Glass panels in high education center will soon be replaced

MEDFORD — Glass panels in the RCC/SOU Higher Education Center will be replaced with locally made sheet metal panels, with work scheduled to start in mid-June.

Grant Lagorio, RCC director of facilities and operations, said RCC and SOU officials plan to issue a request for proposals by the end of the week. The cost of replacing the panels is estimated at $60,000.

In what was apparently a spontaneous fracture, one of 41 interior glass panels that line a three-story atrium and an entry stairway in the building broke March 10. The glass fractured, and fragments fell onto occupants, tables and floor on the first-floor lobby area. Two students suffered non-life threatening injuries, and the area has been cordoned off since the event.

A Seattle engineering, architectural and materials science firm hired to research the problem concluded the glass failure was likely caused by the presence of nickel sulfide in the tempered glass panel, which created an inclusion. To avoid a possible recurrence, all the panels will be replaced, according to Lagorio. The panels are designed as smoke deflectors.

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