

Construction begins on new Student Success Center

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Published: Thursday, December 3, 2009

Updated: Thursday, December 3, 2009

The Miron Construction Co., Inc. has begun transforming the old Elmwood Commons into the new Student Success Center.

The construction, which started in September, will continue throughout the winter to be finished by the beginning of August 2010.



The Undergraduate Advising Resource Center, the Center for Academic Resources, the Counseling Center and Career Services will then have the month of August to move into their new home.

Next September, when the new Student Success Center opens its doors, Oshkosh students will have increased access to those services.

Some aspects of the construction project are obvious: the chain link fence surrounding the project area, the two trailers parked on Lincoln Avenue, construction equipment moving about the site, huge holes knocked in the sides of the old building and concrete being poured between the front of the building and Elmwood Avenue.

The large holes on the north, east and south sides of the building are where large window units will provide the building with a great deal of natural light.

These holes also made removing demolition rubble easy. Much of it was just pushed to the ground below, where it was loaded on trucks to be hauled away.

“The interior (demolition) of the building is substantially complete,” Mark Neubauer, project manager for Miron, said. “We have removed all the block walls in the interior, and the ceilings and ductwork.”

Neubauer said all the old ceilings are gone and 99 percent of the HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning ductwork), plumbing and mechanicals are done as well.

According to Neubauer, the next step is installing the underground plumbing. Then they will start putting up interior walls on the second floor to divide the large open space into rooms.

During construction, Miron will recycle as much material as possible.

“Recycling is important,” Petra Roter, vice chancellor for Student Affairs, said. “To build in a sustainable, green fashion, we must put as little in landfills as possible.”

Brick, precast limestone and slate have all been salvaged to be reused later as reconstruction begins. Pipes and metal removed during demolition have also been recycled.

Building designers found ornate wood pieces in the building. These pieces, including several beams and panel-like pieces, were salvaged and will be incorporated in the new interior design.

Asbestos was used in the initial construction of the building. The asbestos was removed by a company that specializes in asbestos removal and that signed a separate contract with the Division of State Facilities, part of the Wisconsin Department of Administration.

All the asbestos work was completed before Miron moved onto the site, according to Neubauer.

If any asbestos is found hidden in a wall, the asbestos contractor will come back and take care of it. But, as of now, all the asbestos that has been found has been removed.

“Work will continue throughout the winter despite the weather,” Roter said. “The contractor, architects and engineers developed a schedule that takes into consideration Wisconsin weather.”

Though Neubauer said exterior work may be postponed for extreme weather, Christine Miles from the Oshkosh Facilities Management department said it’s important to get the foundations in.

“They can put up a plastic tent around the front and they can heat that space so they can keep working,” Miles said.

The work on the geothermal field must begin in mid-March in order to finish on time. Miles said two pipes will cross Lincoln Avenue and the rest of the plumbing will be in the parking lot.

The system that will be built under the parking lot north of the Student Success Center will use the stable temperature of the ground to help heat the building in the winter and cool it in the summer.