

Renovations at City Hall

By Catherine Dean

The six-month renovation of the second floor of City Hall is nearing completion. The facelift, costing an estimated \$500,000, brings the Milledgeville City Council's conference room into the 21st century with up-to-date technology and safety upgrades.

"The facilities date back to 1984, and were in need of improvements," stated Barry Jarrett, city manager. "The conference room has been enlarged and modern technology installed for better communication during council meetings."

Two walls were removed to enlarge the conference room and a new sound system and projector with a screen have been included in the upgrades. According to Jarrett, the remodel will make the council meetings more functional by allowing everyone in the room to hear what is being discussed.

"With the old sound system attendees at the back of the room could not hear what was being discussed by council members clearly. This new system, which incorporates the microphone and speakers, should resolve this issue," said Jarrett.

To assist the modern sound system, acoustic tiles replaced the outdated wood paneling. The tiles will help to project sound around the room while insulating the conference hall from outside noise. The newly installed doors attached to the room also offer a softer closing system that buffers sound to help minimize the sound of in and out traffic during meetings.

The up-to-date projector screen, which is linked to local media, can be viewed from all positions in the meeting room. "The screen will be integrated with Georgia College's (GC) system to allow a direct feed to be broadcast," added Mark Patrick, city engineer.

The Mass Communications Department of Georgia College has broadcasted the monthly council meetings for decades on the local government and educational access channel MBC TV-4 on Charter Communications.

Due to the reorganization, it was determined by Patrick that GC's storage room needed to be re-worked for future office space. For that trade, he gave the school a dedicated space within the actual meeting room.

“The upgrades and designated space will greatly improve the broadcast experience, both for the communication students and for the viewer,” said Patrick.

In addition to the meeting room and expanded office spaces, two bathrooms were also remodeled to meet the American Disability Act guidelines.

Both Jarrett and Patrick stressed the pride they took in hiring local companies for the renovation work. “We are very proud to have been able to award the remodeling contract to a local company, Dyer Construction, which had the lowest bid,” said Patrick. He added the technology equipment being installed was sourced locally as well, from the Milledgeville World Hi Fi store.

Jarrett hopes to share the progress with the public by the second council meeting in April. “We would love to hold an open house for the community as soon as we can occupy the space and the furnishings are in place,” he said.