Groundbreaking for the LLE Building Expansion

M. J. Shoup III
Laboratory for Laser Energetics, University of Rochester

Groundbreaking to celebrate the construction of the new addition to the LLE Complex occurred on 17 August with representatives from federal, state, and local offices; University senior leadership; and LLE (Fig. 1).

Initial planning work for the project began in 2019. In January 2020, the Board of Trustees Committee on Facilities approved entering into a contract for the design of the addition at a cost of $3,538,700. Design work kicked off in November 2020 and was completed in March 2022. For construction, four bids were solicited and two competitive bids were received, with LeChase Construction being the lowest bidder. The University entered into a Guaranteed Maximum Price contract with LeChase Construction for the addition. The total cost of this project will not exceed $42,265,736, inclusive of previously approved design costs.

Achieving permitting approval for the project with the Town of Brighton was an unexpectedly difficult and drawn out process. A primary sticking point was a conservation easement to accommodate a vernal pond on the LLE site. Diligent efforts by LLE...
staff, Nixon Peabody, and the Office of Government and Community Relations were ultimately successful in finding a mutually agreeable solution; however, the start of construction was slightly delayed. The final approval for this project also accounts for a potential future EP-OPAL expansion.

The new 66,600-sq.-ft, three-floor building will house laboratory and office space for approximately 110 scientists and LLE personnel and includes a class-1000 target fabrication laboratory and thin-film coating laboratory, a laser computing facility, and several other wet laboratory and general laboratory spaces. The largest laboratory space will house the AMICA Laser System—a state-of-the-art, high-energy, long-pulse laser that scientists at LLE are assembling for Stanford University’s SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory Matter at Extreme Condition Upgrade (MEC-U).

A team consisting of 23 local companies was contracted and mobilized to start the building construction project. Site clearing began on 5 July 2023 and progressed into foundation work through September 2023 (see Figs. 2–4). Over that three-month period the site was cleared and graded, and foundation work was started. Exceptional weather allowed the team to perform better than originally scheduled. Although it is early in the construction project, the team is still on track for a March 2024 completion.
Groundbreaking for the LLE Building Expansion

Figure 4
Footers being poured for the perimeter of the new building.