

# LMC breaks 100 for dorm sign-ups

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**BENTON TOWNSHIP** — The official completion date is three months away, but Lake Michigan College's student housing venture appears to be paying off where it counts most.

LMC President Bob Harrison said he expects more than 100 students to commit themselves to the new 200-unit complex the college is building on its Napier Avenue campus's west side.

When asked what's driving the interest, Harrison said, "A lot of students — and parents — are interested in a residential living experience, who are not ready to go away to a big four-year school, and are looking for a great community with a great academic tradition. We match up quite well."

Harrison and Clinton Gabbard, the college's vice president of student services, briefed LMC board members in their recent meeting about the figures.

"We're still finishing up a lot of the policies and procedures," Harrison said. "We're slowly putting the pieces together. We're on schedule to finish the construction by July 1."

The college has hired its residential advisers and a project manager who will live on site, he said.

LMC is developing the Beckwith Hall project, as it's known, with Student Suites of Independence, Mo., which designs student housing for community colleges.

The total estimated cost is \$8 million, which the college is financing through bonds it will repay from student housing fees over 30 years.

Hollis & Miller Architects is overseeing the design, which will include a beach volleyball court, courtyard, disc golf course, lounges and study spaces.

The college is preparing for a series of infrastructure improvements — including a concession stand, and outdoor activity area — which will coincide with the construction.

The total cost is about \$979,675, and comes out of the college's capital budget.

In other business, the college announced Delores Jackson's retirement as head of its nursing program, effective on July 1. She led the department for about 13 years.

Jackson wants to follow her husband into retirement, said Sarah Dempsey, the college's vice president of instructional services.

"She has a tremendous capacity for leadership and nurturing students. She's done that consistently for many years here, and we're going to be very sad to let her go," Dempsey said.

As an example of Jackson's leadership, Dempsey cited pass rates for the NCLEX exam, which determines a student's chances of becoming a registered nurse.

"We have a 96 percent pass rate. That's not unusual for us because we always have a very strong pass rate," Dempsey said. "What's unusual this year is that the exam changed, and it became a bit harder. The national (pass) rates plummeted, but ours did not."

The college will advertise nationally for Jackson's replacement with a special

See **DORMS**, page B2

## **DORMS**

From page B1

focus on academic websites like higheredjobs.com and appropriate trade journals, Harrison said.

The goal is have Jackson's replacement on board by the fall term.

The board scheduled a public hearing for 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 24, to discuss the 2014-15 proposed budget. The hearing will

be in the third floor executive board room.

Kelli Hahn, the college's vice president of financial services, expects to present a lot more detail next month, but she said that all key financial signs are

looking good right now.

"Overall, we're running seven percent below budgeted expenses. Our balance sheet remains strong, and our ratios are reasonable," Hahn told the board this week.