



HIGHLIGHTS



LTC re-imagines spaces with the Statesmen Store and The Landing.



The 618 Project brings business, education and the community together.



Richardson excited to build on a 50-year legacy of softball with new facility.

LTC FOUNDATION INVESTS IN FUTURE OF CTE

The Lincoln Trail College Foundation is making a major investment in the future of career and technical education at LTC, providing funding for the college's new Career and Technical Training Center, specialized training equipment and future program growth.

The Foundation has provided \$250,000 toward the new facility and another \$250,000 close the gap on the cost of a Hands-on Trainer Model 1, or HOT 1, process technology training unit. It also provided \$90,000 for equipment upgrades in the Broadband Telecommunications program and has committed an additional \$660,000 to support future CTE program growth.

LTC Foundation Executive Director Bill Sandiford said two substantial gifts received by the Foundation during the past year helped make the investments possible.

"The LTC Foundation received two substantial gifts in the last year that allowed us to commit \$1 million over the next three years," Sandiford said.



UPCOMING OCTOBER EVENTS

- 3 LTC at Heath Harvest Festival**
- 6 SIUE Visit**
10 a.m., Williams Hall Welcome Wall
- 7 Kim Cox Book Reading**
6:30 p.m., Learning Commons
- 8 SIUE Visit**
10 a.m., Williams Hall Welcome Wall
- 9 NO CLASSES - Workshop**
- 12 COLLEGE CLOSED - Columbus Day**
- 14 Midterm**
- 20 Spring Registration Begins**
- 22 Trick or Treat at the Trail**
4-6 p.m., Campus-wide
- 27 Franklin University Visit**
10 a.m., Williams Hall Welcome Wall
- 28 Harlem Wizards Game - LTC Foundation Fundraiser**
6:30 p.m., Sports Center
- 29 LTC Foundation Meeting**
12 p.m., Lincoln Room
- Treasure Island**
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 30 Treasure Island**
7 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater
- 31 Treasure Island**
2 p.m., Zwermann Arts Center Theater

President Tona Ambrose, Process Technology Instructor Tina Lindley and two LTC Foundation representatives received a demonstration of the unit, which is designed to replicate industrial process operations while allowing students to develop real-world skills in a safe learning environment.

"Our students learn best when they have opportunities to apply what they are learning in an environment that reflects what they will encounter in the workplace," Ambrose said. "The HOT 1 trainer will give our Process Technology students another level of hands-on experience and help us prepare them to enter the workforce with confidence."

The Foundation's investment also extends to the Broadband Telecommunications program. Its \$90,000 contribution is being used to purchase new equipment and upgrade existing equipment.

He said the investment is closely connected to the Foundation's purpose. While helping make education affordable remains an important part of its work, the Foundation's mission also calls for it to assist in developing and augmenting LTC's facilities and carrying out the college's educational functions.

For students, Sandiford said the investments are ultimately about creating an improved learning opportunity.

"Updated equipment and technology should equate to a better experience for both students and faculty alike," he said.

One of the most significant equipment investments is the \$250,000 for the HOT 1 process technology trainer, a modular, self-contained unit that allows students to gain practical experience with industrial equipment, instrumentation and process operations in a controlled environment. The IECC Board of Trustees approved spending \$500,000 for the HOT 1, but the cost rose to \$750,000 when it came time to order it.

Sandiford said Foundation board members believe the trainer can have a significant impact on LTC's Process Technology program.

"The Foundation board believes this is a game changer for our process tech program," he said.

LTC representatives first saw the training unit while in Houston for a process technology troubleshooting skills competition.





Some of the money will be used to cover things like a new trencher, mini excavator, bucket truck hydraulic updates, and an optical time domain reflectometer.

"It is the hope of the Foundation that these investments will improve the quality of our current classroom learning experiences," Sandiford said. "Our staff does a great job of instructing but are limited by cutting-edge teaching tools."

The Foundation is also looking beyond the immediate equipment needs of the

programs. It has committed an additional \$660,000 for future CTE program growth, including funding designed to help LTC reach prospective students beyond its traditional service area.

Sandiford said the Foundation believes the investment can improve instruction while also helping attract students from both inside and outside the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges District. The Foundation has also committed funding to help market the programs to a larger audience.

That growth, he said, could have an impact beyond the college campus.

