

The 'curtain' has now been officially raised

Cabe Auditorium project is complete

By Mandie Shelton

After over a decade of dedication, the curtain has finally been raised on the Charles and Anita Cabe Auditorium.

In 1996, it was proposed that Gurdon build a facility to be used by the Gurdon School District and the community.

"There were some skeptics that said this would never happen," said retired Gurdon Superintendent Bobby Smithson during a recent telephone interview. "But when you have people as dedicated to their community as we do here in Gurdon, anything is possible."

The auditorium has a capacity of 1,200 and a price tag of \$3.5 million. During the dedication ceremony held on Sept. 21 Smithson said, "when we started this project we thought we were looking at a \$700,000 building, but then we just kept adding and adding."

Anita Cabe, another of the driving forces behind the auditorium project, addressed the crowd during that ceremony.

"Everyone had a hand in raising this curtain whether you contributed by buying a brick, cookbook or auction item," Cabe said. "You made this dream possible."

The auditorium was completed last spring, just in time for the Class of 2009 to receive their diplomas on the new stage.

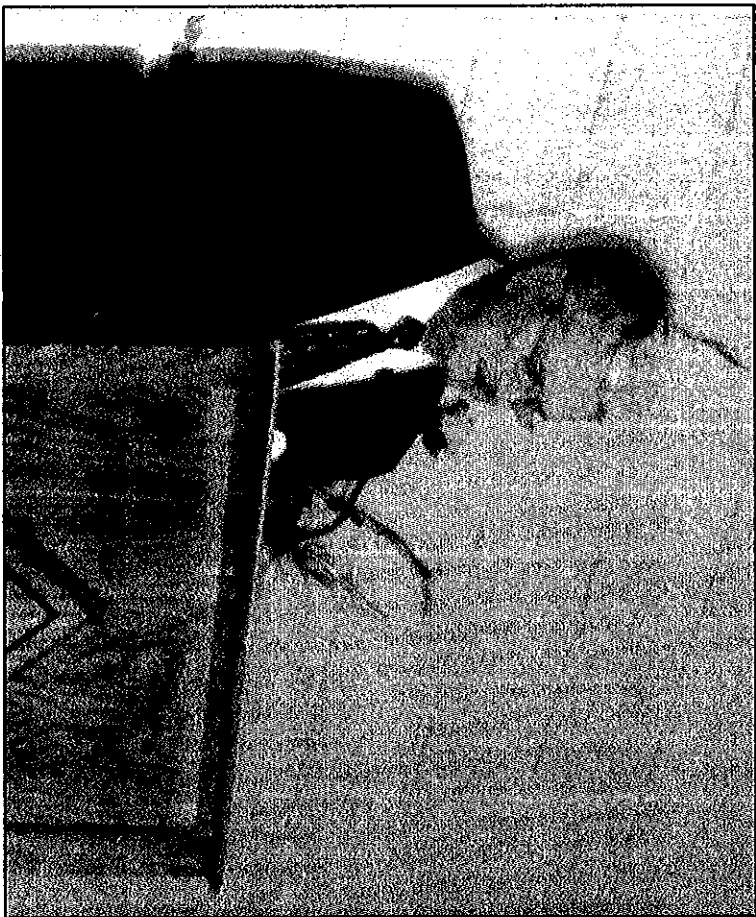
"We wanted to make sure everything was perfect for the dedication," said Cabe, "and it couldn't have turned out better."

The auditorium is also home to the district's administration offices, alumni room and some Gurdon memorabilia.

"It is definitely something Gurdon can be proud of. Any superintendent would be lucky to have a facility like this," said current school superintendent Allen Blackwell.

The curtain was officially raised Sept. 21. So far it has been host to the 2009 graduation, a choir concert, the Forrest Festival pageant and most recently the nationally recognized program called "Rachel's Challenge."

"It is important to remember that everyone who made this possible wanted to give back to the community where they grew up, lived and worked," Cabe told the students attending the dedication ceremony. She then reminded them to "please remember to one day do the same. This day is definitely a great day for Gurdon and has shown us all what we can do together."



Former Superintendent Bobby Smithson speaks during the dedication