

Lane Community College to hold Downtown Center open house



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EUGENE, Ore. (KMTR) – Lane Community College's new Downtown Center is open for class and it's getting ready to show off some of its pioneering "green" features to the entire region in an upcoming open house.

LCC will hold an open house to showcase the new Downtown Center on March 15. While hundreds of students and teachers have been using the building for classes over the last two months, the college says it now wants to show the community the all of the features inside.

Building representatives say the Downtown Center is basically "one giant classroom" from the top floor down thanks to several green elements and the incorporation of real building function into the student work environment.

On the green side, the building is going after a LEED Platinum status

LEED Platinum is one of the highest rankings for sustainable building projects as set by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Throughout its design and construction, crews incorporated elements like a significant use of natural light, using the heat of the earth to help control air temperature, also using plants and water to help shed and reuse rainwater.

The roof features several solar panels that generate electricity for the building. The panels will also be used by the college's energy program to teach students about the different types of panels and how they work.

On the top indoor floor, some classrooms have sensors that can detect when a person walks inside, automatically triggering an overhead set of mini blinds to uncover skylights. The room uses almost no artificial light.

In the hallways, students have access to water fountains that enable water bottles to be filled up from a high-mounted water spout.

Out in the main courtyard, the building has a green roof. Some of the water captured from the roof helps reload toilets and urinals inside.

On the main floor, the college will show off some of its geothermal technology through a clear floor panel. Geothermal heating uses the heat below the earth's surface to help heat buildings. LCC drilled several 300 foot deep wells under the campus to gain access to geothermal heat. The wells typically help bring air temperature up to 60 degrees before the man-made forced air system raises it to around 70. LCC says the system helps save energy.

In all, educators say the new building has helped LCC's students learn.

"We came from the downtown center and you know we had students who were taking classes in a basement and you wouldn't know if it was day or night, just the air quality and the darkness of the building, this is so much more inviting and a great learning environment for students and for us to work," said Jenette Kane, dean of Continuing Education for Lane Community College.

Many of the elements of the building also help aid student learning. In one classroom, crews installed the forced air system on the ground for students learning about HVAC systems. Typically, those systems are mounted along the ceiling. Putting the system on the ground allows students to learn without having to get on a ladder.

LCC will hold its big open house on Friday, March 15, 2013 at 1 p.m. The event is free for everyone to attend. The building is on the corner of 10th Avenue and Olive Street, across from the Eugene Public Library.