"The loss of skilled trade workers is being felt throughout the country," Sandiford said. He said LTC has an opportunity to prepare local students for careers that allow them to remain in the region while also attracting people who could eventually live and work in area communities.

"We believe LTC will not only offer training for our local students wanting to maintain their home in this area, but also attract new residents to our companies and communities through an education at LTC," he said.

"There are people who believe deeply in Lincoln Trail College and what this college means to our communities," Ambrose said. "When they choose to support the Foundation, that generosity ultimately reaches our students. We are incredibly grateful for people who are willing to invest in their education and in the future of this college."

For Sandiford, the Foundation's investment also connects the current expansion of career and technical education at LTC with a vision expressed more than four decades ago.

In his 1983 book, "A History of Lincoln Trail College and Lincoln Trail College Foundation," Ivan Miller wrote about the role community colleges would need to play in responding to changing workforce demands. He said community colleges were uniquely positioned to play a leading role but that doing so would require both philosophical and financial commitments from college leaders and the public.

"Planning must be immediate and continuing," Miller wrote. Sandiford said that message continues to resonate with the Foundation today.

"Mr. Miller's vision then is still clear today," Sandiford said. "And the Foundation will continue to seek and identify new sources to fund that growth."

LTC RE-IMAGINES CAMPUS SPACES WITH STATESMEN STORE, THE LANDING



A series of moves at Lincoln Trail College this summer have transformed two familiar campus spaces, creating new places for students to eat, shop, study, socialize and, eventually, access academic advising.

The former LTC bookstore moved from Williams Hall to the Student Union and was renamed The Statesmen Store. The move placed the store alongside the new Statesmen Store Café, bringing LTC apparel and merchandise, school supplies and breakfast and lunch options together in one central location.

LTC President Tona Ambrose said the changes grew out of an effort to reconsider campus spaces from a student's perspective.

"The changes really came from taking a fresh look at our campus through the eyes of our students," Ambrose said. "We looked at how students use campus and rethought our spaces around their needs."

The closure of the college cafeteria provided an opportunity to rethink how the Student Union could serve students. Ambrose said the Statesmen Store and café were designed around convenience while also helping create a more active, student-centered area.

Students can pick up LTC merchandise and other items at the store while also purchasing grab-and-go breakfast and lunch options from the café. The area includes seating along with ping-pong, foosball and air hockey tables.

"We wanted to create a space that students naturally pass through and use, not just a place they visit when they need to buy school supplies, a sweatshirt, or an energy drink," Ambrose said. "By bringing these services together, we're making the Student Union more functional and creating a greater sense of activity and community in that area."

Statesmen Store Manager Danelle Davis said the new location gives the store considerably more room to display its merchandise, but one of her favorite additions has been the opportunity to use the kitchen.



That has included experimenting with new grab and go options that still give faculty, staff and students food options. She says she's enjoyed the chance to experiment with things like cake pops, something she's never prepared before.

"I'm trying to figure out new things to bring all the time," Davis said.

The move has also changed Davis' interaction with students. Instead of being tucked inside the former bookstore space in Williams Hall, she now works in one of the college's primary student gathering areas.

"I get to see different students that I probably wouldn't have seen just being back in the old bookstore," Davis said.

Meanwhile, the former bookstore in Williams Hall has taken on a new identity of its own.

The space, now known as The Landing, was designed as a place where students can spend time between classes. It can also serve as a multipurpose space for class projects, small workshops, study groups and meetings.

"We want students to feel comfortable spending time on campus, not simply coming to class and leaving," Ambrose said. "Those informal moments between classes are an important part of the college experience. They're where students build friendships, connect with one another and begin to feel like they are part of a campus community."



The Landing is also being developed with a longer-term purpose in mind. Ambrose said it will eventually become home to an advising center and transfer hub, giving students a centralized location to discuss academic plans, meet with advisors and receive assistance planning for what comes after LTC.

"Our goal is to take student services to the student rather than expecting students to figure out where to go," Ambrose said. "When advising, transfer planning and other resources are located in a space that students already know and use, those services become much more visible and accessible."

Taken together, Ambrose said the changes represent a broader effort to ensure the college continues adapting its campus to the way students learn, socialize and access services.

"A college campus can't remain static," Ambrose said. "The way students learn, socialize, access services and experience college continues to change, and our campus needs to change with them."

