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News

## LCCC plans for outreach center in '10

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**NORTH RIDGEVILLE** — North Ridgeville-area residents could eventually be one step closer to higher education.

Lorain County Community College hopes to build an outreach center in North Ridgeville sometime next year, said Marcia Ballinger, vice president of strategic and institutional development. The project is part of the college's vision to increase the community's participation in higher education.

Definite plans for the outreach center have not yet been finalized, and a location for the center has not yet been selected, Ballinger said. The college has other outreach centers in St. Joseph's Community Center in Lorain and in Wellington.

The outreach centers are about 10,000 to 12,000 square feet and offer a variety of courses, computer labs and advising and counseling resources, she said. The centers provide access to higher education for people who otherwise might not be able to travel to the college's main campus in Elyria.

LCCC has experienced a 70 percent increase in enrollment since 1999, Ballinger said. In the last year alone, enrollment has jumped more than six percent. The outreach centers also help address the increasing enrollment.

"What it's demonstrated for us especially in times of economic downturns, more and more residents are seeking more skills and higher education," she said.

The college also has a collaboration with the University of Akron at a facility in Brunswick, which provides faculty, staff and courses from both institutions. That facility works to serve residents from the southeastern part of Lorain County.

College officials also need to come up with a new outreach center in Lorain because St. Joe's is closing at the end of this year.

"With the closing of St. Joe's later this year, we're actively pursuing alternative locations for that" in Lorain, Ballinger said. Nothing has yet been finalized, however.

Ballinger said she is not sure when a decision could be made on the North Ridgeville outreach center. The college's strategic plan, however, calls for a new outreach center to open every two or three years.

"Ideally, we would like to have an outreach center (in North Ridgeville) sometime in 2010," she said.

Cuyahoga Community College also plans to expand in Westlake near Bradley and Clemens roads, said Courtney Clarke, director of public relations. The first building would open in the spring of 2011 and focus mostly on health care and sciences.

The building would have a student services area where students could register, pay and get financial aid, she said. There would also be classrooms and lab space.

Two other buildings would open in about 2013 and 2015, she said. They would focus more on engineering, alternative energy and other areas.

Construction on the first building will probably start this fall, Clarke said.

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