot issue, if passed, would severely limit the school district's ability to borrow money and require that all bonds be repaid in 10 years instead of the usual 20 or longer. It would make the bond that is funding the district's newest elementary school "impossible," he said.

Contractors began working at the school site, at the ends of Meller Street and Telleen Avenue in the Canyon Creek subdivision, about two months ago, project manager Joe Little said.

The ground had been graded and power lines have been moved, he said. Some of the foundation has been poured, and sewer lines are being installed as well. Steel for the walls will be set in about four to six weeks, Little said.

Victoria Camron can be reached at 303- 684-5226 or vcamron@times-call.com.



Emma Carnival, 5, and her brother Jack, 3, both of Erie, take part in the groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday for Elementary School 26 in Erie. **Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call**