

Elevators to get a face lift

Construction on the two elevators in PLC is scheduled to be completed by fall term.

By Hank Hager
Oregon Daily Emerald

For Julie Novkov, a professor in the political science department, the elevators in Prince Lucien Campbell Hall are just too dangerous.

Novkov, who is six months pregnant, said she does not want to take an unnecessary risk by riding the elevators that have sent two custodial workers to the hospital in the last month.

"I've used them less frequently since the accident," she said.

But come next fall, those who ride the elevators in PLC may be reducing their risk of injury or inconvenience.

Starting June 18, both elevators are scheduled to become modernized, said Mark Henry, project manager for Facilities Services, and manager for the elevator renovation.

A consultant company, Lerch Bates North America, Inc. was brought in to study the efficiency of the elevators. From their results, Henry said, Facilities Services formulated a plan to replace all existing operating components of the elevators.

The controlling system of the elevators is also scheduled to be replaced, Henry said, and by doing so, the elevators will now be able to "think," relying more on computer-based technology, which will enable them to run smoother and faster.

By starting during the summer, Henry said, inconveniences to fac-

ulty, students and PLC staff will be minimal. Project workers will be expected to work double shifts to ensure the elevators will be done before the fall 2001 term begins. The two elevator shafts will be worked on separately, Henry said, so that there will be one working elevator at all times.

Henry said one of the major considerations when planning the project was when to do the repairs. Because there is a large amount of traffic in PLC during the academic year, Henry said, summer was their only choice.

If it had been started any earlier "the inconvenience would have been so great to the building," he said. "Imagine what would happen if we were to do it in the spring or fall."

Bidding on the project from outside companies started last October, and Thyssen Elevators, based in Portland, won the rights. Thyssen was the low bidder at \$370,000, Henry said. The overall budget for the project is estimated at \$475,000.

Greta Pressman, campus relations manager for Facilities Services, said the elevators are the original ones that were installed with the building in 1967, which makes the project even more important.

The elevators "are very much due for a replacement in terms of problems," she said.

Pressman said two custodial workers were injured recently when one of the elevators came to a sudden stop. Pressman could not provide specifics of the accident and the neither of the workers could be reached for comment.

But while the injuries to the workers did not prompt the project, she said, they emphasized the need for it to be done.

Linda Steller, department manager for economics, said the elevators are outdated.

"They're not well-functioning elevators," she said. "They never have been."

Because the PLC elevators are so old, some faculty members with offices in the building say they will not ride them.

Zachary Biles, professor of classics, said he is aware of the recent injuries caused by the elevator's accident.

Biles, who said he does not normally ride the elevators, said he has heard ghost stories about them.

"I've heard several people in my department say that they're possessed," he said.

Stephanie Litton, a student assistant for the philosophy department, said she was in the building when the accident occurred and watched as the injured custodians were helped out of the elevators.

Although she does not normally ride the elevators, Litton said she is less inclined to because of the accident.

"When I think of elevators I think of freight and lazy people," she said. "I might as well use the stairs."

When told that work is scheduled to begin soon on the elevators, Litton was skeptical, saying she thought work was supposed to be done last year.


Novkov, who is aware of the scheduled work, said she is glad the elevators will finally be fixed.

"It's a big relief," she said.



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