

# OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



MAY 2026

## CALENDAR

### MAY

11-14 — Final Exams

15 — Last Day of Spring Semester

15 — Nursing Pinning Ceremony, OCC Theater, 4 p.m.

15 — OCC Graduation, Gym, 7 p.m.

18 — Intersession Classes Begin

19 — Last Day for 100 Percent Refund for 3-week Intersession Classes

25 — Campus Closed for Memorial Day

27 — Intersession Midterm

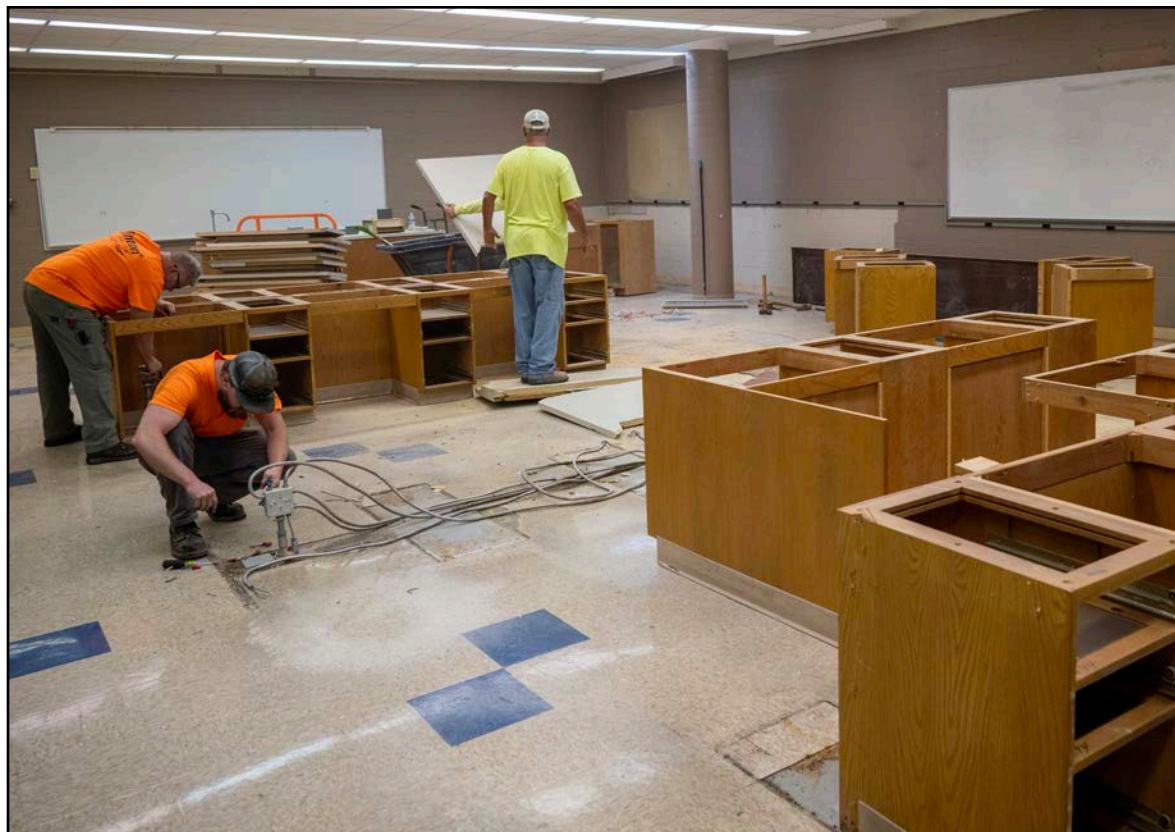
### JUNE

3 — Last Day to Withdraw from Intersession Classes

5 — Last Day of Intersession Classes

8 — Summer Semester Classes Begin

19 — Campus Closed for Juneteenth



**Renovation work began April 27 on the third-floor science labs in Wattleworth Hall. The \$2 million project will transform the spaces into modern, high-tech learning environments designed to enhance science instruction and student success.**

## Renovations to OCC Science Labs underway, enhancing opportunities for faculty and students

Olney Central College has begun work on an extensive \$2 million renovation project to modernize four science labs in Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall.