She said that process begins by continuing to view LTC from the perspective of the students it serves.

"Our philosophy is simple: never stop looking through the new students' eyes," Ambrose said. "We're taking the campus we have and finding better ways to use it to serve the students we have today, and the students we hope to welcome tomorrow."

THE 618 BRINGS BUSINESS, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER



A student working alongside an entrepreneur. A small business owner meeting with an adviser. An employer connecting with a potential employee. A community member learning a new skill.

Lincoln Trail College President Tona Ambrose sees all of those possibilities, sometimes happening at the same time, inside The 618 Project.

The new space at Lincoln Trail College is designed to bring education, entrepreneurship, workforce development and economic development together, creating a place where students, business owners and community members can work, learn and make connections.

"I envision The 618 being a place that feels active every day; a place where you might see a student working alongside an entrepreneur, a small business owner meeting with a consultant, an employer meeting with a potential employee, or a community member attending a workshop," Ambrose said.

The public will have an opportunity to see the space during an open house Nov. 12 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will include a light lunch.

The 618 will offer flexible workspace, private offices, meeting areas and high-speed internet, along with access to business advising, workshops, mentoring and other resources. Ambrose said the goal is to create something much broader than a traditional coworking space.

"Lincoln Trail College has always been about more than what happens inside our classrooms," Ambrose said. "We have a responsibility to fulfill the IECC mission to strengthen the community and region we serve. The 618 Project gives us an opportunity to take that responsibility to the next level by creating a co-working space where education, entrepreneurship, workforce development, and rural economic development intersect."

For Crawford County Development Association Executive Director Resa Shaner, the project addresses a need she has seen among startups, home-based businesses and solo entrepreneurs: access not just to a place to work, but to the people and resources that can help an idea become a sustainable business.

"This space will function as a true community hub for business development," Shaner said. "The

goal is to reduce the barriers that often keep great ideas from turning into viable businesses. Whether someone is launching their first venture or expanding an existing operation, this space will provide the support system they need to move forward."

That support can include workshops and coaching, small business technical assistance and connections with lenders, advisers and industry partners. The space will also connect entrepreneurs with LTC students and training programs. For students, The 618 creates another bridge between the classroom and the professional world. Ambrose said students could use the space for CEO classes, FBLA workshops, internships, mentorship programs, networking and projects with local businesses.

The location at LTC is an important part of that equation.

Shaner said having students, instructors and program partners nearby gives entrepreneurs access to potential interns, employees and collaborators. She also sees the campus as a countywide gathering place where education and workforce training can connect directly with entrepreneurship.

Ambrose said the college already occupies a natural position at the intersection of education, workforce development, business development and community engagement.

"Most importantly, LTC is already a place where people come to learn, grow, and prepare for their future," Ambrose said. "The 618 enhances and expands that role to include people who are creating businesses, growing our economy, and creating jobs."

The partnership also brings the CCDA's economic development experience and connections with local businesses together with the college's students, facilities, technology and workforce development resources. The two organizations have worked together for years, and Shaner's CCDA office will be located inside The 618.

The IECC Small Business Development Center will also have a regular presence in the space, offering services including business advising, financial guidance, marketing assistance, workshops and networking connections.



ABOVE: A casual meeting area inside The 618 at Lincoln Trail College provides a comfortable space for small groups to meet, collaborate and exchange ideas.



BELOW: Private pod spaces inside The 618 can be used for meetings, consultations or temporary office space by entrepreneurs, businesses and community partners.



The 618 will also serve as a home base for CEO Leadership and Leadership Crawford County, programs CCDA has supported and mentored for several years.

For Shaner, those connections are an important part of the project's potential to strengthen the county's business community. Supporting new and growing businesses, she said, can create jobs, generate investment and give residents additional reasons to build their futures in Crawford County.

Ambrose said the same idea applies to lifelong learning. Education does not end when someone receives a certificate or degree. It can continue when someone starts a business, changes careers, learns new technology or develops a new skill.

The 618 gives that kind of learning a physical home.

"Ultimately, I want The 618 to become a place on campus where people come with an idea and leave with a connection, a resource, a new skill, a business plan, or maybe even the beginning of a new business," Ambrose said.

