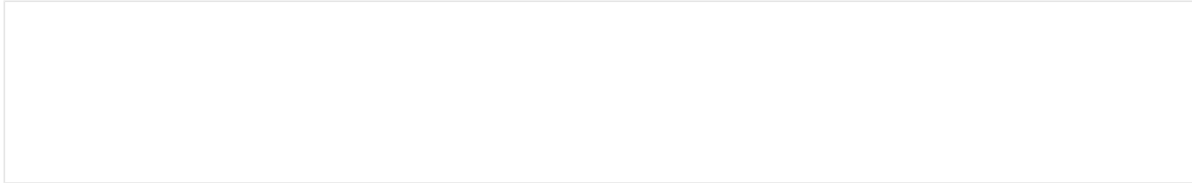


78° Clouds and sun
 Hi 84° | Lo 57°

- Home
 - News
 - Sports
 - Business & Money
 - Opinion
 - A&E
 - Living
 - Photos
- Marketplace
 - Reader Services



Hitchcock Center's \$5.8M project to create 'different breed' of building gets boost



CAROL LOLLIS

Jim McGovern, Sarah LaCour, president of the Hitchcock board of directors, Natalie Blais, district communicator for McGovern and John Olver at the Hitchcock Center in Amherst. [Purchase photo reprints »](#)



By SCOTT MERZBACH

VALLEY BUZZ MARKETPLACE »

- 09:51AM **Atkins Farms Country Market:**
 Monday 6/16 Daily Deal Butternut Mountain Farm Maple Syrup \$4.99 (12 OZ) Reg. \$11.99 (12 OZ) EXCLUSIVELY at Atkins Farms! You... [\(View photo\)](#)

- Jun 15 **Fishtales Bar & Grill:** Come Take a Bite Out of Our Father's Day Specials!! [\(View photo\)](#)

- Jun 15 **Marcotte Ford:** Pop quiz! How often should you wash your car's exterior? a) Once a month b) Twice a month c) When it looks dirty d) When...

- Jun 14 **Fishtales Bar & Grill:** Brand New Chalk Board is Up & Ready For Action! Come See Our New Weekly Martini, Shooter, & Cocktail Specials Along With... [\(View photo\)](#)

Staff Writer

Friday, June 13, 2014

(Published in print: Saturday, June 14, 2014)

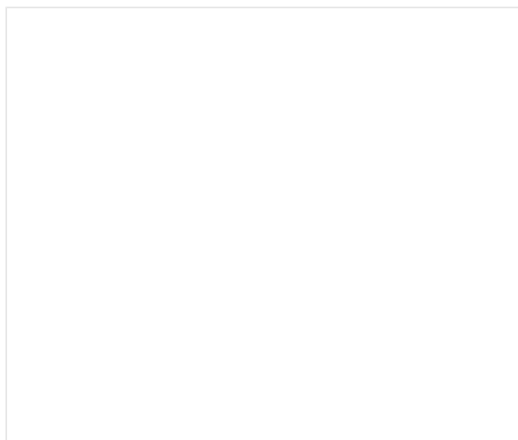
AMHERST — Generations of area schoolchildren have learned about the natural world and environmental issues through classes, field trips and camps at the Hitchcock Center for the Environment.

For U.S. Rep. James McGovern, who joined with former U.S. Rep. John Olver to tour the Hitchcock Center's South Pleasant Street site Friday afternoon, such educational places could reduce the ignorance of elected officials who serve in Washington.

"I wish some of our colleagues in Congress had more environmental education," McGovern said. "We have some colleagues who don't even believe in climate change."

McGovern's visit to the Hitchcock Center comes as the center is in the midst of a \$5.8 million capital campaign to construct a larger, more environmentally friendly building on the Hampshire College campus. It is expected to open in two years.

Julie Johnson, the center's executive director, said that the current space at Larch Hill Conservation Area, inside a renovated carriage house for the past 40 years, no longer meets the needs of the 8,000 people throughout the region it serves annually.



Groundbreaking on the new building, conceived by designLAB Architects of Boston, is expected early in 2015, with the project to be complete by summer or fall 2016. The new structure will be built in a way to meet conditions of the Living Building Challenge, which Johnson said is the best indication of just how little impact it will have on its surroundings. "It's really a completely different breed of building," Johnson said.

The center got a step closer to meeting its fundraising objectives Thursday when it was given a \$600,000 matching grant from the state's Cultural Facilities Fund. "With that, we're now at \$3.6 million of the \$5.8 million goal," Johnson said.

The building will include natural ventilation, roof-mounted solar panels and rainwater collection barrels. It will also be a net zero energy and net zero water building.

Because the building won't be tied into municipal water or sewer, it will use composting toilets that are believed to be the first of their kind in Amherst, Johnson said.

McGovern said he is familiar with composting toilets from Abby Rockefeller, who founded the Clivus Multrum composting toilet. Their presence at the center might inspire others to install them. "Hopefully it will be contagious, Everyone will want do it," McGovern said.

McGovern said it is important that Hitchcock lead the way in showing how to build both an environmental and functional building. He remembers a trip to Africa in which he observed that the famous snows of Mount Kilimanjaro have been diminished because of climate change, and there has been a chain reaction of negative effects for the people who live near the site because of the snow's disappearance.

If the Hitchcock Center is successful, it can show others that being environmentally friendly doesn't mean living without light or heat or other modern amenities. "You don't have to sacrifice your standard of living," McGovern said.

