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KANNAPOLIS — Construction at the new Rowan-Cabarrus Community College building on the N.C. Research Campus is slightly ahead of schedule and has passed several critical milestones, officials said.

The building has a roof, power and all major equipment on site, said Jeff Owens, project leader for Turner Construction, general contractor for the Research Campus.

"We've been lucky with the rain," Owens said. "It's slowed us down slightly but hasn't caused a delay."

RCCC trustees and administrators toured the three-story building Monday with Cherie Berry, commissioner of the N.C. Department of Labor.

The 62,322-square-foot building is scheduled to be completed in June. The college will spend the summer moving in and calibrating instruments, with classes starting in August, Vice President of Continuing Education Jeannie Moore said.

RCCC's two new biotechnology degree programs will move to the building, as well as continuing education programs related to biotech and clinical research.

The college is expected to provide much of the workforce for the Research Campus, a \$1.5 billion life sciences complex built on the ruins of the shuttered Pillowtex manufacturing plant. California billionaire and Dole Food Co. owner David Murdock is developing the campus.

The RCCC building will focus on providing instructional space for hands-on biotech training in a realistic research-and-development setting, college spokesperson Jeff Lowrance said.

Workers are putting up wall partitions, and elevators should go in this week. All three floors include unfinished space to upfit later for future needs, and a student parking lot on the north side of the building will include about 340 spaces.

The second and third floors will include state-of-the-art computer and science labs, classrooms and preparation areas.

The first floor will feature a library, student center, admissions and placement offices, a faculty workroom and an office for RCCC President Carol Spalding.



The Rowan Cabarrus Community College Trustees and NC Department of Labor commissioner Cherie Berry took a tour of the new RCCC facility on the campus of the NC Research Campus in Kannapolis. Photo by Jon C. Lakey, Salisbury Post.

A large conference room on the first floor will host board meetings, as well as provide a location for college officials to meet with potential business partners, Spalding said.

Spalding said she removed some first-floor walls from the building plans to provide more flexibility.

"The design is from 2006, and we are adapting it for now," she said.

Including the community college, Turner Construction has constructed six buildings at the Research Campus. The company has compiled 1.9 million man hours without an accident that caused someone to lose time at work, Berry said.

"They are excellent," she said.

Turner Construction earned the N.C. Building Star Award, the highest safety award given in the state, she said.

The company's previous buildings at the campus include the Core Lab Building, the Central Energy Plant, a parking deck and buildings for N.C. State University and the University of North Carolina.

Campus developer Castle & Cooke North Carolina, which Murdock also owns, constructs the university and college buildings and then leases them for 20 years, when the state will own them. The RCCC building will cost about \$26 million.

The state is providing RCCC with \$3.3 million in annual funding to cover the building's lease and some operating expenses.



RCCC President Carol Spalding (center) and NC Department of Labor commissioner Cherie Berry (left) with school trustees on a tour of the new RCCC facility construction site on the campus of the NC Research Campus in Kannapolis. Photo by Jon C. Lakey, Salisbury Post.