She hopes the project will also deepen the relationship between the college and



ABOVE: The Crawford County Development Association office inside The 618 gives the organization a permanent presence in the new collaborative business and community space at Lincoln Trail College.

BELOW: A large conference room inside The 618 provides space for meetings, workshops, training sessions and other group activities.

the region's employers, creating more opportunities for businesses to interact with students while giving the college additional ways to hear directly from employers about the skills they need.

Ultimately, Ambrose sees The 618 as an extension of what a community college can offer the people and businesses around it.

"We want people to walk through the doors of The 618 and see possibilities, whether they are a student exploring a career, an entrepreneur developing an idea, an established business looking to grow, or a community member looking for a new opportunity," Ambrose said. "Our hope is that The 618 becomes a catalyst for people to learn, connect, create and ultimately build a stronger future for our entire region."

The 618 Project is made possible by a USDA Small Rural Business Development Grant and a \$50,000 contribution from the CCDA.

LTC ALUMNUS KIM COX COMPLETES BOOK ON CRAWFORD COUNTY HISTORY

Kim Cox ('75) moved from Robinson in 1977, but he has long maintained close ties with the town where he grew up.

His latest love letter to Robinson is the self-published book "Historical Handbook of Crawford County, Illinois," a 445-page history of the county and its early settlers illustrated with historic and current photos.

The book is the story of civilization coming to the old Northwest's wilderness, how the white man's occupancy and ways succeeded those of the Native American, and how the settlers quickly established themselves and their culture in a land of ancient wilds, wastes and native people.

Cox will be giving a reading of the book at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, October 7, at the Lincoln Trail College library. The book is available on Amazon, and a few copies of the book will be available at the event.

"Thanks to my father, Carroll T. Cox, my grandmother Harriet Patton Cox and 'uncles' Clarence and Kent Phillips, I grew up with a profound interest in the history of Illinois and Crawford

County's role in it," said Cox. "Crawford County residents should be proud of their role in the nation's development, from before the Revolutionary War until now."

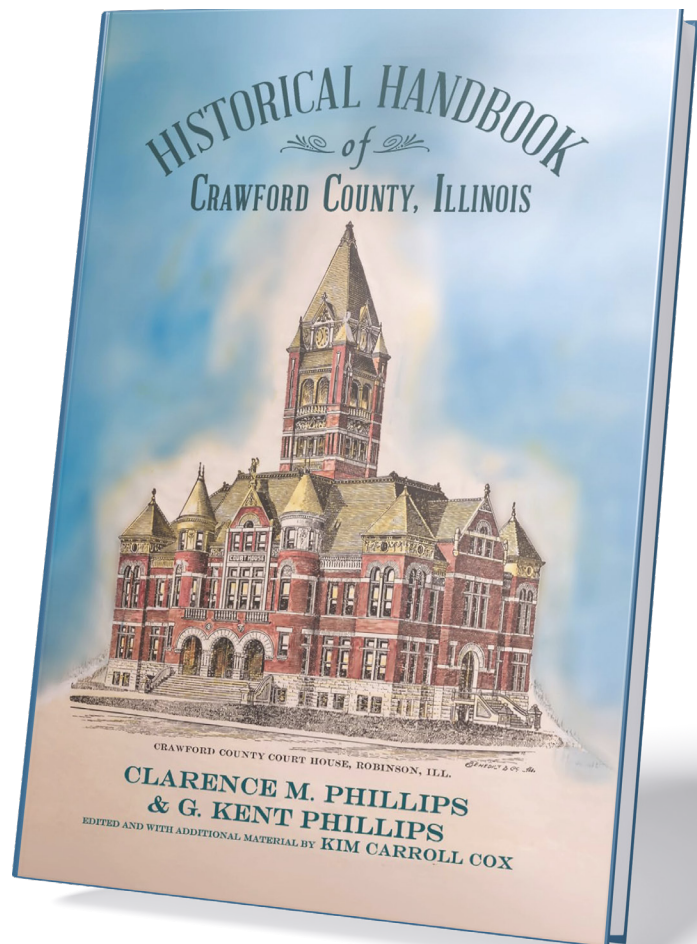
This is the second book that Cox, now a retired lawyer in San Diego, has published about Crawford County. His first book, "I Remain, As Ever, Your Kinsman," is a compilation of letters from Crawford County relatives who participated in the California Gold Rush and those of his great-uncle, Private Allen M. Patton, who served in the 21st Illinois Volunteers and was killed in action at Stone's River in Tennessee during the Civil War.

