

College holds groundbreaking for new technology center



Donnie Roberts/The Dispatch
Chip Overbey, Old Dominion Freight Line's vice president of national accounts and marketing, speaks Monday about the benefits of the new Transportation Technology Center to be built at Davidson County Community College during a groundbreaking ceremony at the college.

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The countdown has begun for a new Transportation Technology Center at Davidson County Community College.

More than 50 people, including DCCC administrators, faculty and students, local and state representatives, and supporters, attended the groundbreaking ceremony Monday for the first building on the campus that is totally financed with funds from grants.

“This really is a result of partnership,” said Dr. Mary Rittling, DCCC president. “This is the first building we’ve built on campus like this. It comes because we all collectively think it’s what’s best for the college.”

The building is made possible through an \$810,000 federal grant from the Economic Development Administration of the United States Department of Commerce, which the college received in June 2007. Matching funds were provided by a North Carolina Facilities and Equipment Funds grant. Also, Cunningham Brick Co. of Lexington donated bricks for the project.

Rittling said the facility will help prepare students for new regional jobs in and around the logistics and transportation fields with the changing economy.

“We are in an interesting time in Davidson County,” she said.

The facility will be used to expand the college’s transportation program while also adding a new heavy equipment and transport technology program. The building will feature auto and diesel labs and classrooms. A corridor will be built to separate the labs and classrooms where companies and people can ride through to see what’s going on inside.

The building will house the college’s truck driving training, heavy equipment, diesel mechanics and automotive systems technology, said Chris Murphy, DCCC’s interim associate dean of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The facility will be able to accommodate nearly 240 students a year, he added.

“It’s a good-size building,” he said. “It will be very good for the needs of the county and surrounding areas.”

The college also received support from companies through letters or other commitments.

“That shows the commitment they have for the college and community,” Rittling said.

Supporters include U.S. Express Trucking, Old Dominion Freight Line, Richard Childress Racing, Plaza Ford, Davis Chevrolet, McElroy Truck Lines and Sun Delivery.

“We’re proud of you and excited about where you are heading with this,” said Chip Overbey, vice president of national accounts and marketing with Old Dominion. “The U.S. economy is big news right now. Our economy had been changing for three decades.”

Rittling also gave a big thanks to Rep. Howard Coble, R-6th, and Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., in being instrumental in helping secure the money for the building.

“I’m proud to represent this area,” Coble said. “I’m delighted to be here today.”

She also thanked N.C. Rep. Hugh Holliman, D-Davidson, and the county commissioners.

“We’re always glad to see new buildings go up,” said Larry Potts, chairman of the Davidson County Board of Commissioners. “We’re always pleased to be a part of the college’s growth. You have our support.”

The general contractor for the building is Morlando-Holden Construction of Greensboro.

The college held a groundbreaking in May for its new conference, training and technology center that will house the DCCC Workforce and Continuing Education Division, which includes the DCCC Small Business Center, and provide space for the college’s Information Technology Department. Both buildings are scheduled to open by the fall of 2009.

Thom Hege, chairman of the DCCC Board of Trustees, told the crowd that this is an exciting era for the college.

“We’re just very appreciative for all the help we received to make this technology building available and to service our transportation and logistics industry,” he said “That’s going to be a very integral part for us being where we’re located on I-85.”