

Library construction faces further delay

*Architects original plan \$3
million over budget*

by Lea Gotch
The Collegian

Construction of Behrend's new library/academic complex has been placed on hold.

The new facility, to be built on the east side of campus near the Continuing Education building, was originally scheduled to start last April.

Due to a 3 million dollar cost overrun, however, construction isn't expected to start for at least another year.

The reason for the delay of the state-funded project, according to Jack Burke, associate Provost and Dean, is that bids from general contractors came in around three million dollars too high. The state appointed an architectural firm to design the building within the 7.7 million dollar

price range allotted by Governor Robert P. Casey last January.

Two general contractors bid for the project and both bids came in over budget.

"They (the architects) say they didn't get a fair bid," said Burke. "They feel they're over bid because of not enough bidders."

The architects base this accusation on the fact that the subcontractors for electrical systems, plumbing, heating, ventilation and the elevator "all came in on the money" explained Burke. He added the only group to exceed the administration's expected cost were the general contractors.

At a meeting on last Wednesday attended by the state appointed architects, university architects, and officials from Behrend, suggestions were made to simplify the building.

Currently, the architects are redesigning the structure using these suggested modifications.

Another meeting is scheduled with the architects on October

Inside *The Collegian* this week:

News

Page 2...
Fraternity helps out
with wine harvest
festival

Opinion

Page 4...
Letter to the Editor
challenges Tucker's
views on Twain

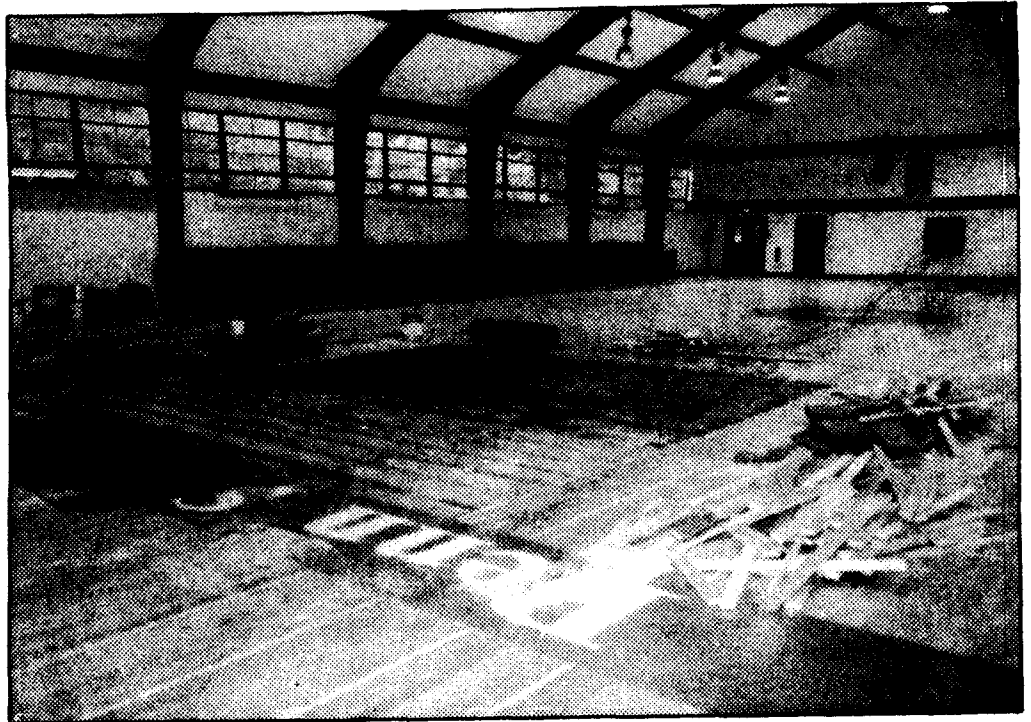
Entertainment

Page 7...
Dread Zeppelin
revamps classics
with reggae

Sports

Page 10...
Soccer team loses
two games and
starting goalkeeper

Still floored



Mike Schell/*The Collegian*

Torn up again: Problems with the gym floor have contributed to further delays in the opening of Erie Hall. See story, page 3.

10, Burke explained. The architects will have estimates prepared as to how much money will be saved by the proposed cuts.

"We are scheduled October 18th at the Department of General Services in Harrisburg to

see where we are on the project," said Burke.

Once a new plan is decided upon, the project will again go out to bids from the general contractors. Burke hopes to have more contractors in the bidding this time.

"Some Erie general contractors thought the project was too big. So, one idea is to bid the two parts [the library and academic complex] separately," he said.

Burke said plans for the
(continued on page 3)

Plastics lab acquires new laser

*\$100,000 machine one of
three in Pennsylvania*

by Floyd J. Csir
The Collegian

The new \$100,000 stereolithography laser installed in the Plastics Technical Center provides state-of-the-art technology for northwestern Pennsylvania.

Jon Meckley, a research associate for the center, said several local businesses contributed money for Behrend to purchase the laser.

Previous computer designs for industry were only two-dimensional, either on a screen or on paper. With this machine, a solid plastic object is cured by the helium laser from California, said Meckley.

These plastic prototypes aid engineers and students in visualizing their designs. Students won't actually use the laser itself, says Meckley, because "one minor mistake could mess up the whole system."

Traditionally, metal prototypes were cut, which cost between five and ten thousand dollars. But now, a prototype can

be made in several days and only costing 1,500 to two thousand dollars.

Meckley said "There are only about 150 to 200 machines like this globally." Once a software package arrives in a few weeks, more intricate and elaborate designs will be possible.

Although hazardous materials are a concern for the professors and research associates who use the equipment, every precaution is taken to insure safety. Goggles, plastic gloves and aprons are used by all operators.

"There are only three other machines like this in Pennsylvania," said Meckley.

Two steps are involved in creating a plastic prototype, said Meckley. One consists of geometric equations in designing the object on the computer screen. The other is the actual slicing by the laser to form a three-dimensional object.

Although plastic prototypes are not as durable as the metal ones of old, the new technology will make it easier for American companies to compete with foreign ones.



Chieu Lam Pham/*The Collegian*

Best in the region: The new stereolithography machine in the Plastics Technical Center creates three-dimensional plastic prototypes.