

CEI provides details of upcoming Future Tech building to City Club members

By JAKOB THORINGTON jthorington@postregister.com - Jan 13, 2022



College of Eastern Idaho officials expect to start construction work this July on its planned Future Tech building, with more than 70% of the \$43 million project being funded.

The City Club of Idaho Falls held its first in-person event on Thursday in two years because of COVID-19. College of Eastern Idaho President Rick Aman and CEI's Director of Strategic Partnerships Ann Marie Peters provided details about its upcoming building to club members and attendees in the Bennion Multipurpose Room at Idaho State University's Idaho Falls campus.

"This college is interested in being a pitch that (Mayor Rebecca Casper) made in wooing different companies to think about eastern Idaho by meeting workforce demands," Aman said.

CEI leadership determined a new building was necessary to meet today's technology-based careers, Peters said. Most of the buildings on campus are

more than 40 years old and CEI is the only postsecondary institution in Idaho without a career and technical education building.

Programs and curriculum planned at the Future Tech building include agriculture technology, battery technology, cybersecurity, solar technology and radiation safety, among others. More than 1,000 students are expected to use the building for their courses, Peters said.

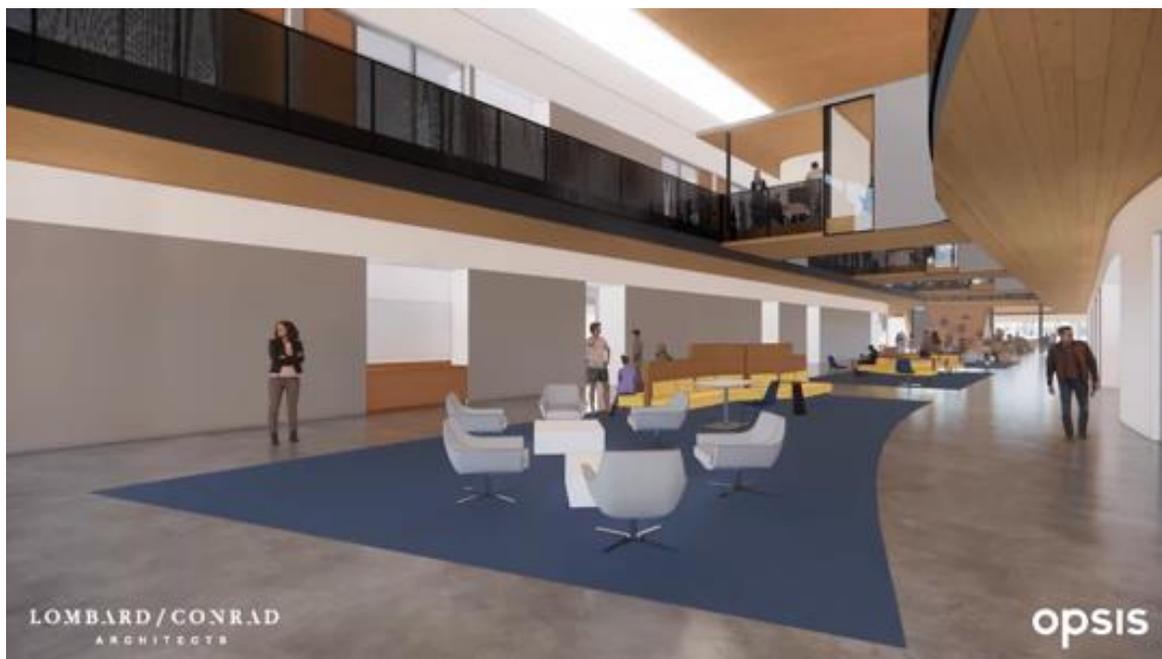


The building will provide high-tech educational facilities and additional common spaces for students to collaborate. A large conference room also is planned to allow CEI faculty and staff to meet, as well as community members.

Ensuring there is enough space in the future for on-campus students is another need the Future Tech building fulfills, Aman said. He anticipates enrollment to surpass the current on-campus capacity of students CEI is able to provide, which is near 4,000 students.

Enrollment has more than tripled since the college transitioned into a community college in 2017, Aman said. In 2017, 1,008 students were enrolled at the college, according to CEI's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

"We're getting limited in space," Aman said. "It will not be long before we're right up against 4,000 students."



The total cost of the building is \$42.7 million and \$30.3 million has already been pledged, Peters said. The total pledge includes \$10 million that Gov. Brad Little is proposing in his education budget. While that money is not yet guaranteed, Peters said CEI officials are confident the Legislature will approve the \$10 million because the Future Tech building will help the college meet the demands of several eastern Idaho legislators' constituents.

Additionally, Little proposed \$10 million each to the College of Southern Idaho and the College of Western Idaho, which Peters said she believes will help increase support from legislators across the state.

“Our legislators and legislators outside of this region as well see this as a really important addition for Idaho,” Peters said.

The 90,000-square-foot building will be located on the north end of CEI’s campus and be visible from Hitt Road. In February, construction documents will be completed and the building is expected to be ready for students in 2024.

Peters said the college is beginning a community fundraising campaign to help fund the remaining \$12 million needed for the building, although CEI also is looking at other sources of federal and local business funding. College leadership is looking for donors who may be interested in naming rights for the building.

3D renderings and more information about the building can be seen in a CEI YouTube video at [youtube.com/watch?v=eLPJFamhias](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eLPJFamhias).

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