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**Local News - Tuesday, June 8, 2004**

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## **A sign of the times in Millville N.J. Schools Construction Corp. provides progress report**

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MILLVILLE -- The Millville School District was approved for millions in funding for school construction and renovation, but it took a few years before the state got moving on allocating the money for the district's projects.

On Monday night, the N.J. Schools Construction Corp. gave city school board members an overview of how the three major projects in the district have progressed since the corporation began working with local officials.

Out of \$8.6 billion in projects statewide,



Staff photo/Barbara Errickson

**Dan Farrow works on some curbing construction at Lakeside Middle School. The renovations are expected to be completed by early 2005.**

Millville will receive about:

- \$13 million for an early childhood center that will house 41 classrooms for pre-school programs. The project is expected to be finished by late 2004 or early 2005.



**Basketball nets lie alongside the parking lot at Lakeside Middle School. Students must share the lot with construction trailers, fenced in the construction site.**

- \$14 million for additions and renovations to Lakeside Middle School, including a gymnasium, auditorium, music rooms and athletic fields. The project is expected to be finished by early 2005.

- \$16 million for additions and renovations to Millville Senior High School, including updating existing classrooms, construction of six new science labs and 61,000 square feet of new construction for various uses. The project is expected to be finished by 2006.

The corporation, formed in 2002, is working with local school officials to help spend money allocated by the state in 2000 for Abbott districts, said George Strachan, the corporation's director of communications.

Millville had lobbied state officials for money to finish Lakeside Middle School to no avail after the school opened in 1999, school officials said.

"Things weren't happening before the corporation started," Strachan said. "Our focus was to get the ball rolling."

As a private, non-profit corporation designed strictly for school construction and renovation, Strachan said it was able to concentrate on the special skills and resources needed to finish hundreds of projects statewide.

The corporation was part of the district's long-range plan to improve all school facilities, said board President William Herman.

There are a lot of good things going on in this community," Herman said of the projects done in partnership with the corporation and by the district alone.

**Originally published Tuesday, June 8, 2004**

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