

Georgia Highlands to break ground this summer on new student center

BY MARK ANDREWS

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The Georgia Highlands College Cartersville campus will start on its new 55,000-square-foot student center this summer in an effort to accommodate a rising student population.

"We're in the design stages right now," said Dana Davis, director of college relations. "Once that process is finalized, we'll go out to bidders."

The center is set to include physical education space, offices, an auditorium, indoor recreation space, food service facilities, student study areas, student union spaces as well as a book store and student life center.

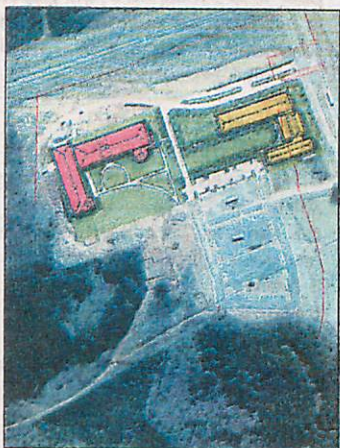
The projected cost of the center is \$16.4 million and is being funded through student fees and bonds.

"The fee is \$100 a semester, and that was approved by students," Davis said.

She said the bonds will be issued to the public by the Cartersville-Bartow County Joint Development Authority and will be retired in 30 years.

Davis said another reason behind the center is to provide more services to students that might otherwise not be available.

"In order to stay competitive we have to provide more amenities for our students," Davis



SPECIAL

The new student center on the Georgia Highlands College Cartersville campus (right) will be located across from the college's current academic building. The drawing will not depict the final building as no drawings have yet been approved by the college's board of regents.

said. "And that's always a challenge for two-year institutions."

The college is currently operating at capacity with around 2,400 students, but Davis said the college will look at any possible venue in order to provide access to interested students.

"Our No. 1 mission is access," Davis said.

Davis said the school also will be introducing a new intercollegiate athletics program in 2012 that will tie into the new center.

"We're anticipating the building to be finished by June 2012," Davis said.