The Crawford County history book has its own lengthy history. The project was started in the 1960s by Clarence Phillips, Cox's grand-uncle once removed. Phillips worked to take two previous county histories in 1883 and 1909 and put them into a usable handbook, along with his own research.

After Phillips died in 1967, his son Kent took up the project. In 1996, Phillips submitted the handbook to the Robinson Daily News, and parts of it were published in the newspaper.

Kent continued working on the handbook with Cox, his nephew, but the project was shelved as Kent Phillips grew ill and later died in 2005. After Cox retired, he had the time and interest to publish the two books.

Cox's connection to Crawford County extends beyond the two books. A third-generation lawyer, his father and grandfather — and Kent Phillips — were partners in the Cox, Phillips, Weber and Weber law firm in Robinson. Cox's father, Carroll Cox, died



in 1976, and his family moved to San Diego the next year.

His family's history runs deep in Crawford County. Cox's great-great-great-great grandfather, James Wilson, owned a tavern in Palestine where court hearings were held for the first time in Crawford County, following statehood. His great-great-great uncle, Joseph Kitchell, was a signer of the first Illinois constitution in 1818.

Cox's father had purchased land in Crawford County to fish and hunt, and some of Cox's most enjoyable childhood memories are of staying at a hunting cabin on the Embarras River. In 2021, Cox sold about 650 acres of land that his family had owned adjacent to Chauncey Marsh State Nature Preserve to the Nature Conservancy, which in turn donated the land to the state to be preserved. Cox still owns 188 acres on the Embarras River, now known as the Carroll T. Cox Forest and listed as an Illinois Natural Heritage Landmark.

CAST REVEALED FOR LTC PRODUCTION OF TREASURE ISLAND

Lincoln Trail College is preparing to set sail this fall with its production of "Treasure Island," a swashbuckling adventure filled with pirates, buried treasure and danger on the high seas.

Joseph George Caruso's adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel follows Jim Hawkins as he joins the search for Captain Flint's legendary buried treasure. The journey quickly becomes more dangerous than expected as Jim encounters the notorious Long John Silver and a colorful crew of pirates, forcing him to rely on courage, quick thinking and trusted allies to stay one step ahead.

The story combines mystery, action and adventure as the characters navigate daring escapes, shifting loyalties and the dangers of a mysterious island. Directed by Lincoln Trail College Director of Performing Arts Dr. Stewart Cramer, the production will bring the classic tale to life on the Zwermann Arts Center Theater stage.

The production gives audiences a chance to experience one of literature's best-known adventure stories on stage, complete with dangerous voyages, uneasy alliances and the lure of buried treasure. At the center of the story is Jim's struggle to determine whom he can trust as the search for Captain Flint's fortune becomes increasingly perilous.

Cramer directs a story that blends suspense, humor and larger-than-life characters, from seasoned sailors to scheming pirates. With its fast-moving plot and classic battle between loyalty and greed, "Treasure Island" offers an adventurous start to Lincoln Trail College's theatrical season.

"Treasure Island" will be presented Oct. 29-Nov. 1.

TREASURE ISLAND CAST	
Long John Silver	Chase Dunlap
Auntie Nan	Grae Drake
Jim	Al Crosley
Dr. Livesay	Ryan Pinkston
Red Dog	Lucas Aydt
Captain Smollett	Cara Batten
Calico Annie	Violet McDonald
Belle Gunn	Rachel Dollahan
Captain Bill Bones	Dylan Batten
Laurie	Madison Hayes
O'Brien	Ashtyn Reid
Morgan	Kinley Bradbury
Bonnie	Caitlyn Tingley
Captain Flint	McKenna Blevins
Town Crier	Carlie Harrell
Tavern Wench/Inn Girl	Lena Kreighbaum
Apprentice	Jackson Schoeck
Fishmonger	Austin Jones
Young Sailor	Ariel Clayton
Crew	Kat Walls

LTC SOFTBALL BUILDS ON ITS LEGACY



When Lincoln Trail College celebrated 50 years of softball this spring, Head Coach Eva Richardson found herself thinking about more than the program's past. She began thinking about its next 50 years.

