

## Area

## STRASBURG

# Residents sign petition to save old school building

By **BARB LIMBACHER**

news@timesreporter.com

Community members interested in acquiring the Strasburg High/Junior High building, which is scheduled to be demolished, were told to collect data and return to the July 8 Board of Education meeting.

Business owner Ted Shetler said Wednesday the group is interested in transforming the building into a community center that could also serve as a disaster shelter. He said

small businesses could locate in the 30 classrooms, and several people have voiced interest. Shetler said 80 people have signed a petition to save the old building, which is to be razed when the new school is completed.

Shetler said if it doesn't work in a couple of years, the group would foot the bill for the demolition.

Board President Ed Yackey asked if the group has talked to the state about bringing the building up to code because there are no handicapped

accessible restrooms, asbestos would have to be removed and air conditioning installed.

"You would need at least \$500,000 upfront to even start making improvements. Why put a new school behind an old building? I don't want an old building in front of the new campus?" Yackey asked. "It is just my opinion, but I will vote 'no.'"

Resident Mike Dreher, who said he doesn't want the board to give up control of the land, said the annual cost of utilities is about \$99,000.

Board members Susan Samsa and Pete Angelo said they don't want the old building demolished. Members Chris Beck and Wes Hostetler asked the group to present facts and figures in July, and input from the community is welcome.

Yackey said construction of the building has been delayed for about a week to remove about 1,000 square feet of topsoil placed in the area of the new high school gym. He said officials don't know how the soil got there.

In other news:

- A library book titled "Lady's Maid" was accepted in memory of Lewin Vermillion, a 1949 Strasburg graduate and retired Army soldier who died in 2008.

- The resignation of Ron Hurst as Washington, D.C., trip adviser was accepted and teacher Brett Hershberger was hired for that supplemental.

- Approval was given to the Strasburg Marching band for a trip to Williamsburg and Norfolk, Va., April 29-May 3, 2010, to participate in the

Azalea Festival parade.

- The elementary awards ceremony will be held Tuesday at 7 in the elementary cafeteria.

- The board agreed to have an all-grades policy in place for next school year to deal with cell phones and texting during school.

- The last two weeks of school students will receive a pin number, and parents can pay up front for lunches.

- An executive session was held to discuss employment of personnel.