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Floyd project still a year away

By TIM ALLEN
Staff Writer

Although the \$19.6 million Bartow County Floyd College Center didn't get construction funding this year, the project looks ready to go in next year's Board of Regents budget.

State Sen. Nathan Dean, D-Rockmart, said the project should get funding in next year's state budget as the No. 2 project for the University of Georgia Board of Regents.

"I've been assured it will stay as the No. 2 project and the governor should sign off on the budget sometime after January," said Dean, who has been the project's main backer in the legislature.

The first phase of the Bartow center should house 30 classrooms and other amenities in a 112,000-square foot building on 54 acres of land on Highway 20 between Wal-Mart and Interstate 75.

Dean had hoped to get the project in the 2002 budget earlier this year, but said the money for projects ahead of Floyd was too high for Gov. Roy Barnes to add other university projects.

"We'd have loved to have gotten it last year, but there was so much money going toward university projects

we just couldn't get it in," Dean said.

No matter when the construction gets started, Dean said the center will bring great economic opportunities to Bartow County and northwest Georgia.

"Not only is this a tremendous educational project, but it's also a great economic and industrial tool for future growth in Bartow County," he said. "It's a great way to improve the lives of all our citizens."

Sandy Briscar, director of public information for Floyd College, said the project is still on schedule as the architect's design reaches completion.

"As soon as the architect's plans are approved and we get the money out of next year's budget, we should be able to begin construction very soon," Briscar said.

The only question remains whether the money from the Legislature will come in the supplemental or the regular budget.

"The difference will be a few months," Dean said. "If we get it in the supplemental budget, we could begin construction around May (2002). If it's in the regular budget, it would have to wait until after July."

After Dean got money for design of the center a year early, Floyd officials hoped to open the school in the fall of 2003. Now, the school probably won't open until the fall of 2004.

"I'm excited to be a part of this project," Dean said. "It's certainly a great example of bringing our tax dollars back to Bartow County."



DEAN

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