Art museum construction stays on track

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Workers operate on the exterior of the future site of Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum on Thursday afternoon. The museum is scheduled to be completed by April 2012 at a cost of about $45 million.

The first glass panels now are being put up in the exterior courtyard area of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, and the university continues to prepare utilities at the future site for the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, or FRIB, campus construction officials said today.

At the MSU Physical Plant’s monthly Construction Junction meeting, Josh Spitzley, a representative from MSU Engineering and Architectural Services, said the $45 million Broad Museum’s roof now is complete, and the exterior’s stainless steel base is being installed. The project is scheduled to break ground April 21, 2012, he said.

Construction workers moved quickly to put the museum’s roof in place, Spitzley said.

“We had a good span of weather there for a while (in October),” Spitzley said. “(Putting the roof up) was pretty crucial.”

Inside, plywood and drywall are installed, as well as insulation, he said.

The museum’s construction was funded in part by a $22 million gift from billionaire alumnus Eli Broad and his wife, Edythe. The Broads’ remaining gift will go toward other costs at the museum, including art collections.

The university has about $5 million left to raise toward its $40 million fundraising goal for the museum.

Broad Art Museum Director Michael Rush said at a museum fundraising gala held last week officials expect to raise the money by the end of April 2012.

The art museum stands out compared to other buildings on Grand River Avenue, music education senior Byron Valentine said.

“It’s modern architecture, which I appreciate,” he said. “It is a bit jarring with the rest of campus, (but) it was designed with that in mind.”
On the opposite end of campus, tentative plans regarding construction on the $615 million FRIB project continue to move forward.

Utilities are being relocated near the site — east of Bogue Street on the north end of campus — and MSU currently is taking bids from contractors for portions of work on the facility’s exterior, said Brad Bull, FRIB’s conventional facilities director.

Design renderings show a system of tiered walls, which attempt to break up the building’s planned exterior.

“The idea is to have the building appear less massive,” Bull said.

The construction plans still are subject to approval by the Department of Energy, which contracted MSU to design and construct the nuclear science research facility.

Substantial completion at the site is set for 2018 with a completion date of 2020 mandated by the Department of Energy.

Close by the planned site for FRIB, the Plant and Soil Sciences building expansion is nearing completion as the second floor lab space almost is finished. Art work also is hanging in the first floor gathering space.

The Bott Building for Nursing Education and Research also is on track for substantial completion in August 2012, and the second floor already is in place.

Commentary

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