

# EXCITEMENT BUILDS WITH ARTS BUILDING EXPANSION

## REGIONAL CENTER FOR ARTS AND HUMANITIES UPDATE



From the outside, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside's exciting new Regional Center for Arts and Humanities is nearing completion. Structures on the north and south sides of what alumni remember as the Communication Arts Building are in place and more of the brick veneer is being added daily.

The real action these days is on the inside of the building where UW-Parkside Campus Planner John Desch and his team are concentrating their expansion and remodeling efforts. Of course, with a project of this magnitude there's no shortage of hurdles to clear.

"Every day brings new challenges," Desch said of the construction that will become the Regional Center for Arts and Humanities.

Why so many challenges? Because the project is really seven projects in one.

There is an expansion project on the north side of the building and an expansion project on the south side of the building. The existing portion of the building is being remodeled.

There are partial remodeling projects going on in Molinaro Hall and Wyllie Hall along with parking lot and roadway updates and reconfigurations.

Finally, there is an art facility being constructed on the east side of Wood Road. This prefabricated metal building will be used for art projects that require a high level of ventilation.

"Three of the seven are remodeling projects," Desch said. "Every time you remodel a building you encounter situations that are unexpected."

In other words, as you plan a remodeling project some of the construction is "unknowable." Desch said the builders have no way of knowing what they may encounter as they uncover previous construction methods.

"You end up constantly reworking the plan," Desch said. "It takes time and money to resolve unforeseen issues."

No wonder the Wisconsin Division of State Facilities (DSF) has labeled this project as extremely complex. In addition to unforeseen issues and multiple construction sites, there's the installation of a high-tech HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system.

Why the sophisticated HVAC? The Frances E. Bedford Concert Hall, for example, is designed so the beautiful music created by the performers is just as beautiful when it hits the ears of the audience. The noise created by conventional HVAC can negatively affect the quality of the sound.

Desch is also charged with keeping the campus community up to date on construction progress and changes to the original plan. That communication, however, is a two-way street.

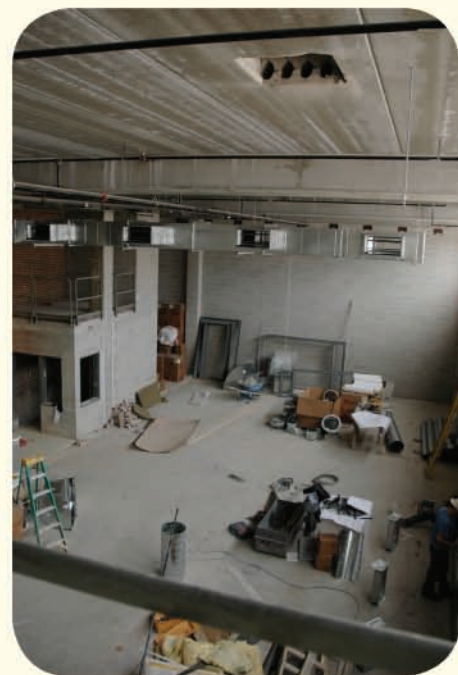
"We inform the campus of issues that arise with the project," Desch said, "and we take any concerns expressed by the campus community back to the contractor."

The Wisconsin DSF is the state agency in charge of the project, and the contractor has control of the buildings and the land during construction. Faculty, staff and students depend on Desch and his team for effective communication with these two groups.

"The contractor is responsible for everything that happens on the construction site," Desch said. "We literally give them the building."

The university is scheduled to get its building back for the fall 2011 semester. "Substantial completion of the project is when the building is given back to the university," Desch said. "There will be some unfinished items at that time and a punch list is developed make sure they're completed."

Without question, this project has been stressful for all involved. Desch says finally being able to see what the building is going to look like is both rewarding and very exciting.



"We are on track to open for fall 2011 instruction," Desch said. "We knew there would be challenges, but the project has gone relatively smoothly given the complexity."