

# LTCC eager to spend \$55 mil. on improvements

By Kathryn Reed

While it could take 18 to 24 months before Lake Tahoe Community College begins construction on a new building, that doesn't mean there won't be more immediate changes to the South Lake Tahoe campus.

The passage of the \$55 million facilities bond in November means plenty of improvements are coming. Remodeling the commons area – the main building – could occur this summer and be ready when students arrive fall quarter.

Technology improvements will also be noticeable.

“The goal is from everyplace on campus you will be able to quickly get on the Internet without delay,” President Kindred Murillo told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Technology – or the lack thereof – has been a consternation at the college for years. Until recently people could not get cell service throughout most of the campus. It's still sketchy. The same goes for connecting to the Internet.

This also means classrooms are lacking what is now a basic teaching tool – Internet.

“They should be able to connect to the Internet like that. It should be easy for them and not frustrating,” Murillo said.

A big piece of the tech improvements will come in the science labs, which are sorely outdated.

Students and staff also have to deal with rooms that are frigid or unbearably hot. While heating and air conditioning systems aren't sexy, they are a necessity. A temperate room is

also more conducive to learning.

The big-ticket items are going to require an environmental impact statement and an environmental impact report. The college expects by the end of the month to release the request for proposal for an environmental consultant.

While it's likely to take 10 to 12 years for the college to complete the project list that the bond will fund, there is a facility's master plan that encompasses 20 to 25 years. The desire is to have the EIS/EIR look at the bigger picture as much as possible. The environmental process could take 18 to 24 months.

The college is getting appointments on the book with Tahoe Regional Planning Agency officials as well. The Division of State Architect office will also play an integral role when it comes to the integrity of the facilities that are built.

"We are making sure everything we do is well thought out. We make up time by making sure we plan well," Murillo said.

LTCC officials are in the process of prioritizing what gets done when. This in turn dictates how much the college will seek with each bond issuance. Murillo said likely there will be three issuances, four at the most. Financial advisors and attorneys help with those decisions.

Another consideration when deciding what to focus on is the fact the state has not issued a facilities bond and likely won't in 2016. That means no shared costs as had been hoped.

"The governor's budget will be critical. It will come out (today)," Murillo said.

She said what Gov. Jerry Brown proposes for community college funding will play a key role in how LTCC structures its priority list.

"We get the sense Gov. Brown will not do any statewide

facilities bond. He has made it clear if communities want to make an investment in K-12 or a community college, it will be the responsibility of the local community," Murillo said. "Part of the reason we did the bond is because we thought the facilities would continue to deteriorate while we waited for the state to do something."

Not having the state matching dollars may mean some of the original plans are scaled back. But the college also has an additional \$825,000 to spend that was going toward the university center. Lisa Maloff has agreed to donate the entire nearly \$6 million needed for that facility. She wants to be at the ribbon cutting, so that project will be accelerated in any way possible.