

SOUTH BRUNSWICK: ISCJ expansion under way

By Davy James, Staff Writer

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Work has started on the first phase of the Islamic Society of Central Jersey's expansion project, which will add an 86,000-square-foot K-12 school and additional parking to ISCJ's existing facilities.

A new entrance on Promenade Avenue is expected to be completed shortly while the ISCJ waits for additional funding and improved weather to move forward on the expansion project.

"The weather has slowed things down quite a bit," said Parvaiz Malik, chairman of the ISCJ board of trustees. "The entrance to Promenade Avenue is scheduled to open soon as the weather gets better. We also need some paving done around the parking lot."

Ground was broken on the project in June. The 17-acre site at the corner of Route 1 and Promenade Boulevard has parking to accommodate 194 cars. After the expansion, the lot will be able to hold 600 cars with new entrances and exits installed on Promenade Boulevard and Route 1.

Later phases call for the construction of a 42,000-square-foot office complex that will generate revenue for the ISCJ.

The total cost of the expansion plan is expected to be approximately \$25 million, according to ISCJ President Aly Aziz.

The money will be raised through community fundraising, grants and contributions, he said, with each phase dependent on the availability of funding.

"We're looking into the construction of the school, but we're still waiting for funding, which has been a big problem," Dr. Malik said. "Because of the economy, donations are hard to come by."

Dr. Malik said he wasn't sure how much the ISCJ still needs to begin work on the school.

"How slow or how fast the school expansion gets built depends on the availability of funding," he said. "The prices keep changing so it's difficult to say where we're at."

Phase one of the plan will install the new entrances, parking spots and the infrastructure for the expansion of Noor-UI-Iman School, which has about 500 full-time students and more than 50 students on a waiting list. The school cannot enroll them, however, because the school currently consists of three mobile trailers.