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■ QUICKJOBS CENTER READY NEXT MONTH

# Free classes available during opening week

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Construction workers were tackling the myriad items left to ensure everything is working properly at the new QuickJobs Center while officials involved in filling its classrooms were getting one last look at the adult education facility before it opens its doors.

Dr. Tom Leitzel, president of The Technical College of the Lowcountry, said during Thursday's tour that an exact date of the grand opening has not been determined. Local officials are attempting to find a date that would allow Gov. Nikki Haley to attend the ceremony.

Prior to the tour, Leitzel and other officials of the technical college met with members of the Colleton County Resource and Development Board and the Colleton County Economic Alliance to talk about what is yet to be done to fill the new facility on Thunderbolt Drive with students and training equipment.

The ribbon cutting, according to the technical college's plans, would be the centerpiece of a week of activities at the center that would give area residents the chance to "test drive" the educational facility for free.

Nancy Weber, vice-president of continuing education-institutional advancement at the technical college, explained the college plans to conduct a number of short classes on subjects like introduction to computers and the "four generations of workers currently in the workplace" to draw area residents to the center.

"The free classes allow us to get to know the people of the county and learn what they want," Weber said. "They should create a very good buzz" about the center.



Photo by GEORGE SALSBERY

**EXPLAINING THE FLOOR PLAN.** Nancy Weber, Technical College of the Lowcountry vice-president for continuing education and institutional advancement, explains the lay-out of the QuickJobs Center that has training classrooms on one side of the hall and training lab spaces on the other.

"There are exciting things in the works," Leitzel told the tour group. "We are just scratching the surface."

The opening of the QuickJobs Center, Leitzel explained, "will give us a physical presence in Walterboro

and Colleton County — that is huge."

Although the technical college has worked with a variety of local organizations to provide workforce training, those classes have been intermittent and at a variety

of locations.

The center's primary goal will be "offering innovative workforce solutions; jobs are what we are all about," Leitzel said.

But, Weber added, the technical college also envisions

using the adult education facility "to have personal interest courses offered at QuickJobs."

Weber said the free classes and ribbon cutting in June

See JOBS, page 6A



PHOTO BY GEORGE SALSBERY

**TOURING QUICK JOBS.** Technical College of the Lowcountry President Dr. Tom Leitzel and Colleton County Administrator Kevin Griffin stroll pasts one of the QuickJobs Center's training labs while discussing the plans for the adult education facility set to open next month.

# College looking for money to equip classrooms

## JOBS

Continued from 1

would be followed by the start of classes in July.

Initially, she explained, the Technical College of the Lowcountry will offer courses in three areas: a 40 hour Intro to Basic HVAC Maintenance; a 48-hour Intro to Basic Electricity and a 72.5 hour NCCER Core course.

The NCCER Core Course, a basic course geared to improving employability of those interested in entering the construction field covers basic safety, construction math, hand tools, power tools, construction drawings, basic rigging and material handling as well as developing communication and employability skills.

Coming soon, according to Weber, will be training programs covering welding, distribution-logistics-forklift operation and industrial facilities maintenance — which are training areas that have been identified as providing potential jobs in the near future.

Leitzel said the technical college has “two growth areas in the next three to eight years” that could be addressed in future course offerings. “Our plans include biotechnology and aviation and aerospace.”

One of the first steps to making the center operational, according to Weber, will be to move the technical college’s mining health and safety training program from its Beaufort campus to Colleton County.

The mining program, mandated by the federal government and covered by a federal grant, draws students from South Carolina, North

Carolina and Georgia, according to Weber.

The move will allow the technical college “to leverage those grant dollars.” Some of the training equipment paid for by those federal funds, she explained, can be used into providing training in other areas.

But both Leitzel and Weber said there are a number of hurdles left to clear to make the QuickJobs Center a success, most of them involving money.

“It’s tough starting a new operation in a time of declining resources,” Leitzel said. Usually, he added, those funds dry up “in the time they are most needed.”

“There are funding challenges,” Weber agreed. We need to shake the trees in Columbia, keep our ear to the ground.”

The funding challenges focus on two areas: obtaining money to equip labs with equipment and helping students cover the cost of enrollment.

Weber said technical college officials have been working with businesses that benefit from a pool of trained applicants to donate some of the equipment.

Finding funds to help students defray the cost of enrollment is problematic, Weber pointed out, because the first training courses offered are going to be non-credit. “Non-credit course work means no enrollment funding,” Weber explained.

One way to seek funds for some students, she offered, might be through the Workforce Investment Board that has money set aside to assist individuals who have lost their jobs to overseas competition.

“We do plan on bringing

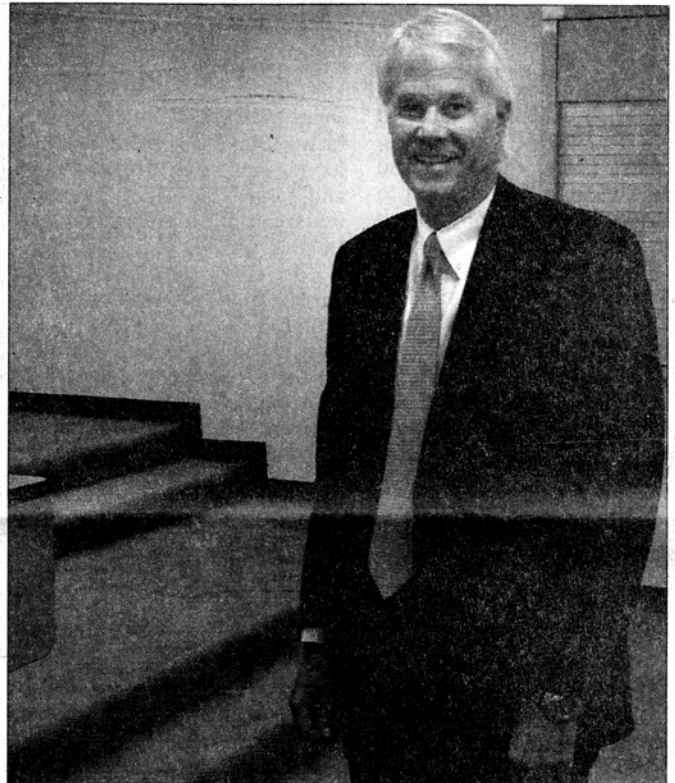


Photo by GEORGE SALSBERY

**STATE OF THE ART AUDITORIUM.** Technical College of the Lowcountry President Dr. Tom Leitzel checks out the new high tech auditorium in the QuickJobs Center that will be available for use by area businesses to conduct employee conferences and training sessions as well as a classroom for the center’s students.

credit classes here, but it is going to take time,” Weber said. “We still have a lot of things to do.”

“We have got to start meeting with the Colleton County School District to ensure there is a smooth seam between Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center and the QuickJobs Center.”

Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center and the new adult education center are Thunderbolt Drive neighbors for a reason. The initial plan was to have the school district’s vocational center and the new adult training

center work in tandem.

“We need to have talks about how to make this work,” Weber told the group that included Colleton County School District Superintendent Leila Williams, who is also a member of the Economic Alliance Board.

The technical college, she added, needs to talk with employers like the Colleton Medical Center to determine how the QuickJobs Center could help the medical center address its needs.

“We have got to have a lot of conversations,” Weber said.