

Construction Begins At University Of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Campus

by Lauren Grenlund

January 31 2023 10:35 AM



CHAMPAIGN, IL. - Governor JB Pritzker today announced construction will begin on the \$100 million investment for the Illini Hall Replacement and Altgeld Hall Renovation Project at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) campus. The funding is made possible by the bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital program, in conjunction with \$40 million from University of Illinois System's Illinois Innovation Network (IIN) and \$52 million in institutional contributions.

“Our historic, bipartisan Rebuild Illinois Capital plan leaves no aspect of infrastructure untouched—roads, bridges, transit systems, and educational facilities included,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “I couldn’t be happier to announce a joint investment from the state and our institutional partners to completely restore Altgeld Hall and construct a new facility to replace Illini Hall at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. From a state-of-the-art data science center to new lecture halls and classrooms, this project will provide UIUC students with the first-rate facilities they deserve as they embark on their educational journeys.”

The project includes a complete restoration of Altgeld Hall, the demolition of Illini Hall, and the construction of a new 140,000 square foot facility to replace Illini Hall. Additionally, the scope of work includes providing a new data science center as part of the Champaign-Urbana hub of the U of I System-led Illinois Innovation Network. New classrooms, lecture spaces, and collaboration areas will be added to both buildings. The Illinois Capital Development Board (CDB) will oversee the project in accordance with the protocol for state-appropriated construction projects.

CDB has prepped the construction site for the demolition of Illini Hall, occurring at the end of January, with asbestos abatement already underway. A new 4,614 square-foot auditorium will be constructed for Illini Hall, along with almost a dozen new classrooms. A portion of the new building will host the Department of Mathematics and Statistics. The new Illini Hall will be designed and constructed to meet LEED Platinum Certification; the highest level of certification possible from the U.S. Green Building Council. The demolition of Illini Hall marks the first phase of the multi-phase project slated to conclude in 2026.

The exterior of Altgeld Hall will receive extensive repairs to the stone veneer and bell tower, which will continue to serve as a historical campus landmark, prior to beginning the interior renovations. Altgeld Hall will receive new accessibility features and a complete restoration of the building’s original murals. A new research space for the Illinois Geometry Lab and the Illinois Risk Lab will be added to the building, as well as new tutoring rooms and classrooms.

“We’re grateful for this major investment by Governor Pritzker’s Rebuild Illinois and the University of Illinois System,” said Mayor Diane Wolfe Marlin, Urbana. “These two projects celebrate our campus history and embrace the future. The iconic Altgeld Hall will be restored, and the new Illini Hall will support research and education in mathematics, data science, and analytics, areas in which UIUC leads the nation. Both projects exemplify sustainable practices through repairing, repurposing, and meeting green building standards.”

“We welcome the continued investment in the Champaign-Urbana campus,” said Mayor Deborah Frank Feinen, Champaign. “This project melds the ongoing restoration of Altgeld Hall, a building with significant historic significance with the creation of new tech innovation spaces that look to the future of our campus. These projects will help us continue to bring the best and brightest to UIUC and will ultimately drive economic development and growth not only in Champaign but also throughout the State.”

“This project is a credit to partnerships that prioritize financial commitments that make modern facilities and infrastructure a reality,” University of Illinois System President Tim Killeen said. “When completed this project will attract talented people and drive economic development. We are grateful to Governor Pritzker, state agencies and the Legislature for their collaboration on this state-of-the-art innovation center on the Urbana campus, which creates a launch pad for innovation and new companies, serving the public interest.”

“The start of construction on this transformative facility is a historic moment for the entire university,” said Urbana Chancellor Robert J. Jones. “These new, innovative, tech-enabled spaces will rejuvenate the core of campus and become home to current and future generations of students and faculty pursuing excellence in data sciences and advanced analytics. These bold investments in our people and our programs will provide unparalleled educational experiences and deliver innovative research that improves lives and changes the world for the better.”

“The Capital Development Board is looking forward to renovating and constructing facilities that will support the academic endeavors of UIUC students,” said CDB Executive Director Jim Underwood. “We will consult the State Historic Preservation Office throughout the construction process to ensure the integrity of this 156-year-old institution.”

Governor Pritzker’s bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan provides essential funding to support the revitalization and improvement of Illinois roadways, state facilities, universities, bridges, and railways over a six-year period. The plan addresses critical infrastructure and economic opportunities.