

Breaking ground



Scores of students, school officials, public figures and members of the public attended the groundbreaking of Tri Star 2.0.

Tri Star 2.0 set to open in 2019

By **ERIC ADAMS**
Staff Writer

CELINA — The scent of dust and the industrial yellow of Caterpillar machinery set the scene for the Tri Star 2.0 groundbreaking ceremony.

The juxtaposition of freshly dressed attendees and freshly moved dirt was almost comical; however, nothing could've been more appropriate for a career compact that champions hands-on learning and celebrates students who don't mind "getting their hands dirty."

On Friday afternoon, scores of students, school officials, public figures and members of the public crowded the Tri Star 2.0 construction site located across from Wright State Lake Campus.

"This is truly a great day in the 34 years of Tri Star Career Compact," Tri Star Director Tim Buschur said in his introductory address.

"The vision of many community members and school personnel from Auglaize and Mercer counties ... has led us to a day many of us thought would never happen."

Buschur gave many gracious acknowledgements from the podium, including the voters who passed the Tri Star 2.0 levy by an approximately 75 percent margin.

"That (margin of passage) was something unheard of," Buschur said. "I know when the state found out how much we'd passed it (by), they I think thought it was bad balloting or something ... They were thrilled."

He also commended local companies — for donating equipment, for hiring Tri Star graduates and for providing valuable input for Tri Star programming — as well as students, for taking the leap of faith from their

See BREAK, Page A5

Saturday, Sept. 16, 2017

Break

From Page A1

home districts.

"I know it's a big commitment coming to us," he said. "So you should give yourselves a round of applause; because of you is why we're here, also."

Thirdly, Buschur extended his thanks to the school board members from all nine Tri Star districts, to Tri Star board members and administrators past and present and to current and retired Tri Star teachers who have supported the career compact since its inception on March 31, 1983 — and even before then, in some cases.

"That was a big deal back then," he said. "I've heard the stories of what you went through for this. You're a big part of this, also."

On hand to share some of those stories was Darrell Parks, an independent employment and training consultant with the Ohio Department of Education.

Parks has 57 years in education, and began his career as an agriculture teacher at Rockford High School, before it was known as "Parkway," Buschur said.

The veteran educator began his speech by winding the clock back to April 1, 1970. On this date, he said, the Ohio General Assembly enacted a law that would prove vital to Tri Star's eventual formation.

The law required all city, exempted village and local school districts to develop and to submit plans to the state board of education for the creation of a "comprehensive vocational education program."

"When I became state director of vocational adult education on July 1, 1982, I was called to the state superintendent's office," he said.

"He advised me 95 percent of that vocational ed-

From Page A1

coming to us," he says a round of applause here, also."

It is thanks to the nine Tri Star districts and administration and retired Tri Star career counselor on 31, 1983 — and

men," he said. "I've been through for this.

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tion, and began his at Rockford High Parkway," Buschur

speech by wind-). On this date, he enacted a law that formed vocational formation. He visited village and led to submit plans for the creation of a vocational program." of vocational adult called to the state

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ucation planning district law had been fulfilled. In other words, 95 percent of the 612 school districts in Ohio were in compliance ... My job was to get the other 5 percent."

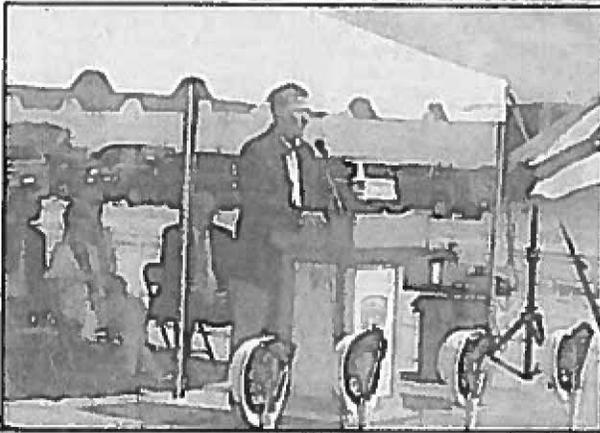
The crowd laughed as Parker made indirect reference to the districts included in that oppositional 5 percent.

"In two regions of northwest Ohio, there was organized resistance," he said. "In fact, one of those regions challenged the law in the courts, but the challenge was denied. I'll leave it to your imagination as to where one of those two defiant regions was located."

Through a series of meetings with local superintendents — namely Ralph Stelzer of Celina; Richard Burke of St. Marys and Wayne Miller of Coldwater — Parker was able to bring the founding Tri Star districts into compliance.

Only a few years later, the remaining six districts got onboard as well, and the rest is history.

Parker noted the arguably hilarious irony that



Staff photo/Eric Adams

Mercer County Economic Development Director Jared Ebbing speaks to Friday's crowd.

Auglaize and Mercer counties would've opposed vocational education so vehemently, when those same voting districts passed the Tri Star 2.0 levy so overwhelmingly.

"This is a truly historic occasion, to see how much the tables have turned," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments on Friday were Jared Ebbing — economic development director for Mercer County — and Brian Styer, manager of employment relations at Nidec Minster.

To learn more about the Tri Star 2.0 project, visit TriStarCareerCompact.com and click the "Tri Star 2.0" link.

Tri Star 2.0 Fast Facts

- Two-story, 100,000 square foot facility.
- Classrooms may average 700 square feet in size, compared to 400 square foot average of current classrooms.
- Second story classrooms will also have a "bay" area, where students can observe concepts they're learning firsthand.
- Bays will be equipped with overhead doors, allowing for easy transfer of industrial machinery.
- Teachers will have access to 70-inch touch screens, which can be moved to any part of the classroom. Students will also have access to laptops.
- Student commons area will seat up to 500 people.
- The building itself will serve as a "teaching tool," with exposed structure so students can observe and identify piping, conduits, circuits, etc.

** Information extracted from *The Evening Leader* archives and/or from the *Tri Star Career Compact* website.