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Building the future workforce: Career Center to come to Beloit's Ironworks campus

By ZAC BELLMAN Staff writer
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BELOIT — A state-of-the-art career center dubbed Hendricks CareerTek soon will be settling in the Ironworks campus, which developers promise will bring career development, education and opportunities to youth in the Greater Beloit Community.

Hendricks CareerTek will be funded by a grant from the Hendricks Family Foundation to the Stateline Boys & Girls Club, and construction is set to begin in January. The center will seek to partner with the School District of Beloit, the Stateline Boys & Girls Clubs, the Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce, Irontek and area businesses in order to provide local youth with "the opportunities to gain valuable insights into workforce demands, career pathways, and requisite skill sets," according to a press release from Hendricks CareerTek.

Director of Community Development at Hendricks Holding Company Kim Bliss said the unprecedented nature of the center leaves them with a challenge when it comes to the specific curriculum to be covered. However, she expressed



confidence at the resources they have put together, especially the addition of former Beloit Memorial High School Principal Tina Salzman, whose role at the new center will be Business and Education Director.

"This (curriculum) depends on the business' cooperation, which we are counting on Tina Salzman to bring to the table," Bliss said. "We hope to get their participation to make this a win-win."

School District of Beloit Career Advocate Lindsay Healless also will provide guidance and support for students seeking Career and Technical Education (CTE), skill trades, and workforce readiness skills, according to the press release. Bliss explained that the goal of the center is to have an impact on students and their preparation for the working world, which could yield a positive result for businesses that get involved as well.

"Most important is the success of our students, but if we can help our businesses along the way then we have done something," Bliss said.

Bliss explained the center will seek to identify strengths and skill-sets of students, using programs developed by Salzman. These programs would involve workshops run in cooperation with local businesses to provide and discuss real-world applications of their skills. The center will be open from 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. year-round, to provide businesses and students access to their resources and after-school activities.

"We believe we have the right people in place to make this happen," Bliss said. "We want to be proactive about education and make sure our students are prepared for the future."



The partnership with the Stateline Boys and Girls Club is also an essential asset, according to Bliss. The focus will be on serving students from a variety of schools who are members of the club, but membership with the club will not be necessary to take advantage of its resources.

"Whether they are affiliated with the Boys & Girls Club will not be essential," Bliss said. "The idea is to get the businesses and students collaborating to give them the tools and experience to equip our future leaders."