

# Learning Center unveiled

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PHOTOS BY DANIEL HERDA / dherda@h-ponline.com

**OFFICIAL CEREMONY:** Director of the Huntington County Community Learning Center Tiffany Drummond cuts the red ribbon on Thursday to officially dedicate the Learning Center.

## Many attend ceremony for new educational facility

BY DANIEL HERDA  
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A red ribbon cutting ceremony and open house was held at The Huntington County Community Learning Center on Thursday, with many attending, including local educational leaders, local government officials, teachers, members of the Huntington community, and members of surrounding communities.

Learning Center Director Tiffany Drummond said everyone at the Learning Center was "excited to welcome the public in and to see the facility."

"It is an open house to come and go and check out the facility," Drummond said. "Teachers are in all of the classrooms to talk about what they offer."

The Huntington County Community Learning Center is the only facility in the state that has multiple programs for all educational ages, according to Drummond.

"As far as I know we are the only place in the state

where you can come to one facility and have high school vocational programs, community college courses, four-year institution courses, long-term trainings and the offices of Work One," Drummond said. "I think that is what sets us apart is that we are one location for a lot of services and we try very hard to remove barriers from going on to more education."

Huntington County Community Schools Superintendent Randy Harris said Thursday was "the day that many of us were waiting on."

"We've got great weather, the building is cleaned up and we have a lot of people here," Harris said. "We are excited."

Harris said the Learning Center is great because of the partnerships that it offers.

"Inside Huntington County we have had sponsors from city government, county government, we also



**OFFERING THANKS:** Huntington County Chamber of Commerce President Steve Kimmel thanks everyone who made the Huntington County Community Learning Center a reality at the Learning Center's red ribbon dedication on Thursday.





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**A WARM WELCOME:** Several from the Huntington community, as well as surrounding communities, attended the Huntington County Community Learning Center dedication on Thursday.

## CENTER

Continued from A1

an investor wall that has all the investors listed," Harris said. "There is also the day-to-day basis with the school district, Ivy Tech, Work One, Huntington University, everyone working together on this is what makes it work."

Ed Vessels, development team member for the Learning Center, said he had to wake up Thursday morning and pinch himself because he could not believe that the project had finally come to fruition.

"We have worked on the project for four years and we never thought this day would come," Vessels said.

Vessels said it took some

storytelling to get many entities, businesses, and community leaders on board, but after describing how the Learning Center was going to be helping many people that it was an easy sell.

"When people saw that this is going to be for high school students, college students, adults and anyone who wants to enter the workforce it was pretty easy for people to get on board," Vessels said.

President of the Huntington County Chamber of Commerce Steve Kimmel, as well as chair of the development team for the Learning Center, spoke at the ribbon ceremony along with others who helped bring the facility from a dream to a reality.

Kimmel thanked organizations like the United Way of Huntington County, who donated the seed money of \$60,000 to get the process started. He also mentioned how Huntington County Community Foundation and the Lilly Foundation for matching grants of approximately \$115,000, as well as city and county governments that provided a combined approximate total of \$500,000.

"To date the team has raised almost \$1.4 million for this project," Kimmel said. "All done without hiring a professional consultant."

The Learning Center has been operational since Aug. 1, with Kimmel saying that all of the classes are cur-

rently filled. He added that the Learning Center belongs to everyone in Huntington County and encourages the community to stop in and see it.

"This Learning Center that you see behind me today is yours," Kimmel said.

The Huntington County Community Learning Center is located at 2201 N. Jefferson Street and can be contacted at 260-356-2858 or by visiting the web site at [huntingtonlearning.org](http://huntingtonlearning.org).