

Library/Learning Commons Blasting Information

September 9, 2011

Dear Faculty and Staff –

Last week I sent you a general update on the Library/Learning Commons project. That update can be found under the “Construction Updates” section at <http://www.salemstate.edu/facilities/4257.php>. In that message I indicated that further information would be forthcoming on the plan to blast rock ledge as part of the excavation phase of the project. This memo provides the promised information.

A portion of the building site consists of rock ledge that must be removed as part of the excavation. The ledge, estimated to be 1,800 cubic yards in size, is in the vicinity of the portion of the old library building that has been demolished. The contractors have determined blasting will be the most efficient and least disruptive means to accomplish this. It will confine noise and vibration to a few minutes a day rather than long period of hammering to break up the rock. The process will be very carefully monitored and should result in no danger to students, employees or neighbors and minimal disruption to campus activity. Key aspects of the blasting plan follow.

Blasting Plan

- Blasting is scheduled to begin September 15 and continue for about four weeks.
- Two blasts are expected each weekday during the four-week period, to occur during 9-11 am and 1-3 pm time periods. The exact time will depend on a variety of site conditions. The number of blasts is designed to allow each to be less powerful and, therefore, less disruptive to campus activity and the neighborhood.
- The blasting will be done by Maine Drilling & Blasting, a highly experienced firm in this type of work. All regulatory requirements related to blasting will be followed.
- A Salem Fire Department detail will be present for all blasting.
- For each blast, explosive charges are set into pre-drilled holes, and the entire area is covered by heavy blasting mats to absorb the energy of the blast and contain debris and dust. Loose debris should not be a risk outside the blast area.
- Each blast will be preceded by a security check and warning whistles:
 - 3 Whistles – warning 5 minutes before blast
 - 2 Whistles – warning 1 minute before blast – vehicular and pedestrian traffic stopped in blast zone
 - 1 Whistle – “All Clear” notice 2-5 minutes after blast– vehicular and pedestrian traffic resume
- College Drive will be closed to traffic, access to Lot A and the Peabody Lot will be restricted, and pedestrians will be cleared from the area for approximately 5-10 minutes for each blast. Traffic will resume once the blasting company has sounded the “all clear” whistle.
- Vehicular and pedestrian traffic on Lafayette Street will not be stopped during the blasts.

- No evacuation of buildings will be necessary. Classes and other activities should proceed as scheduled. To minimize dust and noise in classrooms, faculty teaching in Meier Hall may want to close any open windows upon hearing the two warning whistles one minute before each blast.
- The explosives required for each day's blasts will be brought to the site in the morning. No explosives will be stored on site over night.
- Vibration monitors have been in place since the beginning of the demolition effort and will remain for the duration of the construction project. These are in university buildings, a private residence and a Rainbow Terrace apartment. Additional monitors will be placed during the blasting phase.
- Pre-blast surveys have been offered to all private residences within a 400-foot radius of the blasting area. All surveys requested by these residences have been completed.
- Campus Planning staff will coordinate with the science departments relative to any preparations that may need to be made to protect scientific equipment.

As I said in my message last week, blasting might seem dramatic, but it is a carefully engineered and controlled process. To give you a better idea of what to expect, please view a brief video of a very similar blasting project recently done by the same contractor at UMASS/Lowell. It can be found at the "Library Blasting Information" link on the Salem State University home page.

Something else that may be of interest to you is a live Webcam that displays current activity at the construction site. The camera operates 24/7 and will be in place for the duration of the project. You can see it by going to the Lee Kennedy Company Web site (<http://www.leekennedy.com/p.current.htm>) and clicking on the camera icon next to the Salem State University project.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you have questions about the planned blasting, please contact me. I will keep you informed if there are any changes in the plans.

Andrew Soll
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