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Fact Sheet : Munsell Hall Renovation Project

University Communications, Illinois Wesleyan University

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FACT SHEET

Munsell Hall Renovation Project *Illinois Wesleyan University* *Summer, 1999*

BACKGROUND . . .

- Munsell Hall, an Illinois Wesleyan University residence hall, accommodates 204 students. It's located at 1211 N. Main St., Bloomington.
 - Munsell Hall is a seven-story, steel and masonry building, containing 50,275 gross square feet. It contains 108 of rooms: 12 singles and 96 doubles.
 - Munsell Hall is undergoing renovation during the summer of 1999, as part of IWU's routine program to modernize residences underway since 1996. Five residence halls have been renovated under this program: Magill, Dolan, Pfeiffer, Gulick, and Ferguson.
 - The \$2.2 million Munsell Hall renovation includes:
 - Removal of built-in furniture and replacement with moveable furniture, which can be rearranged more easily;
 - Improvements to the electrical and fire-alarm systems;
 - Hookups to the campus computer network and access to cable television;
 - Replacement of old plumbing;
 - Installation of hallway carpet;
 - New flooring in student rooms;
 - Improved lighting in student rooms;
 - Creation of floor lounges on each floor to be shared with another residence, Ferguson Hall (lounges include kitchenettes and gas fireplaces);
 - Improvements to common and recreational spaces;
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- Repainting;
- New window treatments throughout the building.
- Munsell Hall is designated as a freshman residence for the fall of 1999. It will be a coed facility by floor, with 136 female and 68 male residents.

PROJECT STATUS . . .

- Prior to commencing the renovation, IWU and its contractor recognized that the building had asbestos-containing components. An asbestos-removal contractor was retained to ensure proper removal of asbestos materials.
 - Asbestos is a fibrous mineral, which has been used in various ways because of its properties of fire resistance, heat insulation, and sound absorption. It was widely used in building construction from at least the 1930s through much of the 1970s, with substantial use occurring after World War II. In buildings it was used often in acoustical plaster on ceilings, steam-pipe insulation, fireproofing on structural steel, vinyl-asbestos floor tile, and floor tile adhesive.
 - Undisturbed and undamaged asbestos rarely presents a hazard. It becomes a potential hazard when it becomes "friable" (easily crushable) and released into the air.
 - Historically, only those whose exposure to asbestos fibers has been occupational—those who have worked in asbestos factories or plants, or other industries which use a substantial amount of asbestos, such as in shipbuilding—have contracted illnesses related to asbestos.
 - Given the age of most IWU buildings, asbestos often is present in pipe insulation, floor tile, and some acoustical ceilings.
 - The university routinely tests for asbestos and has it properly removed as mandated by law, when it is in areas which may create a hazard during routine maintenance, normal operations, or renovations.
 - All asbestos removal is handled by licensed asbestos-removal contractors and independent tests are performed to determine that areas are safe for work and occupancy following abatement projects.
 - IWU never has had a problem associated with an asbestos-removal project, even though such projects have been occurring since 1986.

- All IWU physical-plant personnel routinely receive asbestos-awareness training.
- On June 21, 1999, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) raised concerns about potential asbestos hazards at the Munsell Hall project.
- On June 22, 1999, after IEPA notification of a potential problem, IWU voluntarily halted work on Munsell Hall. The building was sealed and signs were posted warning of the possibility of an asbestos hazard on June 22.
 - It has not been established that an asbestos hazard exists. In fact, all air-monitoring results were negative and personal air monitors showed asbestos levels well below Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.
- On June 29, 1999, representatives from IWU, the general contractor, and the asbestos-removal contractor met with IEPA to discuss an investigation and abatement plan to address IEPA's concerns.
 - The parties agreed to develop and implement such a plan after IEPA approval.
 - The plan will ensure that all asbestos is removed as required by federal and state laws and regulations.
 - IEPA documented its concerns in a complaint, naming two parties: P.J. Hoerr and M&O Environmental Services. The commitment to implement an investigation and abatement plan was documented in an agreed order filed simultaneously with the complaint. The agreed order permits work on the project to continue.
 - IWU has retained Boelter and Yates of Park Ridge, Illinois, to develop an asbestos-abatement plan.
- When renovation work was halted at Munsell Hall, the project was on schedule. IWU expects Munsell Hall will be safe and ready for occupancy for the fall, 1999, semester.

CONTRACTORS . . .

- P.J. Hoerr of Bloomington and Peoria is the construction manager for the Munsell Hall renovation. The construction manager's responsibilities are: coordinating the work of all subcontractors; P.J. Hoerr also is performing some of the work.
- M&O Environmental Services of Peoria is the subcontractor responsible for asbestos abatement.

HISTORY . . .

- Munsell Hall, completed in 1966, is named in honor of Oliver Spencer Munsell, IWU president from 1857 to 1873, and his brother, Charles W.C. Munsell, IWU's financial agent during the same period.

CONTACT . . .

- For more information about the Munsell Hall renovation project, contact: Ken Browning, IWU vice president for business and finance, 309/556-3021.