

State board OKs funding to revamp old Baker Center

The state Controlling Board of Ohio recently approved the release of \$883,531 in state capital funds to support the redevelopment of the Ohio University College of Communication's Radio, Television and Communication Building.

The College of Communication has plans to expand the RTVC Building into the former Baker Center on Union Street. An *OU Outlook* article in May 2008 said the project – dubbed the Schoonover Center for Communication after a \$7.5 million donation from alumni Steven L. Schoonover and his wife, Barbara – had been scheduled for completion in spring 2013. Given economic strains, however, that completion date remains uncertain.

Before renovation of the facility can begin, the building must be stripped of asbestos, lead paint and other hazardous materials. The state capital dollars released by the Control-

ling Board on Oct. 19 will help support the removal of those dangerous materials.

Funding for completion of the project relies on a \$23.2 million allotment in the state capital bill, which won't be decided upon until 2010. The total budget for the project is between \$37 million and \$40 million. The university has already received \$2.3 million in state funding for the project.

"Ohio University is already a world-class communications school, and the planned expansion of the RTVC Building will only help to enhance academic opportunities for current students and bring more talented young people to Athens," state Sen. Jimmy Stewart, R-Albany, said of the Controlling Board announcement. "I applaud the state for directing money to clean up the site and help this important project move forward."

The new building will house the Scripps

College of Communication's five schools and the WOUB Center for Public Media.

According to the 2008 *Outlook* story, the purpose of combining these buildings is to integrate the five schools so students can gain a better understanding of the converging media environment. With all schools in the college under one roof, the fields of broadcast, print, Web and other media can work together to produce a more dynamic media product, the release continued.

"Bringing together all of our schools in one location will encourage integrative and interdisciplinary work — the kind of work that will be required of a college determined to be an international leader in communication research and teaching," Scripps College of Communication Dean Greg Shepherd said in the 2008 release.

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As of 2008, early plans for the building include a 250-seat auditorium, a coffee shop and newsstand, classrooms on the lowest and

highest levels and staff offices in the center. It will also have a town square on ground level, with entrances on East Union and College streets, according to the release.