

H building spells fitness for OCC

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

For many county residents, H Building — for health and physical education — is their chief contact with Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge Campus.

"I call it the barometer. The public uses this more than any other building," said Leonard Cole, facilities manager of the building that houses the swimming pool, diving pool, triple-sized gym and exercise room.

High schools, both public and private, and community groups can rent the facilities when they aren't in use by OCC classes and faculty. And it was particularly good news when the college completed phase II of renovations for a building that might have been partly closed without an infusion of voter-approved money.

A Feb. 26 official ribbon-cutting marked the formal completion of three years of renovations. H Building is in the northwest corner of the campus, which overlooks I-696 freeway between Orchard Lake and Farmington roads in Farmington Hills.

Actually, Cole said, classes have been using the facilities some weeks.

Phase I began with the \$13,000 reconstruction of its Olympic-size swimming pool, reopened two years ago.

"The aluminum lining had deteriorated and leaked badly," Cole said.

"It would have been closed indefinitely if the millage hadn't passed," added George Cartoia, college information officer. "That resonated in Farmington and Farmington Hills."

Voters approved 0.8 mill (80 cents per \$1,000 of taxable value) in mid-1995 for seven years, pumping about \$30 million in new funds. The new money is dedicated to new programs, renovations, new equipment and student aid — but not to salaries and jobs.

A bulkhead separates the swimming pool from a 16-foot-deep diving pool used to teach diving, scuba diving and kayaking.

New exercise room

Phase II was \$1 million in work on the rest of H Building.

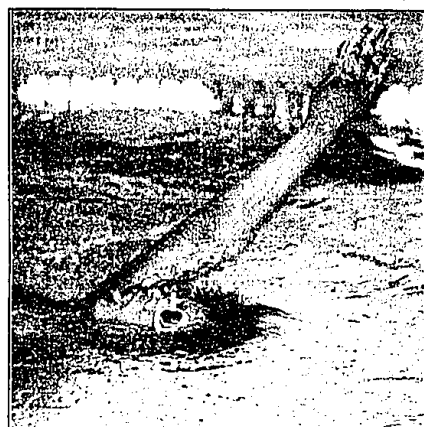
Half of that went into getting rid of the old, separate mechanical system (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) and tying H Building to the rest of the campus. That, said Cole, will save on maintenance work.

The second half of phase II went to these renovations:

■ Locker rooms — 25 percent more lockers, new plumbing.



Renovations complete: Ernie Sweeten (left) and Ray Bell of Rayhaven Equipment, Ferndale, install the mauve-colored lockers in the women's locker room. The new lockers are part of an overall renovation for OCC Building H, the community college's health and fitness center.



Swimming along: Lori Denise Smith, OCC student, who lives in Southfield, works out before heading to work.

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