

Weller House to reopen after \$40,000 in renovations

Nineteen Youngstown State University students won the lottery this summer.

The prize: a freshly remodeled room in Weller House residence hall for the 2004-05 school year.

Weller House, with a capacity of 46 students, and the 36-bed Wick House, were closed for renovations last summer. Located next to each other on the Madison Expressway Service Road at Wick Avenue, the residence halls are the smallest on the YSU campus.

Bill Sperlazza, director of housing services, said the university was able to close the halls because the opening of the new 400-student University Courtyard apartments in Smoky Hollow eased the demand for student housing on campus.

Weller, an apartment-style residence hall with private baths and kitchens, is reopening this summer after a \$40,000 overhaul, which included knocking out and rebuilding walls in conjunction with a new floor plan designed to give students more space and privacy. As a result, the capacity of the building has dropped from 46 to 24 students, Sperlazza said.

In addition, the residence hall was equipped with new flooring, wiring, air conditioning and heating systems, cable television and Internet hookups, Sperlazza said. Bathtubs were reglazed, carpets cleaned and walls painted.

"I envision that it's going to be more mature students living there who can live together more effectively,"

Sperlazza said. The units offer more independence than traditional residence halls, with kitchens equipped with a stove and refrigerator.

A lottery was held for the renovated hall, and only students with at least 40 credit hours were eligible to participate. Thirty students applied, and 19 were chosen. In addition, Weller House will be home to five graduate assistants working for housing services.

Meanwhile, Wick House will remain closed until increased demand for housing warrants a decision to re-open it, Sperlazza said. Wick House is a mansion built in 1906 that was converted into YSU student housing in 1992.