

By Sports Editor TOMMY BRYAN

If you've paid any attention at all, you're aware of the traffic problems surrounding the first week of school at the South Hartmann Drive campus of Lebanon High.

I know first-hand as my 17 year-old junior got hung up in that mess the first couple of days of school.

Thanks to football obligations, he now arrives on campus before traffic has a chance to bottleneck and he leaves well after the rest of the student body, faculty and staff makes a mad dash for home in the afternoon.

I'll give the school system some credit for scrambling around and coming up with a measure to allow parents who are dropping off their children in the mornings an exit avenue through the athletic driveway.

The crossing of incoming students clashed with outgoing "drop off" at a narrow two-lane gate guarding the entrance of the school property.

It's obvious to me architects and school officials badly underestimated the traffic flow at the new LHS.

They've said the problem wasn't this bad at the old school across town.

Of course it wasn't! Traffic came and went from four different directions.

Now there's only one point on ingress and egress from the new campus.

Do the math. There are more than 200 additional souls going to and coming from the new campus on a daily basis than there were at the old building. There are now three less points of entry and exit. The numbers just don't work out.

If they can't get 1,700 people in and out in a timely fashion during regular school hours, what in the world is traffic going to be like Friday, Aug. 24, when Lebanon hosts the first varsity football game at Watkins Stadium / Tribble Field?

I estimate that between 3,500 - 4,000 fans will attempt to get in their seats before a 7 p.m. kick off as the Blue Devils host Franklin County.

According to David Burton, safety director for Wilson County Schools, school leaders do not have a definite plan in place on how to route traffic for LHS athletic events, but said they will see how things go for the first football game and make adjustments.

"Decisions on big game nights for football or any sporting event haven't been made yet," Burton said.

Burton said while the traffic will be heavier for sporting events, the arrival will be more drawn out compared to early morning traffic before school.

"It'll be a staged arrival, not like the morning when everyone is getting there at the exact same time," he said.

I beg to differ.

No plan in place for traffic at LHS season-opener

Thursday, August 9, 2012

On Aug. 24, the game will kick off at 7 p.m. regardless of how many people are stuck in traffic on Blue Devil Boulevard.

My thoughts for the Lebanon faithful – arrive early and tailgate. And don't expect to leave campus as soon as the game is over.

To school officials and traffic engineers, the clock is ticking.