

Chemistry Biology Building has huge impact

Bernie Patterson, For USA TODAY NETWORK-Wisconsin

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If you've been near the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in the last three months, you likely have noticed construction activity on the former parking lot X at Fourth Avenue and Fremont Street.

Work on the new Chemistry Biology Building began in late April.

I feel a real sense of pride when I go by the construction site – and when I see the Pointer mascot flag flying from the 165-ton crane.

The community can be proud as well. At \$75.18 million, this is one of the largest building projects in central Wisconsin. Not since Consolidated Papers invested \$110 million in an addition to its Stevens Point Division mill in 1989 has a project larger than this been under way in the Stevens Point area.

This is the first major free-standing academic building to be constructed on the UW-Stevens Point campus in 40 years.

And it was the largest state-funded building project from the 2013-15 state capital budget other than road construction in Wisconsin. This investment of state funds in UW-Stevens Point is validation of the exceptional work our faculty and staff perform and our outstanding graduates, who go on to pursue successful careers and meaningful lives.

The project's economic impact is estimated at \$144 million. That's based on a formula cited by C3 Statistical Solutions to calculate construction industry impact. The project is generating work for hundreds of people in construction trades, boosting jobs in other sectors that service them throughout central Wisconsin.

Our general contractor is Miron Construction, a Wisconsin-based firm as are most of the subcontractors. Several, such as Point of Beginning, County Materials and Nummelin Testing, are located in Stevens Point. Many are from central Wisconsin or within 100 miles.

About 65 workers are on the construction site each week currently. The number will swell to about 150 next spring when mechanical, electrical, drywall and roofing work are underway, according to Gerald David, Miron project superintendent.

All are paid prevailing wages, or more, by their employer. These wages range from \$17 to \$41 per hour, depending on the occupation.

"Because they're making money here, they're spending it here," David said.



From hotels and restaurants to hardware and office supply stores, from rental equipment to crane repair, the uptick in local business is noticeable because of the Chemistry Biology Building.

The project is more than a week ahead of schedule. Two stairwells are constructed, a third is underway, and the second story is being framed this week. Site mechanical and utility work should be done by the end of August with the concrete structure in place by mid-October.

Those interested can watch progress on a live video stream from our website. Go to <http://www.uwsp.edu/cols/Pages/default.aspx> and select Chemistry Biology building.

The four-story building will have 176,500 square feet with research and teaching labs for biology and chemistry on each floor. The building should be enclosed by January 2017 with targeted completion in late spring 2018.

Looking ahead, we hope this facility will attract students and faculty to our exceptional chemistry and biology programs.

In the meantime, we know this project is providing good jobs to workers and generating business throughout the urban area. That's on top of the \$420 million UW-Stevens Point contributes annually to Wisconsin's economy.

The partnership between UW-Stevens Point and our central Wisconsin communities makes us all stronger and more vibrant.



CAPTION: Two stairwells are constructed and a third is being built as the Chemistry Biology Building begins to take shape at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Miron, based in Neenah, is the general contractor for the first new major academic building constructed in the last 40 years. (Photo courtesy of UW-Stevens Point)

Bernie Patterson is the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

<http://www.stevenspointjournal.com/story/news/education/2016/07/29/chemistry-biology-building-has-huge-impact/87686002/>