Matt Holmes tries out the seated row machine, one of nine new machines in the Wauneta-Palisade Schools' weight room.

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

The look of the Wauneta Attendance Center has changed quite a bit since a May school board meeting when Brian and Michelle Harchelroad approached the Wauneta-Palisade board about the possibility of purchasing fitness and strength equipment to update the school weight room.

"Wauneta-Palisade schools deserve quality fitness and strength equipment," said Brian Harchelroad. "This is a good way for us to pay it forward to the school and community."

Harchelroad called around to friends in the fitness industry for suggestions. A couple calls led Harchelroad to Mike Gillett with Push Pedal Pull in Omaha.

Together the two put together a plan for equipment that is “designed for every student,” according to Gillett.

“The fitness center will enhance the physical activity of every student and the fitness program of the school,” said Gillett.

Harchelroad emphasized that a good fitness program teaches focus, discipline, good nutrition and healthy living.

“Hardwork and determination are rewarded with results,” said Harchelroad.

The equipment consists of nine FreeMotion Epic machines, a Concept II rower, a Magnum Fitness glute ham bench, four Pro Star ATS rack systems, six benches, an Olympic platform and free weights and dumbbells.

The equipment covers a variety of activities and movements to help users be physically active, becoming more healthy and gaining strength.

Harchelroad said he’s grateful the school board had the vision to let the idea become a reality.

With the school open to the idea of the community being able to access the equipment, plans were made to update the small gym and stage.

In the past, the weight equipment was all on the old stage and the small gym was used by elementary students. The new additions of equipment led the school to remove the wall between the stage and gym. New steps were added along the length of the stage down to the gym floor where the weight machines sit on new flooring. A drop ceiling and new lighting were added.

Construction and cement work began in June as a new handicap entrance was added to the south side of the school. Doors have been added to the outside, but have not yet been installed directly to the weight room. Security measures still need to be installed.

Part of the old weight equipment, some up to 35 years old, was moved to Palisade. Other pieces are being sold by the school. Some old equipment, such as a hip sled, lat. pull down, leg extension and curl, squat racks and benches, will still be used.

The new equipment began arriving in late July and the last load arrived as school was starting. The school offers five weight training classes to students.

The weight room will be open for visitors at the Open House Thursday evening as part of Homecoming activities.