

WIU Building One 80 percent complete

By Nicole Lauer
nlauer@qconline.com

The grand atrium of Western Illinois University's Quad-Cities Riverfront Campus sparkled in the sun along Moline's River Drive on Tuesday.

Inside Building One, construction work continues as the structure nears transformation from active construction site to new college campus.

University architect Bill Brewer said work is just shy of 80 percent complete at Building One, where about 30 construction workers labor daily to ready the site for students slated to begin classes in January. As crews renovate the 60,000-square-foot building donated by Deere & Co., WIU staff members are busy enrolling students and awaiting the new building.

Mr. Brewer said work is on budget, with an estimated \$14 million of the total \$18 million project cost spent. The project is a state project with funds funneled through the Illinois Capital Development Board.

Weather, for the most part, has cooperated with construction, said Mr. Brewer. Temporary vents have been installed to dry out some of the moisture from recent rains, but he said, overall, weather has not been a



Nicole Lauer / staff

Crews are seen working on the two-story glass atrium Tuesday at the new Western Illinois University Quad-Cities campus on River Drive. Work is on budget and on schedule for classes in Building One to begin in the fall, said Joe Rives, vice president of the Quad-Cities campus.

concern.

The project has also overcome an unexpected snag that required the 20,000-square-foot concrete slab on the first floor of the building to be replaced. Mr. Brewer said close to \$95,000 was spent to do that. Other than the floor, he said, there have been very few surpris-

es, and the project is progressing well.

While some exterior work remains, project superintendent Kevin Mericle said crews are mainly focused on finishing out the interior and working on site utilities.

"Things are going to look a lot different in 30 days," he said.

Those words are music to the ears of Joe Rives, WIU vice president for Quad Cities, Planning and Technology, who got an opportunity on Tuesday to check out the progress on his new office, the tiered classrooms, the new engineering wing and other building features that are taking shape.

Mr. Rives said WIU has received excellent community support, and the college has found many ways to collaborate with existing institutions.

One example, he said, is the opportunity for students to dual enroll at Black Hawk College and WIU. This arrangement allows for students to lock in WIU's four-year tuition guarantee earlier. He said he estimates 750 to 850 students to attend the Riverfront Campus when the building opens.

Phase one is expected to house the College of Business and Technology, academic and student services and university administration. The second phase includes a building to house the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education and Human Services, Fine Arts and Communication. Design drawings for phase two are expected to be completed by the grand opening of Building One.