

News

\$15 million horticulture building to expand offerings at Wayne County Community College Downriver Campus

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The Taylor campus of the Wayne County Community College District is about to get a whole lot greener when a new Horticulture building is completed sometime in 2018.

College Chancellor Curtis Ivery and Downriver campus president Anthony Arminiak recently spoke about the project.

Overall the project will invest \$40 million into two new buildings, one at the downtown Detroit campus and the building at the Taylor campus.

Ivery said the project in Taylor will cost between \$10 and \$15 million dollars when it is completed and will be paid for with funds that have been set aside over the last 15 years.

"We won't be asking for any money for this," he said. "It's part of our long time capital improvement project."

The building being added downtown will be a new Health and Wellness Center. Parts of that building will be open to the public. Any student enrolled at any of the College's campuses will have access to use it when it opens.

Both buildings are expected to open in 2018.

The school already offers a horticulture program, but it will be greatly expanded with the new building when it's completed.

"We are committing to horticulture education," Ivery said. "We want to be progressive with our course of education."

Ivery said the building will be used for education in hydroponics and aquaponics as well as for other parts of the program. The program is expected to be melded in with medical research and science education as well.

"We have a beautiful 97-acre campus Downriver," Arminiak said. "It's the perfect place to compliment our surrounding community as well."

He said the school will work to build better relationships with the Taylor Conservatory which is "right down the street" and with Wyandotte's Roosevelt High School which offers the largest greenhouse facility among local high schools.

"We're very excited to provide a state-of-the-art center to expand our students' learning, as well as the opportunity to improve overall health and wellness to community residents," Ivery said. "Our mission has always been to provide pathways to better lives through higher education. Healthy minds and bodies (are) an integral part to living a great life, and this center will provide numerous outlets to achieving that."

Arminiak said both organic and urban farming are on the rise. With that comes a need to educate the masses on how to do it, and

how to profit off of it.

"This will have a large economical impact on the local region," he said. "Having the education will allow students to seek jobs in the emerging fields.

The new building will be placed behind the existing infrastructure between that and training lake that is in use for various programs already.

"We are thrilled to offer a modern location where students and residents alike can study a field that has grown rapidly in interest and importance to our region, and the nation at large," Arminiak said. "Michigan is a leader in agriculture, and metro Detroit is a leader in urban agriculture. This center is directly in line with that interest and with our mission to provide pathways to better lives through higher education."

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