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From Page:  
16  
2/24/2011  
45554

## WITCC administrators see bright future for Cherokee Campus

Improved communications with the community and a renewed effort to "sell" the many opportunities afforded by its Cherokee facility are the vital cogs in the wheels of Western Iowa Tech Community College and Conference Center in Cherokee as it rolls into the future.

"The opportunity is here and now to take this campus to a totally different level," said WITCC President Dr. Robert Dunker, based at WITCC's main campus in Sioux City.

"We continue to establish more and improved communication links throughout the area and are developing a real ear for the Cherokee community.

"We are focusing on marketing our products (various course offerings) and to learn just what it is this community is willing to purchase. It's always a two-way street - we provide the products and the community will tell us what it is that interests them and what they want to pursue."

Executive Vice-President Dr. Terry Murrell, along with Dr. Dunker, oversees WITCC, and likes what he sees in Cherokee after join-

ing WITCC three years ago as former Vice-President of Instruction and Student Services.

"All the components are in place for WITCC to help students throughout the Midwest better prepare for

their future and to help guide them along their chosen career paths," said Murrell.

Dunker said the WITCC Campus and Conference Center in Cherokee was designed and built years ago as an educational opportunity and also as an economic development opportunity.

Darla Struck, Director of the Cherokee Campus and Northern Services Area for WITCC, said one of the main focuses of WITCC is to reach out to cultivate improved communication and relationships with the business community. Course work can be tailored to suit a business's needs such as college credit courses, degree offerings, safety training/OSHA compliance, hands-on mechanical instruction, professional development, employee training, and upgrading various skills.

Three staff members are

now on board to help Struck facilitate WITCC's impact in Cherokee. They are secretaries Gigi Boothby, Erica Berding, and Donna Lewallen

"Gigi, Erica, and Donna are wonderful additions to our staff and are totally dedicated to the community and WITCC's mission here," said Struck.

Conference Center Director Nancy Brutsman, and Educational Talent Search Director Dori Claycamp are

also integral cogs in the WITCC wheel.

In the past few years, WITCC in Cherokee has re-introduced its popular construction class, added a second ICN Room and a "smart" classroom used for classes, and wireless internet access was installed at the Cherokee Campus.

A renewed emphasis on various community course offerings mirroring the former "Adult Education" programs once so popular and sought after in Cherokee have also become quite popular, according to Struck.

"WITCC is the perfect platform to achieve this at the local level," explained Dunker. "We need to turn





businesses on to the opportunities here and turn people on to Cherokee. This is a wonderful community with wonderful, caring people. We know that. It's why we're here. We just need to be all we can be in educating the people on all that we can offer and exciting new products that no one has even thought of yet.

"With Darla being the face of WITCC in this community, I'm confident we are only scratching the surface. She has very much to offer and it's her job to facilitate this focus. I'm confident she will take this campus to a totally different level."

Dunker and Struck also expounded on the value of

the spacious WITCC Conference Center, a state-of-the-art facility that includes an 8,000 square foot banquet hall with 20-foot ceilings; banquet seating for 500; accommodations for meetings, banquets and major exhibits and displays; capability to divide into three large rooms for meetings or banquets; full

kitchen; round and rectangular tables and padded chairs; complete audiovisual system containing large video projection screen, and a portable stage.

Also, large vehicle entrance; internet access; lecture and audiovisual theater with stadium seating for 176; Iowa Communications Network classrooms

(ICN); large sky-lit atrium for reception/registration; event planning consultation; full catering services; handicap accessible; dedicated parking; 20-station computer room; piano and organ available.

New to the local WITCC facility is a high-tech, computerized satellite weather station.

"Just the social impact of the Conference Center is awe-inspiring," added Dunker. "The opportunities are great. Then, add all the other facilities the Center has to offer and it truly become a total community center in every sense of the word. We just need to make people learn to utilize it to the fullest."

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Western Iowa Tech Community College Advisory Board meeting in Cherokee in December by WITCC officials and various community leaders. Some of those present included, left to right, Tim Hauptert, Hy-Vee Store Director; Nancy Brutsman, WITCC Conference Center Director; Dr. Robert Dunker, WITCC President; Darla Struck, WITCC Director of Cherokee Campus and Northern Services Area; Dr. Terry Murrell, WITCC Executive Vice President; Janet Gill, WITCC Dean of Enrollment; and Mark Buschkamp, Cherokee Area Economic Development Corporation Director.

Photo by Paul Struck