The renovations will transform the third-floor physics, chemistry and two biology labs into updated, high-tech learning spaces designed to better support today's students and faculty.

OCC President Chris Simpson said the improvements are a much-needed investment in the campus that will provide a more modern environment for teaching and learning in STEM courses. The spaces will create new approaches to instruction for faculty members and will be inviting to students.

The remodel will include new cabinetry, flooring, furniture and upgraded instructional tools and equipment to enhance science education across multiple disciplines.

The Olney Central College Foundation is partnering with the college to help fund new scientific equipment. The Executive Board is making the initiative a focal point of the OCC Foundation's 2026 Campaign for Excellence.

Renovations are expected to continue throughout the summer, with the project scheduled for completion before the start of the Fall 2026 semester.

# OCC to host 62nd Commencement May 15

Olney Central College will hold its 62nd commencement exercises at 7 p.m. on May 15 in the OCC Gymnasium. Friends and relatives of the graduates are invited to attend.

OCC Dean of Instruction Amy Tarr will give the welcoming remarks while Chris Simpson will deliver the President's Message.

OCC alumnus Leon Stallard, a financial advisor with Edward Jones in Olney, will present the 2026 Commencement Address.

Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Board of Trustees Member Dr. Susan Batchelor will confer the more than 200 degrees and certificates being awarded this year. She also will give the Charge to the Class.

OCC will once again livestream the ceremonies on our YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/@olneycentral](http://www.youtube.com/@olneycentral).



**More than 200 degrees and certificates will be conferred during Olney Central College's 62nd Commencement.**

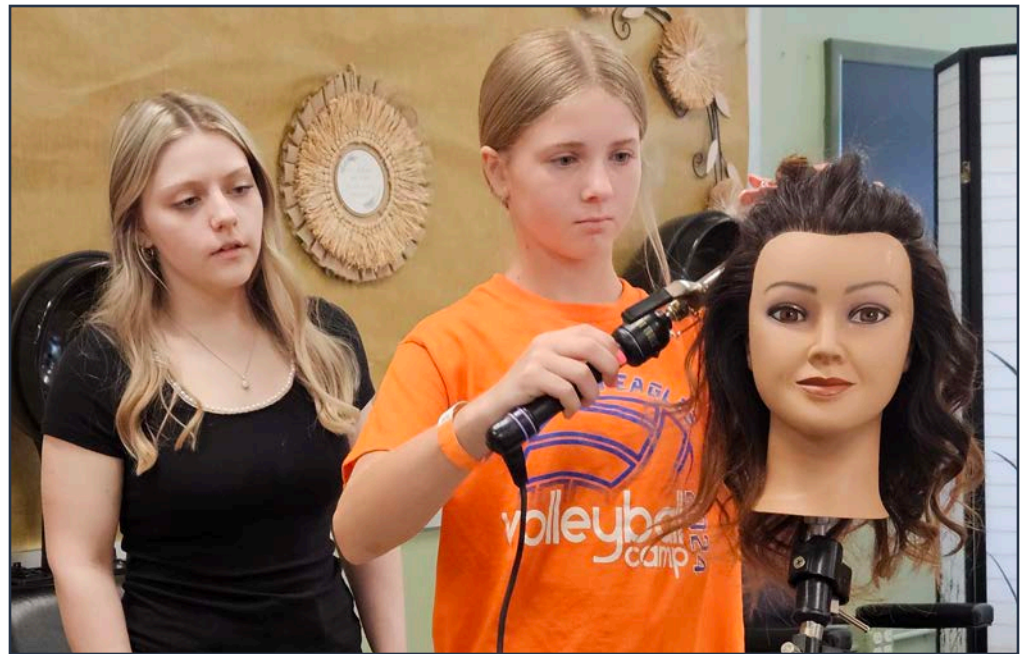
# Ignite Curiosity Summer Camps are back

Olney Central College is inviting area students to explore new interests, develop hands-on skills and make lasting summer memories through the Ignite Curiosity Summer Camps.

Registration is now underway for the camps, which offer engaging learning experiences designed to spark creativity, encourage exploration and introduce students to potential career pathways in a fun and interactive environment. The camps are designed for a variety of age groups and provide students with activities that blend education with creativity and teamwork.

