

# IVY TECH

campus promises sharpened workforce & affordable college

**T**here is a growing sense of economic momentum here. As a new season nears, higher hopes spring with it, in large part to what's being built along Ind. 3 South in New Castle.



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Dr. Andy Bowne

What once was an auto dealership has been transformed into a place many feel will help accelerate the local economy; a place where young people can find a more economical start to their college careers; a place where middle-aged workers in transition can get a new start; a place where future nurses and respiratory therapists will learn their craft and, as a result, start to help many people in the years to come.

Former Ivy Tech Chancellor Gail Chesterfield said she'd never seen a community rally around a project so quickly. Henry County invested about \$2.2 million worth of food-and-beverage tax money in this facility. The Henry County Community Foundation and hospital foundation each contributed \$250,000. Six couples in the community pooled their own resources together to raise \$500,000 more.

Dr. Andy Bowne, Ivy Tech's new east region chancellor, believes it will be worth every penny.

"From a chamber standpoint, a business and economic development standpoint, it's all about creating tomorrow's workforce," Bowne said as he toured the new campus. "I think it's a wise investment in the community."

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## IVY TECH COMMUNITY COLLEGE: THE PRICE IS RIGHT

**D**URING A TIME WHEN TUITION AT MAJOR colleges and universities continues to rise, Dr. Andy Bowne, Ivy Tech's new east region chancellor, believes Ivy Tech becomes a bargain – an economical way to achieve dreams to a better life.

Bowne said he wants to build upon Ivy Tech's efforts at reaching out to future students in addition to serving current needs. In that regard, he envisions a link to high schools as important as the connection with business and industry. Bowne said currently 78 percent of all East Central Indiana high schools have dual credit arrangements with Ivy Tech, meaning students receive credit for a class not only toward their high school graduation, but also for the

college route they plan to take.

"Last year, dual credit programs with Ivy Tech saved families \$14 million in tuition costs across the state," Bowne said. "That's a huge savings for families. This year, we will serve about 1,700 students who are taking dual credit courses at Ivy Tech in this region."

Likewise, students who begin their careers by taking Ivy Tech classes also save. With college expenses rising and four-year colleges rapidly pricing themselves out of the middle class market, Ivy Tech becomes one of the best bargains available – and the most flexible – for people to get back on their feet.

"The savings start to add up over time," he said.

### Some classes to be offered this summer

Construction of the 14,000-square-foot Phase I is expected to be wrapped up in April, about a year after they broke ground here. Bowne said a few classes might be offered at the new facility for the summer semester in May and June.

"Come fall, we're full stride," Bowne said.

Currently, Bowne said about 340 Henry County students take Ivy Tech classes. That number could triple once all three phases of the new facility are finished.

"When we get all the way through all three phases, we will be able to serve about 1,200 students here," he said.

Phase II will be a health care wing, made possible by generous local donors. A walk into the area feels like a real hospital setting, with four bed stations already in place for nurse and respiratory care training. Phase III will add another 6,000 square feet for more general-purpose classrooms.

While there are three phases to the project, the students who eventually use them will be multi-faceted and represent a cross-section of generations. It's the beauty of what has become the nation's largest community college. In the east region, there are about

8,600 students who take Ivy Tech classes.

"Some are coming to us to get an associate degree," Bowne said. "Some are going to start their college careers with us, then transfer to another college and get a bachelor's degree. Many are going to come to Ivy Tech and take a one-year technical program, complete it, then go right to work."

### Michigan roots

Bowne took over for Chesterfield in October, bringing with him an enthusiasm for the community college concept and a team-building approach he believes is necessary for success in the future. He wields a double-edged sword of experience to combat the issues Ivy Tech's diverse student population faces.

At Grand Rapids Community College, he led a workforce training and economic development group.

"We worked with area employers and developed short-term training programs for people who had lost their jobs or weren't interested in the traditional college approach. They were intense six-month training programs that met five days a week to help people get employment skills."

Bowne later was asked to lead the Grand Rapids

Community College Foundation, where he became known as a "prolific fundraiser." Through his leadership, about \$32 million in gifts came the college's way, with an equal amount received in local, state and federal grants.

### Working on a stronger workforce

Recently, Bill Stanczykiewicz, president of the Indiana Youth Institute, told a New Castle Rotary Club audience that there are as many as 40,000 to 50,000 jobs available in Indiana but not nearly enough skilled workers here to fill them.

"It's not your grandfather's factory anymore," Stanczykiewicz said. "It's not even your father's robot."

Bowne believes strongly that Ivy Tech can be an answer to so many questions as employers and job seekers try to find their way in a changing economic world.

"The skill shortages that exist today aren't necessarily four-year skills," Bowne said. "They are often technician-level skills needed to run and maintain equipment, to problem solve. Regardless of the industry, whether we are talking about health care, manufacturing, a call center, you name it, that's where we excel as a community college."

One example of how Ivy Tech can work with business and industry, according to Bowne, is the development of specialized courses for the industrial maintenance technician.

"The industrial maintenance technician has a combination of skills – electrical, pneumatics, hydraulics, welding and problem-solving – that so many manufacturers are screaming for right now," Bowne said. "That is something we can and are responding to here at Ivy Tech."

### A roadmap to changing the 'social fabric'

During public discussions about whether Henry County should dedicate a large chunk of food-and-beverage tax money to the Ivy Tech project, there was some debate over where such a campus should be located. Some believed an Ivy Tech campus downtown



would revitalize the long-suffering area.

But Bowne said what was ultimately decided – Ind. 3 – would prove to be a wise location choice.

"Being close to the highway gives easy access to this facility from all directions. It's our goal to have an Ivy Tech presence every 20 miles or so. This fits right into our plan."

Other skeptics have fears that Ivy Tech will, indeed, improve the workforce here – and that workforce will leave the area for greener pastures. His experience tells him that's not necessarily true.

"Community college students – 85 to 90 percent of them – stay in the community," Bowne said. "Typically, community college students go back to their roots."

Ultimately, Ivy Tech means more than degrees or jobs filled. Bowne said he agreed with a recent assessment by another former Ivy Tech chancellor Dr. Rob Jeffs, who told a New Castle group recently the new facility under construction could help shape a better future.

"As they complete these classes, people begin to get better jobs with full benefits and health care," Jeffs said. "Relationships are stabilized because of improved financial stability. It begins to turn around the social fabric of the community." ■

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