CAT facility set for May opening

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This rendering shows the new Clemson Area Transit facility on West Lane, which will be South Carolina's first and only environmentally green facility when it officially opens in May.

CLEMSON — Clemson Assistant City Administrator Andy Blondeau has said the new Clemson Area Transit facility on West Lane won't open until May.

"Weather has delayed construction work, but we hope to make significant progress this week and next," Blondeau said, noting that the project is 90 percent complete. "The punchlist needs to be completed."

Blondeau said a 32 kilowatt solar collection system was purchased that will make the facility carbon neutral.

"We estimate running 100 kilowatt hours a day, and this will generate 256 kilowatt hours on a sunny day," he said.

In addition, Blondeau said bids for the bus wash are due April 18. The system will be installed by early June.

The new CAT facility will provide a new headquarters and operations center for 65 employees and protection for a fleet of 26 fixed-route CAT buses serving Oconee, Pickens and Anderson counties. The building will be environmentally green.

"This project features courtesy electric vehicle charging stations for CAT visitors, advanced solar and solar tracking technology, heat reflecting and retaining windows, energy efficient heating and cooling, storm water reclamation for bus washing, pervious surface parking, native plants and natural landscaping," said CAT Executive Director Al Babinicz.

In addition, Babinicz said, CAT will feature a carefully planned environment that "will have a significant impact on the well being, happiness and productivity of our employees."

The CAT headquarters training room, which Babinicz calls "the Aquarium," will bring outdoor light in and provide freedom to move around. Technology will also be a major feature of that area.

Babinicz said kiosks for Greyhound and Amtrak will also be featured. The kiosks will provide information regarding CAT's regular fixed route service, Amtrak passenger train service and Greyhound bus service all connected by CAT. However, no tickets for Amtrak or Greyhound will be sold.

Babinicz said the bus operation area, located in the back of the new facility, will feature a locker area for drivers as well as a flat screen television containing emergency messages, departure times and the like.

"It will be very high-tech," he said.

The bus area will feature 31 bays for 26 CAT buses. However, the area is spacious enough to hold anywhere from the 35-foot bus now in use to 40-foot and, possibly, 62-foot articulated buses should the city ever purchase any.

CAT was established in 1996 and now serves five cities and four universities.

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