Email

Print

Comments (0)

3

Blogs »



SPECIAL COVERAGE

Special Coverage: The Dignity Project 2014: an on-going series on end-of-life issues

Jun 10, 2014 09:57AM



READ UP ON IT

Biking by the water on Tampa's RiverWalk Bike Path

Jun 12, 2014 02:39PM



HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

WMass Tournament Scores/Schedules

Jun 2, 2014 03:32PM



WALKING THE BEAT

Music, bread and daffodils

Apr 21, 2014 12:55PM



UMASS SPORTS

UMass coach Derek Kellogg mentioned in disputed NCAA allegations at Memphis

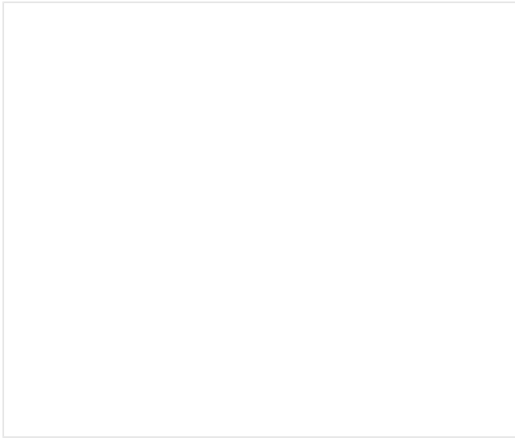
Jun 16, 2014 10:39AM

Popular

Olver, who is working on the fundraising campaign, said that he gave one of his first seminars on climate change at a Hitchcock Center classroom in the late 1990s. The new building, Olver said, will use a lot of wood, which has less carbon footprint than steel and concrete.

McGovern said he hopes to encourage others to come to the center and help complete the fundraising, noting that federal earmarks, which Olver once used, are no longer allowed. These could include having representatives from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Interior Department visit, and possibly U.S. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Edward Markey. "My assignment is to get as many of them to come here at one time," McGovern said. "If they have good ideas, we want to hear them now."

Before departing, McGovern also got to meet two animals that live at the center, Speedy, a 55-year-old eastern box turtle, and Maisie, a corn snake.



Prior to the tour, McGovern attended a ribbon-cutting for the Olympia Oaks affordable housing project in Amherst. Some of those 42 units are opening later this month.

Share: Email Print Comments (0) 3

Contribute: Suggest a correction Send a photo Suggest a link Send a news tip
 Letter to the Editor

Comments 0

[DISCUSSION GUIDELINES](#) [DISCUSSION FAQ](#)

There are no comments yet. Be the first!

Post a Comment

You must be registered to comment on stories. [Click here](#) to register.

MOST READ COMMENTED

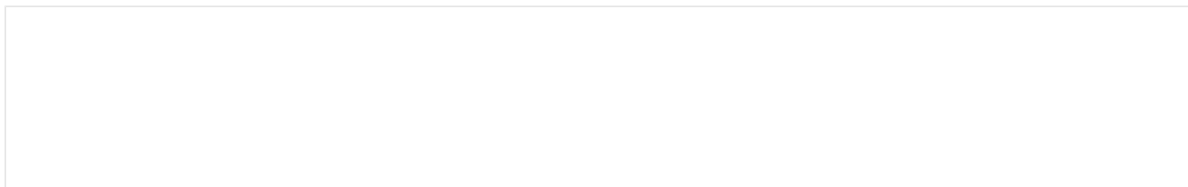
Most read stories in the past 7 days.

1. [Task force issues opioid recommendations](#) (3657 reads)
2. [CHART: VA backlog: 67 days is the average wait time for a new patient to see a Leeds VA specialist](#) (2778 reads)
3. ['Cultural Chaos': All-points arts festival will celebrate Easthampton's Cottage Street Cultural District](#) (1866 reads)
4. [As football conference search continues, UMass explores possibility of independency](#) (1773 reads)
5. [Granby couple details anguish of brother's botched funeral, shedding light on William Ryder's problems](#) (1722 reads)
6. [Former Westfield State President Dobbelle offers to settle wrongful termination suit; university says no](#) (1521 reads)
7. [Two families file suit against Ryder, offering more details on mishandling of loved ones](#) (1476 reads)
8. [NE governors to pool resources on opioids](#) (1451 reads)
9. [Police news: arrests and reports for Amherst, Hadley, Northampton, Easthampton, Granby, Pelham, Southampton and Belchertown](#) (1406 reads)
10. [Rumored threat will lead to increased police presence at Hampshire Regional High School on Friday](#) (1230 reads)

Today's E-Edition »



[Get more information about the E-Edition »](#)



Categories

- Home
- News
- Sports
- Business & Money
- Opinion
- Arts & Entertainment
- Living
- Marketplace

Newspaper & Website

- Terms of Use
- Privacy Policy
- Copyright Notice
- Reader Services
- Subscribe
- FAQ
- Discussion FAQ
- Newspaper in Education

Advertise

- Advertise
- Place a classified ad

Contribute

- Suggest a correction
- Send a photo
- Suggest a link
- Send a news tip
- Letter to the Editor

Connect With Us

-  [RSS Feeds](#)
-  [Newsletters](#)
-  [Subscribe](#)
-  [Facebook](#)
-  [Twitter](#)
-  [Youtube](#)

Main Office

115 Conz Street,
Northampton, MA 01061
413-584-5000

Amherst Office

9 East Pleasant Street,
Amherst, MA 01002
413-549-2000

Our Newspaper Family Includes

