The decision to tear down Hunt Hall, pictured, was not made quickly — or lightly — with Eastern Oregon University looking at ways to save the building for over 15 years. (Eastern Oregon University photo)

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EASTERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

**Campus project to get rolling**

North Campus Restoration Project includes demolition of Hunt Hall

Observer staff

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**If you go**

**What:**North Campus Restoration Project public presentation

**When:** 6 p.m. April 4

**Where:** Huber Auditorium, Badgley Hall

**Of note:** Organizers are inviting input on Hunt Hall history during the meeting

The first phase of a major capital construction project at the north end of Eastern Oregon University’s campus begins later this month.

The lower section of the Hunt Hall parking lot, accessible from the 12th Street entrance, will close Wednesday to accommodate salvage, abatement and eventual demolition and restoration of the original women’s dormitory site. A fence will be installed around the perimeter to ensure safety and will block access to the parking lot.

The work follows completion of a thorough study of Hunt Hall conducted by the university that determined the cost to repair and renovate the aging building exceeded the price of new construction.

“With the plumbing, steam lines and electrical systems not up to current codes, the lack of an elevator for ADA accessibility as well as other access issues, the massive retrofitting the building would require just isn’t feasible,” said Luke Aldrich, North Campus Restoration Project manager.

The decision to tear down Hunt Hall was not made quickly — or lightly — with EOU looking at ways to save the building for over 15 years. Aldrich is currently leading a team to re-envision a use for the large space after the 72,300 square-foot building is gone.

Possibilities being discussed by the North Campus Restoration Team include enhanced parking and visitor access, including walkways, and opening up views of the valley and mountains surrounding EOU’s campus.

“Restoration of the site is obviously an important component of the project,” Aldrich said. “The team is going to great lengths to ensure we memorialize the building and minimize disturbance in this culturally sensitive area.”

Total cost of the project is $2.985 million, with funding provided by capital construction bonds allocated through the Oregon Legislature. EOU is working with W.C. Construction, Inc., and the demolition and cleanup is expected to be complete by fall term.

Most of the building has been closed since 2014. The first wing was constructed in 1939 and originally named Dorion Hall in honor of Marie Aioe Dorion, the sole female member in a cross-country expedition to the Pacific Northwest in 1810. This wing has been vacant since the 1970s.