

School Auditorium Dedicated in Memory of Duffy

'He Loved This Community'

State-line area residents fondly remember Mike Duffy's dedication to the schools and community, but the local school board wanted to make sure that future generations would learn of his strong commitment to South Beloit.



Mike Duffy

Bold letters above the entryway to the theater at South Beloit High School state "Michael M. Duffy Auditorium" and a plaque proclaims: "This auditorium is dedicated in memory of Michael M. Duffy as a permanent reminder of how instrumental he was in our district and in the creation of this high school. His dedication, commitment and love for our students, faculty, staff and community will always be remembered."

Duffy, who died unexpectedly last year, served as superintendent of the South Beloit School District from 1995 until he retired in 2010. His retirement didn't last

long because he soon took a position as interim superintendent of the Durand School District and was elected South Beloit's mayor and a Rock Energy Cooperative director in 2011.

Lori Duffy said it is an honor to have the high school's auditorium named after her husband.

"It helps me to see what he meant to this community and how special he was," she said. "He loved this community, and people knew it."

When Duffy was hired as superintendent, South Beloit schools were overcrowded. Scott Fischer, current superintendent, remembered that he was Riverview School principal at the time and musical instruments were kept in his office because storage space was at a premium. Duffy worked with the school board to devise a plan to build a new high school, convert the old high school into a junior high, and adjust classes in the lower grades to fill freed-up space at the elementary schools.

The plan, however, needed community support to make the \$14 million dream become a reality. Voters overwhelmingly approved a \$9 million referendum in 2000 that was added to a \$5 million state grant. Fischer and

(Continued on page 16c ▶)

Lori Duffy and Superintendent Scott Fischer stand outside the Michael M. Duffy Auditorium at South Beloit High School.

MICHAEL M. DUFFY AUDITORIUM





Join Us Friday, Aug. 14 for **ROCK ENERGY** **FAMILY NIGHT** at the **BALLPARK**

Because of
rainy weather
on June 20, our
event has been
rescheduled.

Beloit Snappers vs. West Michigan Whitecaps

7 p.m.

**Pohlman Field at Telfer Park
in Beloit**

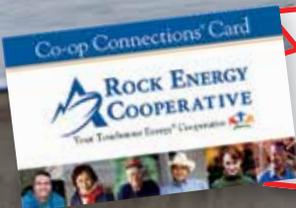
Gates open at 6 p.m.

The first 30 kids win a special gift.
(Must be accompanied by adult member.)

Come early to collect team
autographs. Then stay late for
a spectacular fireworks show!

Stop at either our Janesville
or South Beloit offices to
buy game tickets.
Tickets are \$2 each (\$7
value) and good for any
2015 regular season
Snappers home game.

**Show your Co-op Connections
Card at the ballpark on August 14 to
buy reduced-price food vouchers. Get
a hot dog, chips, and soda or pizza
and soda for just \$2. If you don't have
a card, stop at either Rock Energy
location to get yours free!**



Michael M. Duffy Auditorium

(Continued from page 16a)

board members recalled that the community backed the referendum to build the new school, largely because they trusted Duffy. He played an integral role in the building's design and had a vision that the building would be more than a high school.

"We can use parts of the building for a lot of different things," Duffy was quoted during the planning stages. "It can be more of a civic center or community center—not just a school. That's too much money for it to be closed at night and on weekends."

Linda Chambers, school board president at the time, said Duffy wanted to bring the arts to the community and believed the 600-seat auditorium would be a great venue for plays, concerts, and other events.

"That auditorium was his baby," Lori Duffy said. "He had dreamed of having a fantastic auditorium, and he pushed for it. He would stand on that stage and say, 'I did something good for this community.'"

Duffy kept a close watch over construction while the high school was built, school board members remembered.

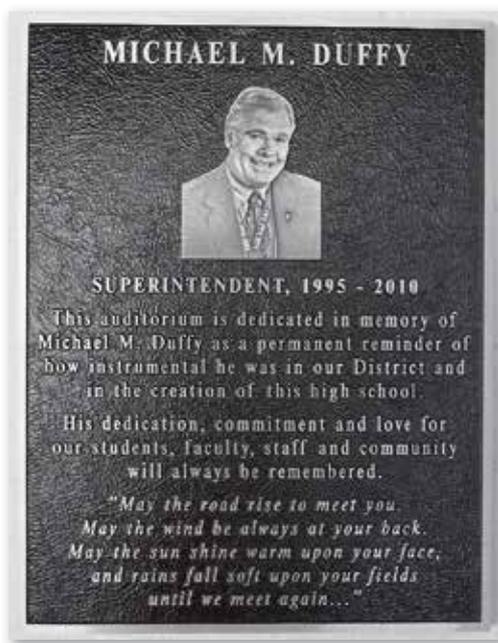
"Mike was very dedicated," said Ted Zierath, school board member. "He took it upon himself to be at the building site on a regular basis. He wanted to make sure things were done right, and no shortcuts were taken."

Lori Duffy's interest in the community has increased since her husband's death because she hopes to continue working on projects that meant so much to him.

"He definitely left a mark on the community," Zierath said. "The community is better off for him having been here."

Duffy's influence wasn't limited to just the South Beloit area. He served as a Rock Energy Cooperative director for a little more than three years.

"While Mike's time on the board was relatively short, his contributions were many," said Shane Larson, the co-op's chief executive officer. "Mike was as quick with a smile as he was with his sage advice. His cooperative roots ran deep, beginning as a farm kid in Illinois. He was committed to doing the right thing for the members of Rock Energy Cooperative." ■



This plaque hangs outside the auditorium.

Members Can Lock in Natural Gas Rates

Rock Energy Cooperative is offering a pilot program for residential members who want to lock in their natural gas rates for the winter to avoid the risk of price increases.

A fixed-rate plan ensures members that they will always pay the same price per therm for their natural gas. Even if demand increases and supplies decrease, members on a fixed-rate plan would continue to pay the same rate throughout the winter. There is no guarantee of savings from participating in this program. It only guarantees that the price you pay per therm of natural gas will not change during the contract period. Because this is a pilot program, the number of participants will be limited.

If you're interested in learning more about this program, contact Mike Salmons, energy services manager, at (866) 752-4550. ■



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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure it is not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire. Manufacturers recommend using rigid venting material – not plastic vents that may collapse and cause blockages.

Source: energy.gov

Mark Your Calendar!

Member Appreciation Day 2015

Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, Sept. 12

8 to 10:30 a.m.
REC Headquarters, 2815 Kennedy Road, Janesville, Wis.

Watch for details!



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