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Animal science building opens at Huntington

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A few remaining finishing touches weren't reason enough Monday to delay a celebration Huntington University planned months ago – the ribbon cutting of its newest building.

"With the exception of baseboards throughout the building and decor on the walls – which we hope you'll forgive us for – this building is ready to welcome students," university President Sherilyn Emberton said in prepared remarks provided to The Journal Gazette.

Along with a classroom, the 10,000-square-foot Don Strauss Animal Science Education Center features flexible pen space capable of housing livestock for hands-on learning experiences, according to a news release.

The facility was created to move Huntington's agriculture program to the next level, Emberton said.

The Hauptert Institute for Agricultural Studies promotes a Christian perspective on agriculture, "which

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recognizes a responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation and to examine questions of sustainability and justice," officials said.

The program welcomed its first students in fall 2015. More than 50 students were pursuing agriculture degrees as of this fall, the release said.

Construction of the education center was announced last December. University leaders didn't know whether the project would progress on time, given this year's events, Emberton said.

"But God was faithful," she said. "While other building projects around the state and country were put on indefinite hold, we were able to break ground in early spring and take advantage of those contractors who had projects cancel."

The building's namesake is the late Don Strauss. He

was a member of the Strauss family in North Manchester and founder of Strauss Veal Feeds and Midwest Poultry Services, which provided a donation that made the center possible, the university has said.

Huntington University has released several statements about the animal science education center since last year but has never included dollar amounts for the building or the Strauss donation.

Lake City Bank is another supporter, donating \$100,000 over four years, the university announced last month. Of that, \$10,000 is earmarked for the department of agriculture, and \$15,000 is committed to the animal science education center each year.

"This building was made possible because of the generous hearts of people who believe in the mission of Huntington University and who have a heart for agriculture and the bio sciences," Emberton said.

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