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## **Governor Unleashes \$46 Million in Funds for Doudna Arts Center**

*Feb-24-2004*

*(Used by permission of The Daily Eastern News)*

*By Evan Hill, Campus Editor (Publication Date: Feb. 24, 2004)*

The Doudna Fine Arts Center's day has come. Gov. Rod Blagojevich released more than \$46 million in state funding for the project, bringing excitement to Eastern administrators.

"To say that I am elated would be the biggest understatement of the day," President Lou Hencken said. "We've been working on it a long time. We also extend our most heartfelt thanks to our local legislators, Senator Dale Righter and Representatives Chapin Rose, Roger Eddy and Bill Grunloh, for the tremendous support they've provided to Eastern and in working with the governor and his staff."

Most of the renovation project started in Fall 2003, but was held up after funding was stalled of a lack of state funds available for capital improvement projects.

Hencken said he had received word from "people very close to Gov. Blagojevich" that the funding could be expected any day and received official notice of the released funds just before 4 p.m. Monday.

"When completed, the state-of-the-art Doudna Fine Arts Center will not only benefit the students and the university with its additional classrooms, but it will also be a place where the community will participate in the college's arts, theater and music programs," Blagojevich said, according to the press release.

Hencken also said he believed the project would bring benefits to the area.

"It will pay back the state of Illinois many times over because of the increased space," he said. "When this is finished we will have additional classes and will be able to recruit more students."

The improvements to Doudna will add 90,000 square feet to the existing 104,000 square feet, according to the press release. The plan also calls for electrical, plumbing and lighting upgrades, window replacements and asbestos removal.

In addition to the Doudna money, which will be used for renovation and expansion of the current structure, Eastern will also receive money for repairing and upgrading the electrical system for the entire campus, Hencken said.

Hencken said the next step was to make any needed revisions to the current plans and then to seek bids from contractors.

"Because of the economic climate, with not a lot of work being done, we should get some pretty good bids on this," Hencken said.

The next project of this magnitude relying on state funding is scheduled to be a new physical science building, but Hencken said it would not happen for at least five or six years.