"Our Ignite Curiosity Summer Camps give students the opportunity to explore new interests and have fun while building valuable skills along the way," said Curtis Miller, Director of Enrollment and Community Outreach for Illinois Eastern Community Colleges. "These camps encourage creativity and learning while helping students discover various career opportunities."

- Culinary Conquest will meet from 10 a.m. to noon on June 8-12 at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble. Participants will dive into the world of cooking as they learn essential skills like food safety, food preparation, nutrition and kitchen safety. The experience heats up as the week wraps up with a high-energy team food challenge,



**Participants attending the Getting Styled camp gain hands-on experience in the Cosmetology salon and have the opportunity to work with OCC students and faculty.**

where students will plan, prepare and present their own dish like true culinary pros. The camp is offered in partnership with the University of Illinois Extension. The cost is \$25.

- LEGO Battle Bots will meet from 8 a.m. to noon on June 15 at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble. Campers will jump into a hands-on robotics adventure where they'll design, build and program their very own LEGO Battle Bots. Participants will learn the basics of robotics and coding while exploring robot movement and sensor technology — then put their creations to the test in exciting challenges. The cost is just \$25.

- Getting Styled will meet from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on June 17 at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble. Campers will explore the exciting world of cosmetology through hands-on learning stations — braiding, curling hair, adding hair tinsel and painting nails. The cost is \$25.

- STEM Builders: 3D Printing Camp will meet from 8 a.m. to noon. on July 20 in the OCC Learning Commons Stem Lab. Students will dive into the world of STEM as they bring their ideas to life in a fun and creative way. This exciting camp introduces young creators to the basics of 3D design while exploring how 3D printers and 3D pens actually work. Along the way, campers will build problem-solving skills through engaging, age-appropriate STEM challenges and learn how to turn digital ideas into real-world objects. The cost is \$25.

“We hope students leave camp with a new skill or interest,” Miller said. “Our goal is to create experiences that build curiosity that will follow them into adulthood.”

Visit OCC Student Services to register for the camps.

Additional information about these and other upcoming camps at Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College and Wabash Valley College is available at [www.iecc.edu/communityed](http://www.iecc.edu/communityed).



**Above, students participate in an interactive Jeopardy-style game that tests their knowledge of FCC and OCC. At right, Student Ambassador Jackson Sornberger leads students on a tour of the OCC Welding Program.**



## Flora High School students tour OCC

Olney Central College recently welcomed 75 students from Flora High School for a campus visit designed to introduce them to the college experience and the wide range of opportunities available at OCC.

During their visit, students toured the campus and explored several of OCC's hands-on instructional areas, including the Welding and Automotive programs. The visit provided students with an up-close look at the equipment, learning environments and career-focused training opportunities available at OCC.

In addition to touring campus facilities, students participated in a fun and interactive Jeopardy-style game that tested their college knowledge and encouraged engagement.

Prior to visiting OCC, the students toured Frontier Community College.

# Area high school students put skills to the test in Brandon Blackford Welding Competition

Top high school welders put their skills to the test April 23 during the OCC Welding Program's Sixth Annual Brandon Blackford Memorial Welding Competition.

The event featured 12 welders representing seven area high schools.

Top-place finishers receiving scholarship awards were:

