



MUC expansion continuing at rapid pace

By Travis Gulbrandson
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Summertime usually is a slow period on the campus of the University of South Dakota.

That's not the case this year, however, with crews hard at work on the \$11.6 million expansion of the Muenster University Center (MUC).

"It's really taken shape over the summer," said Phil Carter, media relations representative for USD. "The weather has cooperated, with the conditions being dry and favorable. Over the winter and into spring was kind of hinky, but I think by that time construction had started to evolve into interior work."

The 31,000 square foot expansion began late last fall, with exterior work, Carter said.

Through the spring and summer the project has included placement of additional steel beams, pouring the floors, and work on the exterior enclosure of the new addition.

The piping and plumbing was already

completed by April of this year.

The completed facility will feature expanded seating and national restaurant options, such as Chick-fil-A, Qdoba and Einstein Bros. Bagels.

Aramark also will continue to offer dining options for students and visitors.

"The students have generally had an input when it comes to dining options," Carter said. "Obviously, when it comes to living on campus, that's part of the opportunity – to dine on campus."

Input was also received from "those who commute, and faculty and staff who enjoy eating here on campus," he added. "So, a variety of those factors played into expanding the dining options."

Sustainability also is a consideration in the project, with contractors using LEED Silver certification materials to promote further efficiency of the MUC.

According to its official Web site, "LEED is a green building tool that addresses the entire building lifecycle recognizing best-in-class building strategies."



The 31,000 square foot expansion of the Muenster University Center (MUC) began late last fall, with exterior work. Through the spring and summer the project has included placement of additional steel beams, pouring the floors, and work on the exterior enclosure of the new addition. (Photo by Travis Gulbrandson)

"It's a way for contractors as well as us to be sustainable environmental stewards," Carter said.

The project's general contractor is Sioux Falls Construction, with design of the new addition handled by RS Architects, also of Sioux Falls.

Work is taking place between the original MUC building and the I.D. Weeks Library, necessitating the closure of the "link" students use to pass back and forth.

Carter said that beyond "little inconveniences here and there," students will be largely unaffected by the work.

"We're hoping that we can have some of the options open by the start of

the 2014 spring semester," he said.

The original MUC building opened in February 2009, and expansions of it have been discussed since USD President James Abbot's state of the university address in 2011.

"Even though the facility is relatively new, our student enrollment was growing at such a good pace it made sense just to add on and provide more dining options, more seating options, more areas for students to use the Muenster University Center to relax," Carter said. "It is their place, and since their base is growing, I guess it all kind of factored in with that. ..."

"Whenever you have one

a facility like the MUC on campus and you start growing, it just makes sense for that facility to expand, sooner rather than later," he said.

Last spring, Jeff Baylor, vice president of marketing, enrollment and student services at USD, was quoted as saying the campus community and future students are "very excited" for the completion of the project.

"Since opening in 2009, the Muenster University

Center has certainly impacted the quality of student life at USD whether students are hanging out with friends, watching the big game or one of their favorite shows on one of the facility's high definition TVs, or simply grabbing a bite to eat. It's the focal point of campus. It's USD's "living room," so to speak.

Construction updates can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UniversityofSouthDakota.

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