

Butler Eagle

New learning center anything but common 900-plus gave to campaign

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BUTLER TWP — The Heaton Family Learning Commons, replacing the previous John A. Beck Library at the **Butler County Community College**, was officially unveiled to the project's donors Friday afternoon.

The learning commons was a \$5 million project, with half of the money coming from the college's Pioneer Proud Campaign.

The other \$2.5 million came from a state grant, according to Jim Hrabosky, vice president for administration and finance.

The project was supported by more than 900 donors, said campaign co-chairman Nancy Hunter Mycka, and about 200 people donated more than \$1,500 to the project, earning them an invitation to the closed dedication ceremony, President Nicholas Neupauer said.

The fundraising campaign had an initial goal of \$5.5 million, but that was surpassed substantially.

“Not only did we reach \$5.5 million, we reached \$6.85 million,” Neupauer said.

Mycka said this amount represented the largest fundraising campaign in the history of the county.

The other funds raised by the campaign will go toward projects to sustain student access and success, to provide scholarships and innovation, to support economic development.

Neupauer was particularly proud of the percent of the college community who donated to the campaign. The national average for a fundraising campaign like this is around 40 percent participation.

For BC3's Pioneer Proud Campaign, 82 percent of the college community donated, he said.

“It was a collegewide, Pioneer-proud commitment,” he said.

The last college fundraising campaign was in 1999, raising about \$3.5 million to build the Science and Technology building.

The new learning commons upgraded not only the orange carpet from the Beck Library, but also added a cafe, more than 60 computers and a number of smaller rooms for collaborative work. The learning commons is named after local real estate developer Robert Heaton, who donated \$1 million to the project, the largest donation the college has received in its 50-year history.

The learning commons officially will open for students during an opening celebration from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Aug. 30. A ceremony starts at 1 p.m. at the learning commons at main campus, 107 College Drive.