ABAC’S NEW HORTICULTURE BUILDING READY FOR FALL CLASSES

TIFTON—Construction on the new Environmental Horticulture Building at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College is complete, and the first official classes will be held there this fall semester. The building replaces the old Agricultural Engineering Technology (AET) Building located between the Chambliss Building and the Carlton Center.

The new 18,050 square foot building, which cost $2.3 million, will house the Environmental Horticulture program at ABAC. This program includes golf turf management, commercial turf management, landscape design and grounds management, ornamental production, and golf club management. Approximately 160 students are enrolled in the program.

ABAC’s new building contains three classrooms, two specialized labs for plant and pest identification, an on-site teaching and demonstration greenhouse, a CAD (Computer Aided Design) lab for landscape design, golf course design, and ag engineering, an equipment shop for small engine repair and troubleshooting, reel grinding, and basic maintenance of grounds equipment, a ceramics lab, offices for Environmental Horticulture faculty and staff, a conference room, and a student learning room to accommodate teaching and learning for a small group of students.

Although the building is primarily for environmental horticulture, the classrooms are designed for multi-disciplinary usage and can be used for other classes on a space-available basis. All furnishings for the building will be installed during the next month.

ABAC President Mike Vollmer said the multi-million dollar facility reaffirms ABAC’s commitment to providing strong programs in horticulture.

“This building, along with its state-of-the-art equipment and technology, will provide students from Georgia and throughout the United States with excellent and unique educational opportunities,” Vollmer said.

Dr. Larry Allen, Chair of the Division of Agriculture and Forest Resources at ABAC, said the building will be the envy of many four-year colleges across the country.

“I know of no two-year institution that will have a quality facility such as the one ABAC will have,” Allen said. “Environmental Horticulture is truly a jewel in the crown of ABAC.”
To address the landscaping and turf needs around the building, RainBird Irrigation Systems through Stovall Turf and Irrigation in Smyrna has donated a state-of-the-art irrigation system that will soon be installed. The irrigation plan was drafted and donated by Robert Scott, President of Irrigation Consultant Services of Conyers. Tifway bermudagrass sod donated by local sod producers, including Tifton Turf in Ashburn, Pike Creek Turf in Adel, and Southern Turf in Brookfield, will then be added. Moe Clements of Outdoor Services, Inc. in Tifton will assist with the installation of the irrigation system and the laying of the sod. During the fall semester, the horticulture faculty, staff, and students will design and install the landscaping with plants to be donated by wholesale nurseries in south Georgia.

Dr. Ed Seagle, Associate Professor of Environmental Horticulture, said he’s looking forward to classes this fall in this new facility, which provides students with an opportunity to build an educational base that will further focus them toward the lifelong learning process.

“This building will provide a much needed learning environment for students entering the green industry,” Seagle said. “The labs and classrooms will provide the necessary support equipment and tools in delivering a quality educational opportunity to students. The well-lighted building with its high ceilings and the ABAC seal on the lobby floor provides a welcoming, professional atmosphere to all who enter. We are so very thankful to everyone who has had a part in making this project become a reality.”

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