

New Visions center sets new horizon at Lime Hollow



Image provided by Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture

Educational center to open in September

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The next generation of biologists and forestry management experts will benefit from a new educational center set to open in September at Lime Hollow Center for Environment and Culture.

The campus will have expanded class offerings and accommodate a class size of about 25, up from the 15 that can currently fit in the small former coal barn that is now the classroom at Lime Hollow.

The off-site modular construction of the building will be completed by the Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES construction trade program in the spring, and the entire campus is expected to be ready for BOCES New Vision students in September.

The campus will be a collaboration between BOCES students, as the construction trade students build the classroom that will house the BOCES New Vision Environmental Science program.

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Joe McIntyre/staff photographer

BOCES students construct a modular building Feb. 13 to be transported this summer to a location near Lime Hollow's Gracie Pond.

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The construction students are constructing two modular buildings, which will comprise the educational center, with a 30-foot space in the middle for a central auditorium class-room. The entire building will be about 2,600 square feet, said Lime Hollow Executive Director Glenn Reisweber.

The education center will be located about a quarter-mile from Lime Hollow's visitor center on McLean Road. The entire campus will include a maple syrup sugar shack and a 100-seat amphitheater, as well as storage facilities and a picnic pavilion and arts and crafts pavilion for summer campers.

The Environmental Education Center campus will also be used by Lime Hollow campers during winter and summer months when OCM BOCES students are not attending classes.

Construction on the center began in September 2012, and Reisweber is urging board members to buckle down and prepare for hard work in the spring to ensure the center is ready to open come fall.

Reisweber is excited about the maple syrup facility, which is expected to be in operation by 2015. He said it will introduce a very refined process of sterilizing bacteria through ultraviolet rays, teaching the next generation of maple syrup farmers how to tap the resource in a sophisticated way.

"Maple sugaring is a good example of science, technology, engineering and math; every component is in there and that is something that is very unique and regional," Reisweber said.

Jim Bender, Construction Trades instructor at BOCES, said his students are benefiting from the experience as well.

"It's a very real life situation, with construction meetings periodically and the kids learn about meetings with the engineer and the plant," Bender said.

He said at any given time about 10 students will be working on building the structures. He said construction has been ongoing for two years and should be completed by the end of the summer.