

2012 Community Service Award

The Community Service Award is given annually to a service club, civic organization or individual that demonstrates an economic enhancement to the area, provides service to the community and enhances the community image and enriches community life.

The following individuals have been nominated this year; Carrie Katerzynske, Chad Hoerth, Deborah Johnson, the Hatten Stadium Foundation, the New London Girls Youth Basketball Association, the New London Rotary Club, Richard Yerkey, Saputo Cheese USA, the Shamrock Club of New Dublin and Tony and Lorraine Van Kampen.

Hatten Stadium, built in the early 1940's, has been a historic cornerstone of the New London community for thousands of youth and adults who over the past 60 years have played baseball there. Visiting players and spectators marvel at the site of the mature pine and cedar trees surrounding the old stone masonry, which encompasses the entire stadium. Unfortunately, this fantastic venue has been slowly dimming as time and Mother Nature have eaten away at its brilliance. However, because of this, the opportunity has presented itself to make this "diamond in the rough", shine once again. A group of individuals have come forward with the vision and determination to make Hatten Stadium THE BEST venue for all who play there.

Once the need was identified the organization was formed with the following mission; the Hatten Stadium Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to the preservation, restoration and maintenance of Hatten Stadium.

Hatten Stadium is home to the following: New London High School Baseball (Varsity, JV and Freshman), New London Youth Baseball, Babe Ruth 14's and 15's, New London American Legion and Jr. Legion Clippers Baseball and the New London Merchants (B.A.B.A League).

What exactly is this organization planning to do? As with any baseball stadium, the most important piece for the making of a good game, is a good playing surface. So the first task the foundation decided to tackle is the renovation of the playing field. In conjunction with the field renovation, the foundation hired Omni Associates to design a master renovation plan for the rest of the stadium. This plan includes designs and cost estimates for: remodeling the restrooms, the dugouts and the service rooms under the stadium. It also includes recommendations for energy efficient lighting and the addition of a concession venue, upgraded landscaping, the adding of bullpens and renovation of stadium seating.

Monday March 28, 2011 that plan was unveiled to the public at a meeting held at the New London High School Auditorium. Due to the community's response to the fundraising efforts of the foundation, groundbreaking for Phase 1 was held on September 7th, 2011. Dorschner Excavating started the project by removing sod around the infield. This phase includes regrading the infield, adding additional drain tile, installing new ball diamond mix and conditioner and finally replacing the turf with fresh sod.

The next steps will be to put in a new irrigation system; the funds for this portion have already been raised and are designated. The next step in the project and for fundraising is the warning tracks. The group is hopeful that they will have funds raised and be ready to go by the fall. The next hurdle will be lighting.

Goals of having this updated facility will be the opportunity to host High School sectional and regional games as well as American Legion state tournaments and games.

It will be exciting to see what this group is able to accomplish with community support and some hard work. The possibilities are endless!

It's clear that this group provides a service to the community, enhances our community image and enriches community life.

On behalf of the New London Area Chamber of Commerce, we present the 2012 Community Service Award to the Hatten Stadium Foundation.