



Students, educators, investors and others gather behind the shovels for a ceremonial groundbreaking of the new Huntington Learning Center expansion project on Wednesday, Oct. 7. The project will cost \$1.45 million and add more than 7,500 square feet to the current vocational center. Manning the shovels are (from left to right) Matt Schenkel, of Shawnee Construction & Engineering; Randy Harris, of

Huntington County Community School Corporation; Kari Vilamaa, of Barton-Coe-Vilamaa Architects and Engineers; Huntington Mayor Brooks Fetters; Steve Kimmel, of Huntington County Chamber of Commerce; Jerrilee Mosier, of Ivy Tech Northeast; Huntington County Commissioner Tom Wall; and Karen Green, of North East Indiana Works/WorkOne. Photo by Rebecca Sandlin.

Shovels turn dirt as learning center moves closer to reality

Ground was broken Wednesday, Oct. 7, on a \$1.45-million, 7,552-square-foot building expansion that will turn Huntington County Community School Corporation's vocational center into the Huntington County Community Learning Center.

The 29,306-square-foot center will include two new skills development tenants, expand current certification-based class offerings for high school students and adults, relocate to the center two off-site programs and provide additional office and classroom space.

The expansion construction, which will be carried out by Shawnee Construction & Engineering, is expected to be completed by July 2016. The project architect is Barton-Coe-Vilamaa.

"This groundbreaking is the culmination of a lot of hard work on the part of the learning center development team and a wonderful spirit of collaboration among the numerous stakeholders who have offered both financial and strategic planning support," said Steve Kimmel, executive director of the Huntington County Chamber of Commerce and a member of the development team. "This demonstrates how a community working together can achieve great

things."

Among the tenants at the new center in addition to Huntington County Community School Corporation will be WorkOne Northeast and Ivy Tech Community College Northeast.

The school corporation owns the building at 2201 N. Jefferson St. and will provide operational oversight and maintenance of the learning center.

Automotive and precision machining classes already offered at the vocational center for high school students will continue, as will CNC (computer numerical control) and welding programs for adults.

A certified nurse aide program and emergency medical technician program for adults now housed at Horace Mann Education Center will be moved to the learning center. Future plans include adding an industrial maintenance program for adults.

Structurally, the project will include an expanded welding bay, an office suite for WorkOne, an office for Ivy Tech, an office provided by Huntington University that can be used by training providers, three new classrooms, a community conference room with a 16-seat

capacity, a 10-bed health science lab and a new lobby and reception area.

In addition to the training provided at the center, people will have access to other learning opportunities and career guidance through WorkOne, as well as educational guidance and prerequisite courses through Ivy Tech.

The expansion was made possible by numerous financial contributions, including from local city and county government, nonprofits, foundations, higher education and business and industry.

"This learning center will be an exciting and innovative addition to the Huntington community," said Randy Harris, superintendent of the school corporation. "It is a real partnership of government, education, and private business to provide educational opportunities for high school students and adults to benefit our community.

"I am truly excited by the potential provided by this unique partnership to create talent pipelines that meet the 21st Century needs of employers."