

# Nanotech campus to see growth

By MARY LANNON

A building of about 200,000 square feet will join the University at Albany's Center for Environmental Science and Technology Management nanotech campus across Fuller Road from the University.

Traffic related to that project topped the concerns of McKownville residents during a Nov. 18 question-and-answer period with John Giarusso, the University at Albany's assistant vice president for finance and business, and Tom Yurkewecz, assistant vice president for administration and facilities at CESTM.

Giarusso said that very little new construction is planned at the university while Yurkewecz talked about CESTM's growth.

One resident noted that the

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the current CESTM buildings have increased traffic in the area despite assurances, when the project began in 2001, that there would be no impact.

Yurkewecz said that traffic studies had shown that it would have little negative impact on the area. He added that people may perceive traffic impact differently from what the studies predicted.

These statements prompted strong words from Albany County Legislator Frank Commisso, D-Albany.

"You do a traffic study for your project. Why aren't we doing an overall impact study, not just your project?" Commisso asked.

Neither Giarusso nor Yurkewecz responded to that question.

Yurkewecz reassured residents that CESTM wanted to be a good neighbor. He reminded them that it had involved the public when it first constructed the buildings. It had put berms and landscaping around the parking lots and exceeded the setbacks from neighboring property.

At another point, Commisso said that the lack of foresight would cause problems for the

county, which would eventually have to fix Fuller Road.

"They're going to create the problem, and then it's going to be on the county's back," Commisso said.

The new building will be going in where green maintenance buildings now stand on Tricentennial Drive, Yurkewecz said.

A new maintenance building will likely go on the current parking lot for Indian Quad, adjacent to the campus police building, Giarusso said.

Traffic studies for the new CESTM building will be conducted when an environmental review is done on the building, Yurkewecz said. That will occur after a plan for the site has been chosen. Developers are to submit plans on the project by Nov. 24.

"We asked them to integrate into the site," Yurkewecz said.

He added that the large building will blend with the buildings already on the site. Currently the green glass building is 75,000 square feet; the blue-colored building, 130,000 square feet; and the center building, 220,000 square feet, he said. More employees are being added to CESTM, which will have about 400 people working there under its present configuration.

Once the new building goes up that number will increase, and CESTM will look to possibly build a parking garage, Yurkewecz said.

A transfer substation, scheduled on the original plan for the site, will be built on the back of the property soon, Yurkewecz said. CESTM has only grown large enough recently to require it, he added.

He pledged to work with neighbors to maintain a walking path and increase environmental sensitivity of the buildings.

Residents also asked about safety at the site.

"Safety is an extremely important activity for us. ... It's very pro-active," Yurkewecz said.

CESTM, with about 250 people currently on-site, has as large a health and safety office as the university with some 17,000 people on site.

Unlike CESTM, the university will not be growing much larger in the foreseeable future, Giarusso said.

"No new sexy projects on campus," Giarusso said.

At present, he said, the university is finishing a new administration/admissions building just behind the front circle that borders Washington Avenue.

That structure should be

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completed in July 2005.

It's also looking to install an artificial turf field, Giarusso said, which will likely take the place of some of the decrepit tennis courts on campus.

The new science building held its grand opening about three weeks ago, he added, and will likely be fully occupied by May.

Beyond that, Giarusso said the

university has no plans for additional buildings in the near future. Its current five-year plan, approved in July, consists of rehabilitating current buildings on campus.

There is some preliminary talk of building a new football field, but no funding currently exists for the project, he added.