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Ashford project totals \$4.6M

Fields on track to be finished by Aug. 1 deadline

By Scott Levine

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CLINTON — Ashford University's new athletic fields will total more than \$4.6 million, according to building permits issued by the city of Clinton.

Part of the 128-acre property acquired from the Clinton Country Club in December will house a new football and soccer field, along with a nine-lane track and parking lot.

John Ballheim, Ashford University vice president and campus director, said the facility will include temporary bleachers, seating about 100 to 200 fans. The fields were designed to accommodate a 10,000-seat stadium. However, no plans have been formulated to build that kind of a stadium, Ballheim said.

Also, the artificial turf is the highest quality, Ballheim said, noting that most NFL fields have that turf.

"There are two thoughts to line for football," Ballheim said. "We want to make this facility available to the community, and when I say community, we mean any high school in the area.

"The other thought is that it gives us flexibility in the future if we want to bring on football, we can just recruit the athletes and go."

There have been no conversations with area high schools about using the football field, Ballheim said.

Ballheim guessed that about 30 acres were being used with the facility, leaving almost 100 more acres for future development. Expansion conversations have circulated on a new academic building, with classrooms and a science lab, and new resident halls, Ballheim said.

Despite those talks, Ballheim said no plans were being considered.

"We can go over there and simply keep the lawn mowed, until we decide what we want to do, and then we can just do it," Ballheim said.

Despite inclement weather, the sports facility should still be completed by Aug. 1, Ballheim said.



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