

NEWS

"The health care debate found us swapping twin propagandas created in separate but parallel labs forming in the sources of our news and the vaunted opinions of whom we trust"
- BEN WIEBESIEK • INSIGHT • on A11

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Now open for science

By Ashley Moreland
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More than two-and-a-half years after ground was broke and \$111 million later, the part-new, part-renovated Science Building ceremonially opened Aug. 20.

More than 300 people gathered at the Science Building courtyard for the ribbon-cutting ceremony and dedication. According to Joan Foster, dean of the school of Letters, Arts and Sciences, the addition added 197,000-square feet to the existing 142,000-square feet of the original Science Building. The building houses Metro, UCD and CCD science and math classes.

"This is more than just a science building; it's 197,000-square feet of promise, potential and commitment," said Barbara Weiske, Auraria's interim executive vice president for administration, at the dedication.

Weiske said the project was always destined for success because of all "the people who remained dedicated during challenging times."

The construction faced various obstacles, including a cut in state funds. Weiske went on to thank Gov. Bill Ritter, Mayor John Hickenlooper, State Treasurer Cary Kennedy and the senators and representatives who sponsored the "project-saving bills." Ritter, Hickenlooper, Kennedy, Rep. Joe Rice and Rep. Mark Ferrandino were in attendance at the ceremony.

One of the project-saving bills was Senate Bill 233, which allows the state to issue Certificates of Participation to help fund higher education construction projects in the state. Ritter signed the bill into law May 12, 2008 at the site of the Science Building, which at the time was a huge hole in the ground.

Ritter said the hole was a metaphor for higher education in Colorado, and higher education and projects like the Science Building need to be high priorities.

"Imagine if we just said 'It's a downturn, it's a tough economy, we don't have capital development money, and so we're not going to finish the math and science building,'" Ritter said. "What a failure that would have been for us in terms of living up to the promise of kids who rely upon this higher education in Colorado."

Kennedy agreed and said it symbolized the critical lack of higher education funding in the state, especially for math and science projects. She said it was crucial they find a solution quickly — labs in the old Science Building were being closed because of chemicals and poor ventilation.

"Now, the students who come



FROM LEFT: Community College of Denver President Karén Bleeker, State Treasurer Cary Kennedy, Gov. Bill Ritter, President and CEO of the Downtown Business Partnership Tamara Door, Metro President Stephen Jordan, Interim Chancellor of UCD Jerry Wartgow and Interim Executive Vice President for Administration Barbara Weiske cut a ribbon at the opening ceremony for the new science building Aug. 20. Photo by Steve Anderson-sande104@mscd.edu

through these doors are going to have a modern, 21st-century facility," Kennedy said. "They have better use of space, state-of-the-art equipment and a building that is a model for the nation in its energy efficiency."

Representatives from each of the three schools spoke at the event: Karén Bleeker, president of CCD; Rob Cohen, vice chair of Metro's Board of Trustees; and Jerry Wartgow, UCD's interim chancellor. They said the new building allows for growth in the departments, economic development and shows the state's commitment to supporting higher education.

"If you think about the economic development and the times that we're in, that also makes sense that one of our economic clusters is life sciences and sciences and bio sciences," Cohen said. "And again, it makes sense that we have a facility like this so we can take students and teach them and create jobs, because that is what will ultimately come out of this building."

The process

Planning for the Science building began in 2006, according to Ken Ross, Facilities Management director for Auraria Higher Education Center. He said renovation and a new building were desperately needed because the building, which was built in 1977, had an outdated ventilation system. Foster said she used to advise pregnant women to not take classes in the building's labs because they were harmful to their health.

"Imagine telling your students,

'sorry, we won't have organic chemistry lab this week because it's no longer safe for you to be in the lab,'" Foster said.

In addition to the dangerous conditions, a new building was also needed to accommodate the growing math and science programs. According to Foster, Auraria has seen a 250 percent growth since the original Science Building was built. Metro alone has 2,500 students in these programs, which is a 21 percent increase from 2005.

Construction of the new building began in December 2007 but was put on hold in March 2008 when the state cut the proposed funding (\$50 million) in half. However, two bills, Senate Bill 233 and Senate Bill 118, were signed into law in May, which helped to fund the project. SB 233 allowed the state to issue Certificates of Participation to higher education construction projects, and SB 118 contributed 50 percent of mineral lease revenue to the institutions to pay back the COPs.

The project faced another problem in March 2008 when asbestos was found after breaking ground on the site.

The addition was finished in November 2009, and classes began meeting in spring 2009. The official opening of the building was postponed, however, due to winter weather and, according to Cathy Lucas, associate vice president of communications "the time wasn't right [until the beginning of the fall semester]."

The renovations to the new building are scheduled to be complete in December, and the total cost of the project is estimated to be \$117 million, according to Ross.

State-of-the-art facility

The construction added 13 new labs for Metro alone and four undergrad research labs, according to Foster. Because of the additional space Metro has 84 sections of biology labs this semester, which is a 33 percent increase from last year.

"Having all the things the science school need in one building, it's going to create a more exciting place for students to learn," Ross said.

Nate Wieland, a UCD electrical engineering major, is taking Electronics II and Linear Systems Theory in the new Science Building this semester. Although he hasn't spent much time in the addition yet, he likes it and thinks it was greatly needed.

"I had classes [in the old building three years ago]," he said. "It was pretty dank."

Lucas said the new building is a beacon for the campus and shows that "Metro State is on the rise."

"What we've done has greatly improved the facilities for our students," Foster said. "We're serving more students; we're reaching the economic needs of the Denver area."

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8.25 • Sunny
High: 86/Low: 53
8.26 • Sunny
High: 92/Low: 54
8.27 • Partly cloudy
High: 94/Low: 61
8.28 • Chance of rain
High: 90/Low: 61
8.29 • Chance of rain
High: 91/Low: 61
8.30 • Mostly sunny
High: 88/Low: 59
8.31 • Mostly sunny
High: 90/Low: 60
9.01 • Partly cloudy
High: 92/Low: 61

By Kendell LaRoche



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CORRECTIONS

In the Parking story on page A3 the full name and title for Mark Gallagher, Director of Parking and Transportation at AHEC was missing.

In the photo caption on page A5, Student Trustee Kat Cammack's name was misspelled.

In the Back-to-School fall sports review on page A17, Madison McQuilliams name was misspelled.

To notify The Metropolitan of an error in any of our reports, please contact Editor-in-Chief Ashley Moreland at amorela1@mscd.edu