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KAY YEAGER COLISEUM ACOUSTICAL TREATMENT BY PAYLESS INSULATION,
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A sky lift reaches toward the catwalks of the Kay Yeager Coliseum Wednesday afternoon as the arena undergoes an acoustic renovation. Crews will spray an acoustic insulation called K-13 on the top of the walls and ceiling, which will deaden the noisy reverberations that have plagued the coliseum. It will take nearly 300,000 square feet of plastic wrap to cover the seating bowl and floor.

Kay Yeager Coliseum: Acoustical Overhaul Sound check \$380,000 set aside to help venue reach its potential.

By Lana Sweeten-Shults, Times Record News

It's not the sound of silence going on at Kay Yeager Coliseum. It's the sound of crews trying to fix the acoustical problems there.

Crews Wednesday were preparing the venue for the addition of about \$380,000 worth of spray-on acoustical treatment that coliseum officials hope will improve the sound quality. They were laying down plastic to protect chairs, floors and other surfaces before the application of K-13 begins over the next couple of days.

"We're responding to what we've heard in the past ... and making adjustments," said Bob Sullivan, the executive director of the Multi-Purpose Events Center facilities.

The City Council in May unanimously passed an ordinance freeing up project funds from three accounts to pay for the acoustical treatment - from the West Texas Utilities Fund, the Special Revenue Fund and the Hotel-Motel Tax Fund.

Concert-goers and other entertainment-seekers have complained of poor sound quality ever since the \$20.5 million coliseum opened in January 2003.

"I was there for a hockey game, and that was bad enough," said Jim Short of Wichita Falls. " ... You couldn't even hear what the public-address announcer was saying."

Complaints poured in from fans attending concerts by Pat Green, Rascal Flatts, Skid Row, Poison and Vince Neil.

Most recently, parents complained about not being able to hear the names of their children at graduation exercises in June.

"I've talked to people who have been there (for concerts)," said Short, who operated the now-closed Handlebars motorcycle bar. "They used to come into Handlebars (after concerts) and complained ... They said you couldn't even recognize a couple of the songs."

Sullivan hopes the \$380,000 of acoustical insulation will dampen those complaints. The K-13 spray-on insulation will be applied all along the top of the coliseum's walls, and then on the ceiling, Sullivan said.

The treatment will act like a sponge and is designed to reduce the reverberation that dampens the venue's sound quality.

"What the spray does ... instead of a hard concrete surface, this is softer material, and so sound can be absorbed instead of bounced," Sullivan said.

Of course, other factors affect the sound's quality too, like the work done by each entertainer's sound engineers, and the number of people filling the seats, since people act as insulation, too. The more people there are in the coliseum, the fewer the sound waves that can bounce off of the walls.

The K-13 insulation is being applied by Payless Insulation of Houston. Crews will work until the end of the month to complete the application.

Until then, the Kay Yeager Coliseum will be closed. The last concert at the coliseum was the Pat Green concert in May. Sullivan said the staff is working on a number of events for the coliseum after it re-opens. The next big event on the schedule is the Texas Ranch Roundup in August. "It should be done by the end of the month, and the sound will be so much better," Sullivan said.