

Renovations to improve air quality in Hamilton Hall

BY MARGARET BEHM

Faculty members and students who spend lots of time in Hamilton Hall can now breathe a sigh of relief.

Improvements in Hamilton Hall will make breathing safe, said Mark Griep, associate professor of chemistry at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

"The air in the building is not that good," Griep said. "The air coming in is not filtered well."

Too many dust particles are being allowed through the filters of the 30-year-old building, he said, and the air has caused respiratory problems in at least four workers in the building.

The air is also affecting research results, Griep said. Many of the machines are sensitive, and the air affects the results they give out. This makes the results useless, he said.

A legislative bill has supplied more than \$12 mil-

lion in state funds for improvements.

This money will be used to replace the air conditioning, heating and ventilation systems.

Duct work and the fume hood system, which absorbs airborne fumes, will also be replaced.

This project will start in December and end in November 2002, said Howard Parker, campus architect and director of facilities planning and construction.

The National Institutes of Health also provided a grant of nearly \$2 million. An equal amount of state funds is required to be donated to the project.

This money will go toward renovations of the seventh floor labs. An equal amount from the state fund will be matched to the grant, pending approval from the Board of Regents.

The grant is a good addition to the state funds, said Norm Braaten, assistant director for research

grants and contracts at the university.

"The grant money is going towards things we wouldn't have been able to do with the state funds," Braaten said.

Carolyn Price, an associate professor of chemistry, said the improvements will benefit the entire university.

"You can't do good research with run-down facilities," she said. "And you can't attract good students with bad facilities, and the lab facilities in Hamilton are bad."

Classes will still take place in Hamilton during the entire renovation project, Parker said.

"One of the challenges of this project is that the building will remain operational," he said. "It will be done in phases. Parts of the building may be shut down at times. It will be kind of like playing musical chairs up in the laboratory."

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associate chemistry professor

All the improvements to the building will serve an important purpose, Price said.

"A lot of people think the improvements are just for cosmetic," she said. "It's an old building. A lot of it is falling apart. And that affects your work environment."

Commission won't delay club decision

Lancaster County commissioners may decide whether to revoke Cheetahs' liquor license on Thursday.

BY JOSH FUNK

The stage is set to determine if liquor will flow while the Cheetahs dancers shake their stuff.

The strip club, which opened in July, offered drinks under Coaches Sports Bar and Grill's liquor license because the club was renting part of the building.

The Lancaster County Commission is expected to decide whether to revoke the liquor license issued to DLH Inc., which owns the sports bar, on Thursday.

At their regular meeting

Tuesday, the commissioners decided not to delay the license hearing.

The bar owner's attorney had wanted to take depositions from all five commissioners about their knowledge of the 20-year-old statute they are trying to enforce, but the county attorney rejected that idea.

The statute empowers the commission to revoke liquor licenses from adult businesses.

On Tuesday, Lancaster County Sheriff Capt. George Lahners reported that the Cheetahs dancers' breasts and pubic areas were covered, and their buttocks were mostly covered. The commissioners had previously asked the sheriff's office to investigate how the club clothed its dancers.

In other business, the com-

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Larry Hudkins
Lancaster County commissioner

missioners decided not to put a proposal to merge the assessor and register of deeds offices on the November ballot.

A 2-2 vote killed the proposal after a parade of lawyers and real estate agents attested to the efficiency of both offices under the current organization in a public hearing.

Most of the concerns about the proposed merger centered on the lack of a clear plan for the structure of the combined office

and the idea that if something isn't broken, don't fix it.

Commissioner Larry Hudkins said after the testimony that it appeared some of the goals of the merger could be achieved better with the existing system.

"I will take part of the blame as a commissioner that I haven't sat down these two officials and made them work better together," Hudkins said.

"Both of these are excellent departments."

Clinton investigation continues to swell

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Independent Counsel Robert Ray has paid contractors nearly \$742,000 since taking over the investigation of President Clinton eight months ago, including \$210,777 for private investigators, according to a report released Tuesday.

Totalling more than \$52 million, the Clinton probe is the most expensive independent counsel inquiry ever. Ray, who is considering whether to seek charges against Clinton after he leaves office, recently confirmed that he impaneled a new grand jury last month to resume investigation of the Monica

Lewinsky scandal.

Ray's office listed expenses for contract work at the request of Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who criticized Ray's predecessor, Kenneth Starr, for spending so much on private investigators and consultants despite using dozens of FBI and Justice Department staff members.

"These millions and millions of dollars would have been better spent on serious criminal investigations that could make a real difference," Leahy said in a statement Tuesday. "It is time for the independent counsel to file his report, pack it up and go home."

In responding to Leahy's request, Ray's office noted that it spent \$7,400 to gather information for the senator.

"Responding to such detailed inquiries imposes costs and diverts resources from completion of the investigations within the office's jurisdictions," wrote deputy independent counsel Jay Apperson. He expressed confidence the expenses "were all consistent with applicable laws and regulations."

The expenses listed by Ray and released by the General Accounting Office cover the eight months from October 1999, when Ray took over from Starr, through the end of June.

The biggest contractor payment was \$445,429 to a computer analysis company. Four criminal investigators received payments ranging from \$74,348 to \$8,214. Ray spent \$43,948 on legal consultants.

In all, Ray's office spent \$741,961 on contract work over eight months, said the GAO, an investigative arm of Congress. Starr spent \$4.9 million on private contractors during his five-year tenure as independent counsel investigating the Lewinsky matter, Whitewater and other controversies, the GAO said.

The office now employs 10 full-time and two part-time lawyers, the report said. Ray, whose salary is set by law, makes \$122,400.

The independent counsel's total spending is reported twice a year, and those numbers haven't yet been updated to reflect Ray's tenure. His office didn't immediately return a request for comment.

Since he took over for Starr, Ray has closed an investigation into the White House's gathering of FBI files on several hundred people in prior administrations.

No one was prosecuted; Ray concluded that none of the sensitive material had been misused.

He also concluded an investigation of the firings of White House travel office employees without bringing any charges.

Last week, Ray got the go-ahead from a panel of federal appellate judges to continue his investigation of the Lewinsky matter for another year. At issue is whether Clinton committed perjury or obstructed justice when he denied an affair in sworn testimony for the Paula Jones sexual harassment lawsuit.

Ray also continues work on missing White House e-mails that should have been turned over to his office as part of the Lewinsky investigation.

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