

CEI to Hold Ribbon-Cutting for New Eastern Idaho Workforce Training Center

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho — College of Eastern Idaho (CEI) will hold a ribbon-cutting Wednesday, September 21, 12:00 PM at the new Eastern Idaho Workforce Training Center. The facility is located at 101 Technology Drive in Idaho Falls, the former Bonneville County Technology Center (BCTC).



Bonneville County Commissioners officially transferred the ownership of the BCTC to College of Eastern Idaho in May 2022. CEI will utilize the 32,000-square-foot building along with 8.47 acres to train the region’s workforce in skilled trades such as — construction, electrical, HVAC, heavy equipment operation, plumbing, welding, etc. The building contains eight flexible-use high-bays along with six classrooms or laboratories that have optional configurations for hands-on training.

The Eastern Idaho Workforce Advisory Council has been established to represent the workforce interests of Eastern Idaho’s industry demands in the programming for the Workforce Center. This Council will work to provide an avenue for local industry to achieve the goals of the Center.

The Center’s vision – **workforce training** – focuses on the critical long-term goal of developing skills and increasing the workforce for eastern Idaho. The combined leadership, unique expertise, experience, and infrastructure of CEI and the Industry Advisory Council will produce the results required to bring this vision to fruition. **“Industry Led and Community Supported”** is the model for success.



The Eastern Idaho Workforce Training Center transfer process involved the Bonneville County Commissioners, Regional Development Alliance (RDA), City of Idaho Falls, and the acceptance of the property by the CEI Board of Trustees. Chairman Park Price stated — *"The building affords an exciting opportunity for the College, our students, and our community workforce partners."* Along with the transfer of the facility and acreage, the RDA also transferred over \$700,000 of associated funding to update and repair the building.

The original Economic Development Act (EDA) grant was awarded in 1994 for the purposes of retraining the community's work force. The EDA grant monies were expended to acquire land, install public improvements, construct a facility, and administer a training program. The building was the vision of former Bonneville County Commissioner Cliff Long who wanted a facility dedicated to training displaced workers. Bonneville County and the city of Idaho Falls provided seed money and in-kind donations to win the \$4.5 million federal EDA grant. Dr. Charles Boge donated the land.

At the May 26, 2022 City Council Meeting, it was stated that the parties agree that CEI will continue the grant program effectively and consistently with the original grant purposes. Mayor Rebecca Casper commented, *"There is a kind of a celebration that we're helping and enabling eastern Idaho to take some steps toward workforce training that other regions in the state have already taken."*

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