Construction projects abound on MSU campus

Summer work includes a few major projects

By Robb Murray
Pepper Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — The smell of gravel and diesel fuel in the air, temporary fences blocking your sidewalk, the roar of dump trucks and the scraping of back hoe buckets against the pavement, yes, it’s summertime on the campus of Minnesota State University. And if you happen to walk, or study there or just enjoy driving around campus, you may have noticed that the amount of obvious construction work going on this summer looks to be a lot more than average.

Larry Kohonen of MSU’s facilities management division says the number of projects may be up a little, but summers typically are times when parking lots get repaved or reconfigured, existing buildings get replaced and residence halls get much-needed maintenance.

Here are some of the major projects taking place on campus right now.

**Project site: Centennial Student Union**
Cost: $775,000
Completion date: August 7

Of course, as with any project involving buildings, the work goes on before we know it — and asbestos was a bad thing. There is asbestos abatement for the process of removing it all in such a way that it doesn’t pose a health threat to crews or anyone else who work already in place. And, most importantly, the temperature was cool.

In addition to ventilation, the Wigley building will get new ceilings and interior lighting. The south side of the building will be done this summer.

This project is paid for from the HEAPE fund.

**Project site: Nelson Hall**
Cost: $1.5 million
Completion date: Aug. 14

Few buildings were as maligned as Nelson. It has had mold problems, space problems and plumbing problems, just to name a few. The building’s main lobby was used to be a dining hall, and now it’s being retrofitted with a new ceiling, flooring and lighting.

The building’s main lobby is used to be a dining hall, and now it’s being retrofitted with a new ceiling, flooring and lighting. The south side of the building will be done this summer. It’s a real-world work in progress. The building is not yet complete.

**Project site: Wiegley Administration Building**
Cost: $750,000
Completion date: Half of the project will be completed this summer, half the next.

The Wigley building, Kohonen says, has generated more than its share of complaints among the employees who work there. To alleviate that, a costly two-phase project is under way that will replace the ventilation system.

A quick walk through a main door office reveals new duct work already in place. And, most importantly, the temperature was cool.

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**Project site: McBride Residence Hall**
Cost: $3,000,000
Completion date: August 28

Kohonen says that the first projects he saw were a new roof for McBride. At some point in the future, McBride’s roof will need to be replaced. That’s the goal.

What isn’t done is the plumbing and electrical upgrades needed to handle the new new residence halls. And with the ramp-up of the modern college student, electrical upgrades are also needed.

Residence hall upgrades come from the residence hall budget.

**Others**

In addition to these, several other projects are ongoing. Sidewalk repairs cost about $40,000 annually. Parking lot repairs and upgrades happen every year. And sometimes this summer, MSU will work on two of the biggest projects. One is over half the massive Behavioral Science Center project, and the new residence hall.

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**CONSTRUCTION: Other projects ongoing**

The bowling alley will be improved to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The smoking lounge will be cut in half, and a below-ground ventilation system will be updated with moisture from the Blue Earth clay that surrounds it. This system will be replaced with a modern system.

CSU projects paid for with student fees.

**Project site: Maywood Drive**
Cost: $800,000
Completion date: July 31

Perhaps the most visible project right now is on Maywood Drive. The stretch of the road between Memorial Library and the Cawston and McElroy residence halls is getting a new look as the project begins.

First, they’re installing a larger capacity water main down the length of the street. Then they’ll install a larger capacity sewer main down the length of the street.

This project is paid for from the Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement fund.

**Project site: Centennial Student Union**
Cost: $500,000
Completion date: July 31

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