

Renovation begins at MCC downtown

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The gutted first floor of the building where Tuesday's groundbreaking ceremony was held for Monroe Community College's new downtown campus is steeped in history.

George Eastman had this building constructed about a century ago as part of Eastman Kodak's corporate headquarters.

The building along with three others are now undergoing a major renovation to become home for MCC's new downtown campus.

Speakers at Tuesday's event said this change of purpose is very much in the Eastman tradition.



County Executive Maggie Brooks and MCC President Anne M. Kress held a press conference Oct. 20 to commence construction on Monroe Community College's new downtown campus. (Photo: MAX SCHULTE/@maxrocphoto/, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

"This is a facility that began with the spirit of innovation — George Eastman's vision," said MCC President Anne Kress.

She went on to note: "Everything that you see at MCC's new downtown campus brings the community into the future."

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks added that Eastman, a great believer in the importance of education, would be delighted to see how these buildings will be used.

"He's looking down on us today realizing that's the purpose he'd envisioned for this iconic building," Brooks said.

The buildings, located at the corner of Morrie Silver Way and State Street, were bought by the county, which is MCC's local sponsor. About \$6 million has already been spent on getting the connecting complex of buildings ready for renovation.

Last month, the County Legislature approved contracts worth \$43.7 million, clearing the way for reconstruction, which will begin within two weeks.

The renovations are slated to be completed by the fall of 2017.

Monroe County has committed \$36 million to the new, \$78 million downtown campus, with the state matching the \$36 million.

Another \$6 million comes from grants obtained by MCC and the county matched by the State University of New York.

MCC will initially use about 255,000 square feet of the 590,000 square feet purchased by the county.

Currently, MCC rents space for its Damon City Campus in the Sibley Building. All of the services and academic programs currently located in the Damon campus will be moved to the new campus.

Earlier this year, the county reached an agreement with the local group representing construction unions for work on the new campus.

The project labor agreement with the Rochester Building Trades Council should result in at least 75 percent of the workers coming from local construction unions. It also should produce cost-savings for the county that include unions agreeing to work four, 10-hour days, instead of five, eight-hour days.