

New BCCC campus designed for earth-friendly learning

Special to the Business Journal

According to school officials, when students enter Bucks County Community College's new Lower Bucks Campus next month, the building encircling them will have a nominal impact on the outside environment.

According to Eric Gianelle, senior project manager with KCBA Architects in Hatfield, a geothermal system will use the constant temperature of the ground several feet below the earth's surface to cool and heat the building. Louvered awnings will shield the windows on the south and east of the building from the sun's harsh rays. The window glass will be glazed to minimize heat absorption. And waterless urinals in the men's rooms will save about a gallon of water per flush.

Even the building's location, on 14 acres adjacent to the Bucks County Office Center in Bristol Township, was plotted for energy efficiency.

"We turned the building so the solid

The school said more than 1,000 students are expected to attend the new campus, located on Route 413 near the I-95/Bristol interchange. It replaces BCCC's Bristol Center, a suite of classrooms in the Bucks County Office Center that the college has leased since 1989. Classes begin August 29, with a free Community Day celebration planned for September 8. For more information you can go to the Web site www.bucks.edu/lbc or call (215) 781-3939.



Photo Courtesy BCCC

Artist's rendering shows the new library on the BCCC, Lower Bucks Campus opening in August.

"Students will have a better quality of life, looking at conservation rather than a sea of parking."

**-Eric Gianelle,
senior project manager,
KCBA Architects, Hatfield**

wall is facing south and east," says Gianelle, referring to the mostly brick side of the L-shaped building, which fronts the parking areas. That way, heat gain from the asphalt won't be absorbed by large glass windows.

The other side of the 35,000-square-foot facility is mostly glass, overlooking the Del Haas Woods nature preserve and a water-retention pond.

"Students will have a better quality of life, looking at conservation rather than a sea of parking," said Gianelle.

The location also takes advantage of asphalt installed years ago when the Bucks County Office Center was originally the Del Haas High School.

"The building was designed to save a lot of existing site features," Gianelle explained. "We saved many of the trees along the nature preserve by moving the building to the south while preserving the big existing parking lot on that site. We kept that lot and resurfaced it, which also saved a lot of energy."

But just as much attention was paid to the indoor environment, noted Gianelle. "All the classrooms are designed so that there's a wealth of outside light coming in."

The architect said the inviting spots to gather at the Lower Bucks Campus reflect a trend across many colleges and universities.

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