

Work starts on Mokau station

A NEW era of medical support is about to begin in Mokau.

The town's new \$583,000 St John ambulance facility is due to be completed before the end of the year marking a huge step forward for volunteer crew members to provide their lifesaving service.

Funding for the building, which began more than three years ago, was provided by grants from TSB, Lotteries Commission and Taranaki methanol company Methanex, along with \$40,000 from community fundraisers and donations.

Team leader Lynette Adams says the previous North St ambulance station, established in 1973, was no longer suitable to serve the community as there was no toilet, adequate parking or water inside the building to wash equipment.

anaphylactic reactions and cardiac conditions.

With a modern building and a volunteer crew of nine dedicated staff, Mrs Adams says the local community can rest assured they are well taken care of.

"The walls to the building are just going up now and it's very exciting to see the progress being made," she says.

"This will go a long way toward providing a better, more efficient service for our community and with construction due to be finished in about three months the future looks very bright.

"But none of this would have been possible without all of the hard work behind the scenes from the St John Tainui area committee."



ON ITS WAY: Mokau St John team leader Lynette Adams, with St John Ruapehu territory manager Mark Fredericks, says the new station will go a long way towards providing a better service for the local community.

EXTRA QUALIFICATION

Adding to the improvement in facilities, Mrs Adams recently passed her Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) exams to join fellow Mokau volunteer Trish Klenner in the highly qualified position.

EMTs offer a wide range of extra lifesaving procedures that first aid officers can't such as treating patients suffering from asthma attacks,

VOLUNTEERS VITAL

St John Ruapehu territory manager Mark Fredericks says without the generosity from the charitable trusts and members of the community it would be very difficult to continue providing a service in Mokau.

"Volunteers are a huge part of why St John is so successful, especially in Mokau, where the two nearest paid (staff) stations are in New Plymouth and Te Kuiti so they cover a huge

area.

"They are people with fulltime jobs, or are retired, but at the drop of a hat, they get into their uniforms and respond to medical emergencies wherever they may be. They are a credit to their community and I am very proud of the staff in Mokau for the work they do."

Once completed, the multi-purpose facility will also be used by a Taranaki-based doctor once a

month for consultations, first aid training courses and public meetings.

The building also includes separate consultation rooms, a kitchen area, sleeping quarters and an ambulance garage.

Fundraising initiatives for items such as and indoor furniture, cutlery and linen is ongoing.

An official opening ceremony will be held at a later date.

Water seepage affects theatre

THERE'S a major drama playing out at Te Kuiti's Little Theatre . . . but it's not happening on stage.

Water is seeping into the north-west corner of the building which is jointly owned and used by the Te Kuiti Badminton Club, Te Kuiti Basketball Association and On-Stage Te Kuiti under the umbrella of the Waitomo Indoor Sports Stadium.

The theatre sits on land at the end of King

St West owned by Waitomo District Council and all indications are the water is running off the council-owned carpark.

On-Stage president Rob Blamires says the dank and musty smell inside the theatre is most off-putting, despite the carpet and floorboards being lifted in an attempt to dry out the worst affected area.

He says he phoned WDC community service group manager John De Luca more

than a week ago because WDC engineers had already checked the site.

He says Mr De Luca wasn't able to supply any further information because he was still waiting for the engineers' report on how the water is getting in before proposing a solution. He told Mr Blamires he would follow up with the engineers that afternoon.

Although he is still waiting to get the official word, Mr Blamires says council staff

are pretty sure the water is coming in from the carpark, although how that's happening is not clear.

"They think the answer will be to cut down through the concrete slab the corner of the theatre is sitting on," he says.

"The concrete slab, which sits on concrete piles, was the base of the old Army hall that occupied the site before the theatre was built in 1967.

TO P2

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Water seepage affects theatre

FROM P1

They demolished the old hall and built the theatre auditorium over a corner of the slab.

"In fact, our wooden floor joists sat on the slab . . . until they rotted away."

It is believed the rainwater is seeping through the carpark's tarseal, then running along the concrete slab onto the ends of the theatre floor's wooden joists.

"To stop the water transferring they're either going to have to put in an insulated poured-concrete wall or install some form of drainage," says Mr Blamires.

"If WDC will bear the cost of that, we'll look after the repairs to the actual flooring."

Ironically, the wet floor trouble was discovered because of a problem in the ceiling. Over several years the ceiling timber of the auditorium had sagged by about 400mm above the rail from which the stage lights are suspended.

Mr Blamires says anyone needing to change an auditorium light bulb had to jump from joist to joist and lower the suspended light.

"About a year ago I was doing that when the whole ceiling made a horrible groaning noise, and then sagged," he says.

"It's a five metre drop to the floor so I got out of there pretty quickly. After some investigation we realised the ceiling probably hadn't been built to proper specifications back in the '60s."

It was replaced with a lowered ceiling about a month ago.

"We'd just got the ceiling sorted when, as the scaffolding was being removed, a workman commented on the damp smell near the door of the auditorium," says Mr Blamires.

"That's when we pulled up the carpet and discovered the problem with water running off the concrete floor slab under the carpark."

Mr Blamires says the theatre group is very happy with the ceiling repair although they've since had to replace water-damaged tiles after rain dripped through holes in the roof. More water on the floor of the stadium's gym indicates the whole building may need to be reroofed at some point.

"Once we get WDC's engineers to decide the exact source of the flooring problem, recommend a solution and debate how much they're prepared



ACTING UP: Te Kuiti On-Stage theatre group president Rob Blamires inspects the damage probably caused by water running off the adjacent stadium carpark.

to pay for, we will have to repair the floor, fix up the carpet . . . and get on with the show."

FINDING SOLUTION COMPLEX

Mr De Luca says: "A preliminary assessment was completed last Thursday and it appears the groundwater problem is being caused by water seepage flowing between the asphalt layer of the stadium carpark and the

concrete layer of an old structure below the current asphalt carpark

"But finding the right solution to fix the problem is a complex matter and requires careful consideration.

"We have engaged an independent civil engineer to undertake an investigation and come up with a solution.

"Part of that work will involve a detailed site inspection to be undertaken on Monday (July 14)."

Top trialist dies after short illness

GARRY Francis Murphy, one of New Zealand's top dog trialists, has gone on his last run.

A dog trialist for more than 50 years and a judge for more than 30, the 68-year-old died peacefully at his Piopio home surrounded by his family on July 3 after a short illness.

The Piopio and King Country dog trialing stalwart received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Waitomo District Citizen of the Year Awards last year.

With a top team including 'Chief', 'Harry' and 'Royal', Mr Murphy won four North Island Championships, four New Zealand Championships, and represented New Zealand in Australia three times.

In February last year, he rewrote the history books at the King Country Centre dog trial championships in Taumarunui winning all four events - long head, short head, zig-zag hunt and straight hunt.

He also served as president, delegate and judge selection panelist for many years and was a NZ national councillor for 20 years. And his fundraising skills for the Piopio Collie Club were as legendary as his training, trialing and team leadership abilities.

Mr Murphy was always on hand to prepare grounds and sheep for trials and to encourage and mentor other competitors.



LAST MUSTER: The late Garry Murphy with 'Harry' (left), 'Chief' and 'Royal' after winning all four events at the King Country Centre dog trial championships in Taumarunui in February last year.

He will be farewelled at a funeral service being held today at the Piopio College gymnasium at 1pm.

Mr Murphy is survived by his wife Frances, four children and four grandchildren.