Theater renovation wraps up
GRAND OPENING WILL KICK-START PCPA’S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

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Students at Hancock College may notice remnants of construction crews outside the Santa Maria campus/theater building.

Patrons of the satirical comedy “Clybourne Park” in the Severson Theatre can get an interior look at some of the renovation that is part of a $4.5 million Performing Arts Complex construction project that officials hope to conclude by Oct. 7.

Mark Booher, artistic director and dean of the Pacific Conservatory of the Performing Arts, said the grand opening is planned one day after the first performance of PCPA’s production of “Mary Poppins” on Nov. 8 in the Marian Theatre. It will kick-start PCPA’s 50th anniversary celebration, which begins in 2014.

“We’ve actually begun moving back into the building now,” Booher said.

Workers began the renovation project, funded through a 2006 bond measure, in January.

Updates have included repairing the heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system; upgrading the electrical system; and updating a plumbing system that has meant no clean water for the building for at least 10 years.

“It was certainly in need of some work,” Booher said.

The college also spearheaded work to replace the building’s roof, address building code compliance issues and add greater wheelchair accessibility.

But modernization elements are the aspects of construction that the public might notice the most:

■ New carpeting and an extended lobby area;

■ Two new restrooms;

■ A built-in concession stand;

■ New finishings for the dance studio and backstage dressing areas; and

■ A new catwalk that will allow greater lighting possibilities in the Marian Theatre.

“The audiences’ relationship to the stage will be relatively the same,” Booher said.