Members of LTC's original softball team returned to campus for the anniversary celebration, sharing stories about the early days of the program and the lengths they were willing to go simply to continue playing the game they loved.

For Richardson, those stories added new meaning to a project she hopes will help define the next chapter of LTC softball: building a new softball facility on the Lincoln Trail College campus.

"The 50-year celebration that we had this last spring really just put into perspective how much history and tradition there is with LTC and LTC softball," Richardson said. "Having members of that original team back here on campus and hearing their stories just reminded me that this program is much bigger than just the players that I have."

Richardson is in the early stages of leading an effort to develop the new facility. Preliminary concepts have been developed, and an advisory group made up of community members, softball alumni and LTC employees is helping guide the project.

For Richardson, however, the project begins with the women who established the program a half-century ago.

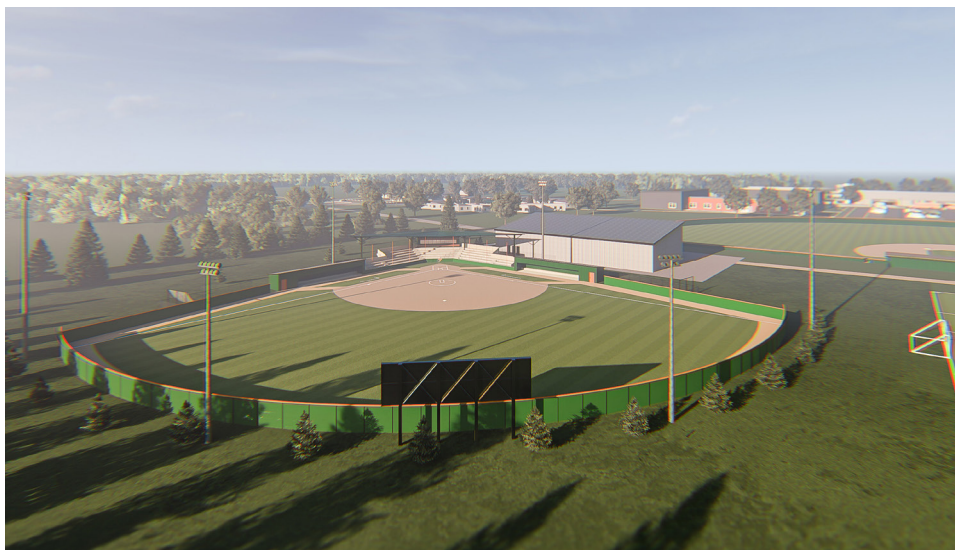
"I think that they deserve to see what they started continue to grow," Richardson said. "Fifty years ago, those women banded together to make a team and did anything they could to play softball."

She heard stories during the anniversary celebration from former players who altered their plans simply because they were not ready to stop playing.

"Those women helped establish softball here at Lincoln Trail and just created a foundation that we are still building on," Richardson said. "I just want them to be able to see that what they started mattered."

That connection between generations is central to Richardson's vision for the facility.

"This facility won't just be for our current players," she said. "It will be a tribute to everyone that has worn an LTC softball uniform over the past 50 years — and for the next 50."



Moving softball onto campus would also represent a significant change in the day-to-day experience of LTC student-athletes. The team currently travels between campus and its field in Robinson. Richardson said an on-campus facility would reduce travel, improve the experience for players and give the program something it has been missing: a true home.

She also sees an on-campus field as an important recruiting tool.

"When recruits visit, I want to be able to show them a nice field on campus right next to our indoor training facility," Richardson said. "Everything is right here. Everything is on campus."

Just as important, she wants softball games to become a more visible part of campus life.

"We want our games to become something our entire LTC family can be a part of," Richardson said. "Students, faculty, staff and alumni should be able to come on campus and see LTC softball playing right here on campus."

For the players, Richardson wants the facility to provide "a true home" where they can practice, compete, develop and create memories together.

Her vision extends beyond the team.

"When I picture the new facility, I see a place that feels like home," Richardson said. "I want our players to pull in on game day and be excited because they know they're playing at their field. They're playing at LTC softball field, and it's beautiful."

She envisions a facility that welcomes fans, strengthens recruiting and brings young players from throughout the region to campus.

"I want young softball players in the area to come watch games and dream about one day wearing an LTC uniform," Richardson said. "I want our alumni to have a place to come back to."

