# Audio file

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# Transcript

00:00:03 Announcer

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

00:00:10 Sofia Perez

Blunt Hall at Missouri State University is undergoing a large expansion project. Groundbreaking began in December 2022 to add and expand to the academic building. The building is home to the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, or CNAS. The expansion project will occur in two phases: phase one being the addition to the existing building and phase two being renovations. I'm Sofia Perez. Today, Dr Tamara Jahnke, Dean of the College of Natural and Applied Sciences, speaks about the expansion project and what it means for the future of STEM at Missouri State.

00:00:41 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

The addition will be approximately 77,000 square feet. It will include a basement and then four floors above that it will go in front of the lecture halls, so the lecture halls are on the east side of the building. The addition will go directly in front of that all the way to the football stadium. The lecture halls will remain, we won't be building over the top of them, but everything will happen right in front and attached to those.

00:01:10 Sofia Perez

The addition will also include student spaces with computer labs and updated teaching and research labs on every floor of the building.

00:01:17 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

One of our biggest needs was certainly research labs, and so that's where we have invested most of the space. The other big addition to the building will be office suites for the three departments that are housed in the building.

00:01:32 Sofia Perez

Jahnke says the expansion of the research space will create new opportunities for STEM students at Missouri State. She also speaks to the value it will bring to the Ozarks region.

00:01:41 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

I think it will really add to the capabilities of students and faculty, especially students, having more opportunities to work with faculty. Right now, we're limited by space, but also being able to bring in the appropriate instrumentation so that students have the opportunity to get hands on experience with all kinds of instrumentation, all kinds of techniques so that when they go out into the world and get their first job or go to graduate school, they are fully prepared, and they have done that experiment or done something similar to that and they're ready to hit the ground running and help that company or move on in their education. I hope that it indeed helps to transform the region so that more of our students will become the entrepreneurs that I know that they are, and maybe they're going to start a local business. We have a number of them that already offer internships for our students. And if we can grow those, that means more opportunities for people to stay within Southwest Missouri, but certainly to stay within the state. The state has some great workforce needs in terms of science, technology, engineering and so we want to be part of that. We want to be able to help that workforce development issue that the entire state has.

00:03:03 Sofia Perez

Jahnke offers some insight into the timeline for completion of the project.

00:03:07 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

We will start moving into the new addition in fall of 24 but might not be completely moved in until early 2025. The hope is that some of those projects can get done during times when students are not on campus during breaks, and so if we can get some of that work done, while the addition is also being built, then that will happen faster if we have to wait until it's fully done because honestly we only have the chemistry, biology, geology labs within the building. And so we're going to be living here teaching here, working here or doing research in the building. While the addition is being constructed and even during the renovation.

00:03:50 Sofia Perez

Phase one of the project is expected to cost $80 million and is funded entirely by federal and state funding.

00:03:57 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

So that is fully funded through the transformational donations in earmarks that Senator Blunt provided for us. And then also that were matched by the state of Missouri. So our governor was very, very helpful in helping us with those things.

00:04:13 Sofia Perez

Phase two, the renovations are expected to cost $40.1 million.

00:04:17 Dr. Tamera Jahnke

Now we're working on the final grant application so that the renovations will also be covered. And then honestly, the next step is we will be working on Cheek Hall, which houses mathematics and computer science, which is an integral part of the college and so important to everything we do. In the sciences, if we don't have that math and computer science background, we can't do what we're doing. And so we're very excited that that is also happening. Honestly, it will transform everything that happens on campus in terms of education as well as research and helping local industry. We work with a number of companies as well as getting national grants and state grants to do the research that we're doing. All the faculty are just really excited about the project. We're going to have an outstanding addition to the university here, in just a couple of years.

00:05:09 Sofia Perez

That was Dr. Tamara Jahnke. I'm Sofia Perez for the Missouri State Journal.

00:05:13 Announcer

For more information, contact the Office of Strategic Communication at 417-836-6396. The Missouri State Journal is available online at ksmu.org.