

Project Information for the “Old Rock Gym”

Cherokee County is considering applying for a grant to renovate and expand the Rock Gym, or the “Old Rock Gym”, as it is fondly called by Cherokee County natives. The Rock Gym is a Cherokee County landmark, with significant historical value. The rock gymnasium was built in 1943 as a result of President Roosevelt’s Emergency Conservation Work Act of 1933, in an effort to employ thousands of unemployed young men, conserve natural resources, and build parks & recreation facilities.

The Rock Gym has been a vital part of our community for more than 66 years. Most Cherokee County natives that are of school age and beyond have at some time or other, participated in events both athletic and non-athletic at the Rock Gym. The Rock Gym has served the recreational needs of the community for over 60 years. The gym was first used as the Murphy High School Gymnasium, and over the years has served multiple community needs and purposes; such as, hosting 4-H day programs, community meetings, community fundraisers (ACS Relay For Life, Toys For Tots), and most widely used for recreational league adult and youth basketball.

If renovated and brought up to North Carolina standards code, the gym could host many more community programs, and continue to serve the community’s needs for years to come. Some of the anticipated activities include multiple adult and youth sports, at-risk youth programs, Special Olympics indoor activities, Senior Games activities, Arts, Civic Programs, and Cooperative Extension programs.

The Rock Gym has not received any major renovations since the time of construction; and, although the building is in great need of repair and renovation, the foundation is solid, and the rock work is beautiful and untouched. Routine maintenance and upkeep have been performed as the County budget has allowed; however we are in jeopardy of losing this community landmark if the major needs continue to be neglected.

Interior needs include: new flooring; updated electrical; updated mechanical and plumbing; ADA compliant restrooms; safety-compliant exit signage; and, an insulated ceiling. The exterior needs include: new roofing (roof continually has to be patched, and the floors are damaged from the leakage); ADA accessibility ramps (there is only one handicap accessible entrance/exit; which is located directly on the side of a public roadway and is unsafe); and, an addition to allow for equipment rooms, restrooms, concessions, and parks and recreation office space.

Cherokee County would like to apply for a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant for the “Old Rock Gym”, to ensure that this beautiful landmark continues to serve the needs of our people for generations to come.