And she is setting a high bar for what the completed facility could become.

"Most importantly, I want the facility to reflect the pride that we have in LTC softball," Richardson said. "I don't want it to just be any other field. I want it to be the best field in the conference."

Richardson believes the impact could reach well beyond game days. An on-campus facility could create additional opportunities for camps and other activities while bringing prospective athletes, young players, families and community members directly to Lincoln Trail College.

She also believes the investment itself would send a message.

"Beyond the physical facility, I really think it sends a message to the community, to LTC and to the people in our conference that LTC softball matters and we're committed to the future of it," Richardson said.

That future carries both opportunity and responsibility for Richardson. "This is my first chapter, and we're 50 chapters in," she said. "That field is the next 50 years of softball and tradition."

Richardson said she wants to help build a program that players, alumni, LTC employees and members of the Robinson community can look at with pride.

"I think it brings an incredible responsibility with me, but also an incredible opportunity," she said. "Responsibility is nothing I'm afraid of. It's something that I actually look forward to because I know our potential and I know what we could rise to."

That sense of responsibility is also something Richardson tries to instill in her current players. Wearing an LTC uniform, she tells them, connects them to everyone who has represented the program before them, and everyone who will follow.

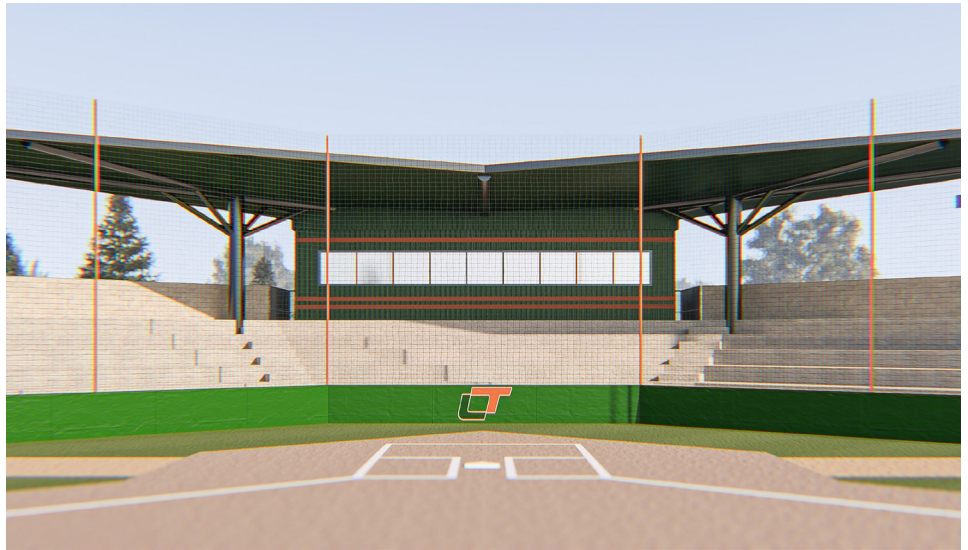
"I mainly hope they remember that they were a part of something bigger than themselves," Richardson said. "We're not just building a field. We're building something that's bigger than ourselves."

There is still considerable work ahead. Richardson said the current goal is to have the softball facility completed in fall 2028, with the first pitch taking place that fall. She knows reaching that goal will require support from throughout the LTC family and surrounding community.

"It will take the support of the college, alumni, community, donors and softball supporters," Richardson said. "But I really believe in this project. I believe in the people that are behind it."

For Richardson, the ultimate goal is about connecting two moments in LTC softball history: the women who worked to establish a team 50 years ago and the players who will wear an LTC uniform decades from now.

The new field, she hopes, will stand between them as evidence that what the first generation started continues to matter.





