There have been some exciting developments since last month’s project update. The rigorous bid process came to an end, with IMC Construction, Inc. being named construction manager. IMC distinguished itself from the other bidders based on its value, thoughtful responses, detailed construction and site plan, knowledge of the project, and innovative value engineering approach. (Value engineering is a systematic process used to improve the value in a project by solving problems and/or reducing costs while improving performance and/or quality.)

Based in Malvern, Pa., IMC is a nationwide general contracting and construction management firm. The project team is now working with IMC during a detailed value engineering process aimed at tightening the scope and budget of the project.

Barton Associates, Inc., a full-service consulting engineering firm based in York, Pa., also joined the project team in June, when they were chosen to design the mini-plant. This central utility core will service the Science Center and allow for expansion to adjacent buildings in the future. As an added benefit, the mini-plant will help us begin to address the aging infrastructure that serves the central academic and administrative portion of campus.
Background on the Project

Albright College began construction on its new Science Center in spring 2008. The project will include the construction of a four-story addition to the existing Merner-Pfeiffer Hall of Science and the renovation of the existing historic building, constructed in 1929 and added to and renovated in 1965.

The project will add 41,635 square feet of state-of-the-art lab space to the 37,019 square feet of renovated space, for a total of 78,654 square feet. The addition will wrap the west and north sides of the 1965 addition to the original Science Hall.

“The project is designed to preserve the character, dignity and history of our grand old Hall of Science while adding to the ways that Albright shines when it comes to attracting and retaining top-notch faculty, staff and students,” said Lex O. McMillan, president of Albright College.

New Power Connection a Success

As discussed in June’s update, a campus-wide power outage occurred July 3 to allow for the connection of the newly installed electric duct bank to existing utilities. In June, MBR installed the conduit raceways throughout the trench excavated by H.T. Sweeney (photo 1). The excavation process required precision, as H.T. Sweeney had to maneuver around several existing utilities and monuments in the duct bank footprint.

Once the conduit was in place, MBR pulled cable through the raceways between the vault and the manhole along Palm Street (photo 2). As MBR pulled the cable, H.T. Sweeney backfilled the trench using a trackhoe mounted vibratory plate and a dual-drum vibratory trench roller until the trench was backfilled to finished grade (photos 3 and 4).

Final connections were made during the outage (photo 5). Thanks to careful planning by the Facilities Department, the faculty and the project team, and careful coordination with MBR and Met-Ed, the power outage went according to plan and was a complete success.

Looking Ahead...

The project team and IMC are working through a value engineering process that will take us to the end of July. Shortly thereafter, the construction process will commence with site preparation around the existing building. An update will be distributed before any major site preparation activities begin.

H.T. Sweeney and Burkey Construction will continue curb, sidewalk and landscaping remediation along Birch Street, Bern Street, 13th Street and Palm Street.