

The Valley

Construction projects abound on MSU campus

Summer work includes a few major projects

By Robb Murray
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MANKATO — The smell of gravel and diesel fuel in the air, temporary fences blocking your sightlines, the roar of dump trucks and the scraping of back hoe buckets against concrete.

Yep. It's summertime on the campus of Minnesota State University. And if you happen to work 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 little more than average years.

Larry Kohanek 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 replaced or reconfigured, ailing sidewalks get replaced and residence halls get much-needed maintenance.

Here are a 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 that went up before we knew asbestos was a bad thing, there is asbestos abatement — the process of removing it all in such a way that it doesn't pose a health threat to crews or anyone else who



John Cross

A new water main and sewer lines along Maywood Avenue at Minnesota State University are among the handful of campus construction projects this summer.

in the building.

After that, the CSU will get some much needed structural work outside and a pretty good facelift inside.

First, the outside.

Visitors to the campus mall will notice a fence around a portion of the north side of the CSU. A quick glance through that fence reveals a trench, roughly 15 feet deep, and the exposed foundation of the CSU's basement level. Water has been

seeping through the walls, and the fenced-in project will fix this.

Inside, the billiards room has been gutted and will be given a look that matches the motif of the other renovated areas of the CSU. Wood-paneled walls will give way to the bright purples and golds that characterize the building's more aesthetically pleasing half.

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CONSTRUCTION: Other projects ongoing

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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 riddled with moisture from the Blue Earth clay that surrounds it will be replaced with a modern system.

CSU projects are paid for with student fees.

Project site: Maywood Drive

Cost: \$400,000

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 Crawford and McElroy residence halls is fenced off and torn up at this point, but should be ready for cars again by the end of July.

First, they're installing a larger-capacity water main down the length of the street. Then they will 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: Wigley

Administration Building

Cost: \$750,000

Completion date: Half of the project will be completed this summer, half the next.

The Wigley building, Kohanek says, has generated more than its share of comfort 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-floor office reveals new duct

work already in place. And, most importantly, the temperature was cool.

In addition to ventilation, the Wigley building will get new ceiling tiles and improved lighting. The south side of the building will be done this summer. North side next summer.

This project is paid for from the HEAPR fund.

Project site: Nelson Hall

Cost: \$1.58 million

Completion date: Aug. 14

Few buildings were as maligned as Nelson. It has had mold problems, space problems and ugliness problems. Just about all of that has been alleviated.

The building's main lobby used to be a drab, time-warped homage to all that was regrettable about late '70s, early '80s design. Today, after a slick remodeling, there are sitting areas, better lighting and no more of that curious display case.

Department offices that never had a view can now see the sun without having to leave the department, head down a flight of stairs and walk outside. Offices were given a fresh look (amazing what a little sheet rock can do), lighting was replaced, new carpeting added — it's really a whole new world.

This project is paid for from the HEAPR fund.

Project site: McElroy

Residence Hall

Cost: \$1,248,000

Completion date: August 28

Kohanek says that one of the first projects he oversaw when coming to MSU was a new roof for McElroy. Nineteen years later, McElroy's lid was ready for replacing. That's just about done.

What isn't done is the plumbing and electrical upgrades needed to the G, H and I wings of the complex.

A quick walk through the complex shows many rooms without sinks. By the time students come back, however, they'll all be replaced with better ones and bigger pipes to channel the used water away. And with the amped-up demands 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 sometime this summer, MSU will begin work on two of the biggest projects it's ever had: the massive Trafton Science Center project, and the new residence hall.