

Published Wednesday, April 06, 2011

Groundbreaking for WGTC Coweta campus April 29

BY [JEFF BISHOP](#)

The Times-Herald

A ceremonial groundbreaking has been announced for April 29 to celebrate the start of construction for the new Coweta campus of West Georgia Technical College.

The West Georgia Technical College Foundation is hosting the groundbreaking event at the intersection of I-85 and Turkey Creek Road, at the southeastern quadrant of the intersection. The ceremonies will be held at 10 a.m.

Fundraising efforts for the Coweta campus have been ongoing for the past year, when an \$8 million initial goal was set. An all-new fundraising campaign is already in the works.

Fundraising is always difficult, but even more so in a down economy, said Dawn Cook, vice president of Institutional Advancement.

"When we started this two years ago, we didn't know that the economy was going to tank like it did," said Cook.

"But we've been very successful, in spite of that, thanks to the commitment from this community."

Cook said she'd like to think that much of the support was due to the high caliber of graduates that are produced by West Georgia Technical College. Well-educated graduates who integrate well into the work force "make our job easier," when it comes to fundraising, she said.

"We are the only technical college that did not suspend or cancel its capital campaign" when the recession hit, she said.

West Georgia Tech President Dr. Skip Sullivan said that the seed for the campaign was first planted four years ago when it became apparent that the college was outgrowing its local home base at Central Educational Center on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in Newnan.

"Someone said that we need our own campus here, and we've been working since that time to make that happen," said Sullivan.

Enrollment this fall at West Georgia Tech totals 8,000 credit students, along with 4,000 adult ed students, so the school is beginning to fall into the "large college" category, he said.

The plan is to open the new campus in spring 2012.

Phase 1, the Foundation Building, will include a 20,000-square-foot administration building and two similar sized classroom buildings and an industrial classroom building.

The initial \$8 million fundraising campaign was meant to capitalize not just the Coweta campus, but also the student scholarship fund, a health care fund, an adult literacy fund, and other initiatives.

But "priority one" for the campaign is "a new, stand-alone, full-service campus for Coweta County," said Cook.

Orchard Hills LLC has already donated 38 acres on I-85 for the campus, and the state of Georgia has budgeted \$8.5 million for phase two of the campus.

"Coweta has been crying out for post-secondary options for years," said Cook. "The county has seen the results that the CEC has had in the school system, but CEC is just a taste of what technical education has to offer."

That doesn't mean that West Georgia Technical College will be abandoning its long partnership with the CEC, or its established campus there, said Sullivan.

"We are not abandoning the CEC," he said. "But you can see all the double-wide trailers there. We're just out of room," he said of the campus in Newnan.

"Our responsibility is to meet the needs of Coweta County," he said. "And health care here has become a boom industry. For a long time students were not able to stay here in Coweta, and they had to go elsewhere to go to school. But West Georgia Technical College will now have a permanent place here."

Sullivan recently told the Coweta County Development Authority that he would do whatever is necessary to partner with the local community and meet its post-secondary educational needs. It's something WGTC is already doing in other communities, he said.

Sullivan said a prospect recently investigated a nearby county where his school operates a campus, and his institution was given a detailed list of the company's requirements.

"They outlined what they needed," Sullivan said, which included trained machinists, help with logistics and a number of people schooled in niche specialties, including trained maintenance crews ready to "keep the facility running."

West Georgia Technical College's response?

"Tell us what you need," said Sullivan. "We will provide it. We will get the people trained."

Sometimes the requirements go beyond what a technical school can offer, he said. But very often West Georgia Tech can meet most of the requirements.

"Often these people have to be trained before the building is even built," he said. "These employees have to be ready to go when the employers open the buildings."

That's why the educational program of a technical school like West Georgia Tech has to incorporate a certain amount of flexibility in its curriculum, he said.

"Even if we don't have a program, we can develop it within a few months to meet that need," he said.

"With our new campus here, that is what we will have to provide," Sullivan said.

The new school will be a real feather in Coweta's cap, said Coweta Development Authority Chairman David Brown.

"Without a trained work force, in this day and time, you're not going to get those high-tech industries that bring in those high-paying jobs," said Brown.

"I hope the citizens continue to stay involved and support this," he said.

"Hopefully the community will do its part."

- [About us](#)
- [Customer Service](#)
- [Social News Forms](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Visitor Agreement](#)
- [RSS](#)
- [Mobile](#)
- [Go To Top](#)

© 2011 The Newnan Times-Herald Inc., Newnan, Georgia. Any unauthorized use, copying or mirroring is prohibited.