A $7 million project is underway on Babcock Street in Melbourne. What's going in? That's what readers asked FLORIDA TODAY Retail and Real Estate Reporter Ilana Kowarski. Video by Rob Landers. Posted May 19, 2015
Are you curious about what's being built on Keiser University's Melbourne campus, near the airport?

A FLORIDA TODAY reader, Rita Hewett, asked me to find out about this construction project at Keiser University which is a private, non-profit career college and here's what I discovered.

Keiser University is building a new facility on its Melbourne campus and investing $7 million in the project, because it is undergoing a major expansion effort. Later this year the university plans to introduce new health-oriented academic majors to its Melbourne campus, and the university hopes to expand its Melbourne student body by 50 percent over the next two years. That would boost enrollment from 1,000 students to 1,500 students. Keiser University-Melbourne also plans to increase the number of bachelor's degree programs, providing Keiser associate degree recipients with the option to continue their education at Keiser.

"The most important thing is that we're giving more graduates of our associate programs the chance to move on to bachelor's degrees," said Karen Runk, the dean of academic affairs at Keiser.

Once it is complete in September, Keiser's new academic complex in Melbourne will include 25 rooms, including eight lecture halls, 14 labs, a computer room, a student break area and a 90-seat auditorium that will be used for student orientations and other speaking engagements.

There will also be some unique student amenities, including cooking stations and a dietetics laboratory.

At the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016, Keiser will start rolling out its new academic programs in biomedical sciences, nutrition, sports medicine, and physical therapy. These wellness-focused academic majors were chosen because of a perception by Keiser's leaders that Florida residents were becoming more health-conscious and demanding more health services.

"Each of the new programs resulted from demand in the community both from students and businesses," said Colleen Browne, the campus president of Keiser University-Melbourne.

Collectively, these academic programs will have staggered starts depending on the timing of the formal accreditation process, which varies for each discipline. We'll keep you posted on any other major property developments at Keiser. Remember, when you have a question about construction, just "Ask Ilana."