

# LMC hires construction manager for project

By **RALPH HEIBUTZKI**  
HP Correspondent

**BENTON HARBOR** — The top performers in any field are easy to pick out, which is the argument Lake Michigan College officials cited in hiring the construction manager for its state capital outlay grant project.

Board members unanimously hired Miller-Davis Co. of Kalamazoo for a \$903,850 fee.

Miller-Davis edged out Skillman Corp. of Kalamazoo (\$893,850) and Triangle Construction (\$920,000) and Pioneer Construction (\$920,370), both of Grand Rapids.

The quotes were extremely

close, but only Miller-Davis had all of the qualities that the college desired, said Anne Erdman, vice president of administrative services.

“We wanted them to have a track record of building for education,” Erdman said. “We wanted them to have a high record of being accurate, in their estimations, and we wanted them to have experience in capital outlay projects.”

Once it identified its top choices, LMC asked the four firms to submit requests for proposals – instead of bids – explaining how their qualifications fit those goals, Erdman said. The goals focus on costs.

Only Miller-Davis advanced to an interview with LMC’s management team last week.

“They have experience with \$400 million in capital outlay projects, and their primary clients are education. The state also vetted them, and said, ‘No issue,’” Erdman said.

Miller-Davis demonstrated a 96 percent accuracy record in its RFP quotes, which also worked in its favor, Erdman said.

LMC received \$8.5 million from the state to pursue the project, which required the college to match the amount.

Key aspects include the renovation of 50 classrooms

and two lecture halls; collaborative learning spaces; and the creation of a Career and Transfer Center and Student Success Center.

The board began preparing for the project last December, when it hired Stantec of Berkeley, Mich., as the architect.

Miller-Davis will work closely with Stantec on the next phase, the design, now that the college has identified its priorities at the Naper campus, Erdman said.

“That’ll be the one (phase) people are most familiar with, where we’re actually drawing the rooms and saying, ‘This is how it fits in.’ Our goal is to be way ahead of this, but we must have it

done, by state policy, by the end of the calendar year,” she said.

Erdman said she expects that process to go smoothly because Miller-Davis and Stantec have also worked together before.

“They’ve had two different projects where they’ve done really well together, in Central Michigan (University), and one at Western Michigan (University). They’ll work to keep us on budget, and on time,” she said.

In other business, the board moved forward on its proposed Wine Education Center by granting an easement along Empire Avenue to Benton Township, which

will operate and maintain the main sewer infrastructure there.

LMC is running the program at a temporary site in the Mendel Center, but will eventually move it into a new building at the corner of Yore and Empire avenues, Erdman said.

“The one issue with it is it doesn’t have any current utilities,” Erdman said. “We got a \$4 million grant from the state to do the design work and put all the utilities in. We’ve just completed that.”

Kaelin Construction of Sodus built the sewer infrastructure work for the new center. Once that work

See **LMC**, page B2

## LMC

From page B1

finished, granting the ease-

ment was the next step, she added.

However, no construction timetable has been firmed up “because we’re still wres-

tlng with some of the design work,” Erdman said.

“As a target, we’d certainly want to start construction next year. This is going to be

a destination program, and with people coming from all over the country for it, you want to make sure you got it (the design) right.” she said.