

BC3 landscape changing as \$18M project under way

Sept. 11, 2020



A six-acre tract of Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township is shown Aug. 6, 2020. The site will feature BC3's new 10,000-square-foot physical plant combined with a shipping and receiving facility as part of an \$18 million project. The two-year project's centerpiece will be the nearby state-of-the-art Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building.

(Butler, PA) Steel strings plucked on a country music radio song emanate from somewhere within this dynamic maze, this labyrinth of concrete block bundles appearing, disappearing and reappearing again, of inspectors' pickup trucks arriving and departing, of tables for blue prints and gray thermoses unfolding and folding, and of crisply defined trenches being there one day, being gone the next.

Also heard across this open-air stage at Butler County Community College, the grunt of diesel-powered excavators clawing the earth, the shrill Beep! Beep! Beep! of construction vehicles moving in reverse, and the percussion of soil and rock pummeling the freshly emptied bottom of a dump truck's aluminum bed.

Some 3,300 tons of that soil and fragmented sandstone have been hauled in 150 tri-axle loads from a southern tract of BC3's main campus in Butler Township early in a two-phase, \$18 million project that began in June.

The first phase features preparation of the six-acre site bordering Old Plank Road for the construction of a 10,000-square-foot physical plant combined with a shipping and receiving facility, said Brian Opitz, BC3's executive director of operations.

The second phase will feature construction of the state-of-the-art Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building on a nearby site and where students will train in its hospital-like setting, Opitz said.

First phase also includes new quarter-mile road

The first phase of the project is expected to be completed in May 2021.

The college's physical plant will occupy 8,500 square feet of the combined building. The physical plant will house a garage, storage area, leaf-removal equipment, mowers, front-end loaders, snow plows and other devices for the maintenance and beautification of the campus and its central Oak Grove. It will also be home to BC3's operations office.

BC3's shipping and receiving facility will occupy 1,500 square feet of the combined building.

The first phase also includes the razing of the existing 7,148-square-foot shipping and receiving facility, built nearly a century ago when the Oak Hills Golf Course was located on what became BC3's main campus; and the adjacent 5,472-square-foot physical plant, built in 1993.



A six-acre tract of Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township is shown June 24, 2020.



An excavator transfers soil and fragmented sandstone July 7, 2020, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township.



A bulldozer clears a path July 15, 2020, for a quarter-mile-long connector road on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township.

The first phase introduces a quarter-mile-long road that connects to College Drive, which winds through BC3's main campus. The connector road will join College Drive near BC3's Amy Wise Children's Creative Learning Center, a \$2.1 million facility that opened in January 2018 and was funded in part by a \$1 million gift from John L. Wise III and family in 2016.

Second phase could be completed by fall 2022

The second phase may begin in summer 2021, Opitz said, and be completed by fall 2022. It will feature the two-year project's centerpiece, the high-tech, approximately 24,000-square-foot Victor K. Phillips Nursing and Allied Health Building, to be located near the current job site.

The two-story building will feature technology like that found in hospitals, Opitz said. Its atmosphere will replicate that of a hospital, and the building will include simulation labs, skills labs and a tiered classroom whose seats will nearly encircle the educator's instructional area.

State, gifts helping to fund project

Capital funding from the commonwealth of Pennsylvania will total half of the project's cost.

The remainder will be funded by previous and ongoing private contributions, and by BC3.

Leadership gifts of \$1 million were given to BC3's Education Foundation by Janice Phillips Larrick in 2017, former state Sen. Timothy Shaffer in 2018 and from Concordia Lutheran Ministries in June 2020. Grove City College's investment of \$500,000 to the project was made possible by Jayne Johnson Rathburn's gift to the Mercer County private institution.

BC3 named the building in recognition of Larrick's gift, and its health care division after Shaffer as the Shaffer School of Nursing and Allied Health.



Construction workers create an extruded curb for a quarter-mile-long connector road Aug. 13, 2020, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township.



A portion of a quarter-mile-long connector road is shown Aug. 20, 2020, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township.

The college is expected to launch by next summer a 54-credit licensed practical nursing program and will expand enrollment in its registered nursing program as a result of the gift from Concordia Lutheran Ministries and in response to a regional nursing shortage. Concordia Lutheran Ministries will also offer full-tuition assistance to BC3 students accepted into either nursing program and who agree to work for the healthcare provider after graduation.

BC3's registered nursing program will train Grove City College students in technical and clinical coursework in their pursuit of a bachelor's degree in nursing from the Mercer County private four-year institution. They will pursue 38 credits at BC3 in courses that teach accountability, caring, communication, critical thinking, health promotion, management, nursing informatics and professionalism.

Students who complete pre-nursing courses at BC3's main campus, or at BC3's additional locations in Armstrong, Butler, Jefferson, Lawrence and Mercer counties, can finish their degree in registered nursing at BC3's main campus.



The progress of a physical plant combined with a shipping and receiving facility is shown Sept. 10, 2020, on Butler County Community College's main campus in Butler Township.