First Place: Finn Martin, Mt. Carmel High School — \$500

Second Place: Trevin Hemrich, Flora High School — \$400

Third Place: Draven Taylor, Flora High School — \$300

Fourth Place: Grady Michl, Newton Community High School — \$200

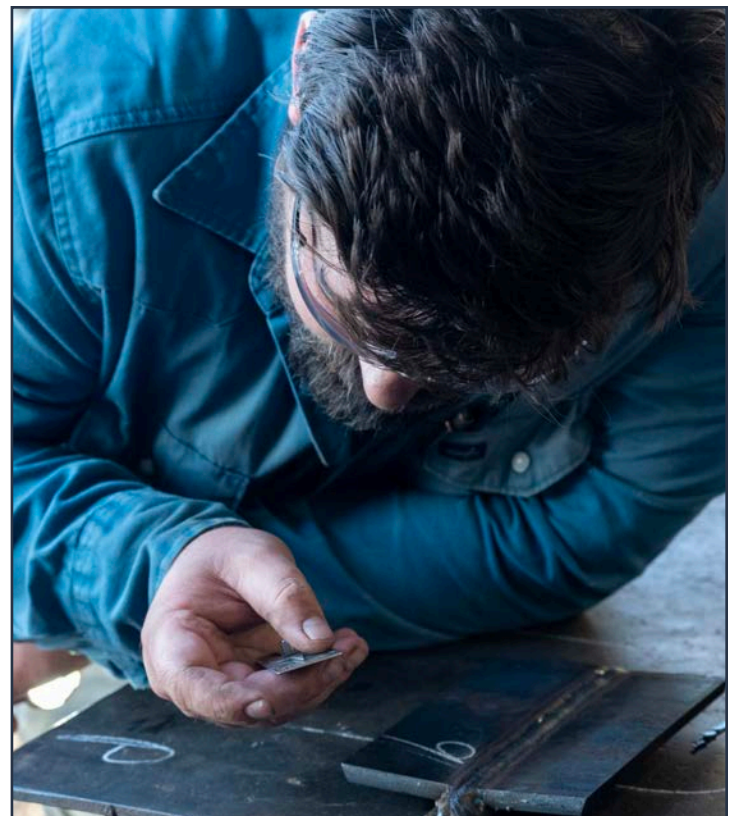
Fifth Place: Cody Greathouse, Edwards County High School — \$100

First-, second- and third-place winners also received welding hoods.

Monetary awards were made possible by the Brandon Blackford Scholarship Fund, and Brandon's family generously provided T-shirts for the event.



**From left, OCC Welding Instructors Maverick Fisher and Will Bookhout are pictured with top finishers in the Brandon Blackford Welding Competition Finn Martin, first place; Trevin Hemrich, second place; Draven Taylor, third place; Grady Michl, fourth place and Cody Greathouse, fifth place.**





## *Spring Instrumental Concert*

The Olney Central College Music Department presented its Spring Instrumental Concert on April 22, featuring the OCC Community Concert Band, the OCC Jazz Combo and a special guest appearance by the Flora High School Band.



# OCC IN PICTURES



## Plant Sale

The OCC Science Club, Phi Theta Kappa and Active Minds hosted a Plant Sale on April 29. Members spent the last month caring for the plants in the OCC Greenhouse.



## Piper Knox receives

### SIU Provost's Scholarship

OCC student Piper Knox received the prestigious Provost's Scholarship from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Valued at \$31,000, the scholarship covers tuition and mandatory fees for two years and recognizes transfer students who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership and involvement. Pictured, from left are SIU Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management Wendell Williams, who presented the award, Knox and OCC President Chris Simpson.



## Art Club Exhibit

The OCC Art Club hosted an opening reception on April 17 for its latest exhibition, "Lumière et Ombre," in the Anderson Library Gallery. The exhibit showcases the creative work of OCC student artists Micah Groves, Lee Geier, Bailey De Jong and Reagan Schulte.



## Esports Tournament

Members of the Olney Central College Esports Club recently hosted a Mario Kart 8 tournament, giving students an opportunity to enjoy friendly competition and fast-paced gameplay. Students from Frontier Community College, Lincoln Trail College and Wabash Valley College are invited to participate in future events and join the IECC Esports Club.

## Administrative Professionals Day

OCC President Chris Simpson and Dean of Instruction Amy Tarr joined members of the college's Student Services team at the Richland County Rotary Club's Administrative Professionals Day Luncheon. The event provided an opportunity to recognize the administrative assistants for their dedication, hard work and the important role they play each day in supporting OCC students, faculty and programs.



## Grad Fest

Students preparing for graduation gathered in the OCC Learning Commons during Grad Fest May 6-7 to pick up their caps and gowns, enjoy snacks and celebrate the upcoming milestone with photos and friends.



## *Spring Voice Recital*

**The Olney Central College Music Department presented its Student Voice Recital on May 9, featuring a variety of musical theater and jazz favorites. OCC students were joined by alumni special guests for the performance, which showcased the talents of current and former members of the music program.**

