

# Board OKs \$16M for Big Cove

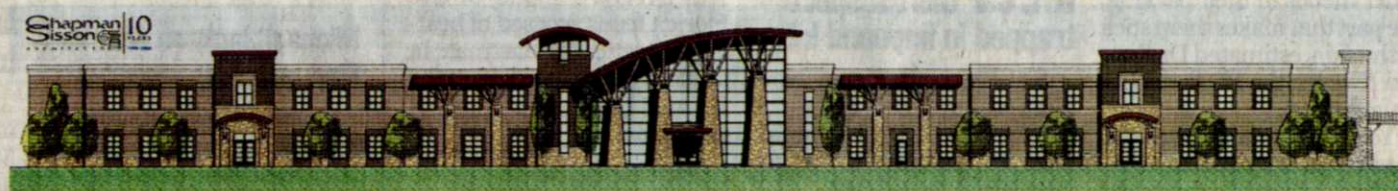
Work starts at 31-acre site of new elementary school

By **STEVE CAMPBELL**

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The Huntsville school board approved \$16 million Thursday for a new elementary school in Big Cove, two years to the month after committing money to the project.

The school system will get money from the City Council, which in January approved a resolution committing the city



An artist's rendering of the new Big Cove elementary school.

to back \$85 million in general obligation debt for new schools and renovations. The board, in turn, pledged to repay that debt from a 6.5-mill school property tax.

Workers at the 31-acre new school site along Taylor Road have already begun grading

and sewer design. The board's approval clears the way for construction.

"We're going to start seeing some big activity there soon," finance director Herbert Wheeler said.

According to the schools' building report, the school could

be completed by July 2010.

The new elementary school, which hasn't been named, would take pressure off nearby Hampton Cove Elementary School, which has more than 900 students and uses portable classrooms.

School leaders have said that

Hampton Cove students who live west of U.S. 431 likely would attend the new school.

The new school could also mean hundreds more homes, and with them, many children. When the City Council an-

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nexed property for the school in August, it also agreed with the landowner's request for residential zoning.

Superintendent Ann Roy Moore has said at least 500 students could attend the school when it opens.

In October, architects for

Chapman Sisson Architects said the 123,000-square-foot school will hold 800 students in 44 classrooms on two floors. The pick-up and drop-off lanes will be separate for buses and cars.

The entrance and corridors are designed for good visibility from the reception area and main office. West Huntsville's Providence K-8 School, which has a similar entrance, also was designed by Chapman Sisson.