OCTOBER ATHLETIC EVENTS

Baseball

3	Illinois Central College (at Emerald Acres)	2:30
3	Shawnee CC (at Emerald Acres)	5:15
9	PBR Scout Day	TBA

Golf

5	at Danville Area CC Fall Invitational	9:00
12	at Cougar Clash at Atkins	9:00

Men's Basketball

4	at Danville Area CC Jamboree	12:00
18	Midwest Jamboree (at John A. Logan)	12:00
30	Olive-Harvey College (at Lake Land Classic)	4:00
31	Missouri State Univ-West Plains (at Lake Land)	TBA

Men's Soccer

6	Southwestern Illinois College	11:00
10	Illinois Central College	11:00
14	at St. Louis Community College	2:00
17	at Lewis & Clark Community College	2:00
21	Jefferson College	1:00

Softball

2	at Kentucky Wesleyan College	4:00
3	at Valparaiso University	12:00
4	St. Charles CC (at St. Louis University)	2:00
4	at St. Louis University	4:00
11	at Bowling Green State University	12:00

Volleyball

2	at Southeastern Illinois College	6:30
5	Lake Land College	6:30
7	at John A. Logan College	6:30
12	Frontier Community College	6:30
14	Kaskaskia College	6:30
15	Franklin College	6:00
19	Wabash Valley College	6:30
21	Rend Lake College	6:30
24	at Vincennes University	11:00
26	at Shawnee Community College	6:30

Women's Basketball

3	at Illinois Central College Jamboree	TBA
15	at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods Scrimmage	5:00
24	at Rose-Hulman Scrimmage	2:00

Women's Soccer

6	Southwestern Illinois College	1:00
10	Illinois Central College	1:00
14	at St. Louis Community College	4:00
17	at Lewis & Clark Community College	4:00
21	Jefferson College	3:00

LUIS DANTAS NAMED HEAD COACH OF LTC SOCCER PROGRAMS



Lincoln Trail College has named Luis Dantas head coach of its men's and women's soccer programs, bringing collegiate coaching experience, an accomplished playing background and a passion for student-athlete development to Robinson.

A native of Lisbon, Portugal, Dantas began playing soccer at age 5 and developed his game through soccer academies in his home country. He came to the United States in 2019 after receiving a scholarship to play at Murray State College in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

"I'm so excited to be here," Dantas said. "This program has a lot of potential to become one of the top programs in the nation. I want to bring a more competitive culture to the program."

Dantas helped Murray State achieve the most wins in a season in program history, earn its first national ranking and capture a regular-season championship. He recorded six goals and five assists during his time with the program.

He later transferred to Cowley Community College in Arkansas City, Kansas, where he played for Ruy Vaz, who became one of the most influential coaches and mentors in Dantas' career.

"He's like a dad to me," Dantas said. "I accomplished everything I dreamed of when I first came to the United States under Ruy."

During his two seasons at Cowley, Dantas served as team captain and helped the program win two conference championships and a regional title while earning a trip to the national tournament. He was named Defensive Player of the Year, earned two all-conference selections and recorded six goals and six assists.

Dantas said Vaz's influence extended beyond his playing career and helped shape the way he approaches coaching, player development and the game itself.

"Playing for him showed me what a program could be and what a coach could mean to his players," Dantas said. "He has been a role model for me as a player and as a coach."

Vaz, now the head coach at Eastern Illinois University, also helped connect Dantas with Lincoln Trail College athletic director Jennifer Saad when the coaching position became available.

Dantas continued his playing career at NCAA Division I Western Illinois University, where he played more than 800 minutes, started every conference match and recorded two assists.



He also played three seasons of professional indoor soccer with the Wichita Wings. Dantas helped the Wings win three consecutive Midwest Conference championships and make three straight national tournament appearances. He recorded 20 goals and 15 assists during his time with the organization.

Dantas began his collegiate coaching career as an assistant men's soccer coach at Newman University in Wichita, Kansas. He helped the Jets produce a record-setting season that included a Top 25 national ranking and the program's first semifinal appearance.

He later became an assistant men's soccer coach at the University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy in St. Louis. His responsibilities included developing training sessions, recruiting and evaluating players, analyzing game film, coordinating team operations and mentoring student-athletes.

Dantas said his immediate focus at Lincoln Trail will be establishing an identity for both programs and helping student-athletes succeed in every area of their college experience.

"What I can promise is a change in culture and very competitive teams, on and off the field," Dantas said. "I'm big on academics because it is so important to have a balanced academic life and soccer life. If you can balance those two, everyone has the potential to succeed."

On the field, Dantas plans to implement an aggressive, possession-oriented system influenced in part by the style he learned while playing for Vaz.

"We want to possess the ball, build from the back and always play with the intention of going forward and scoring goals," Dantas said. "We will press high, try to win the ball back quickly and play with intensity on and off the ball."

He wants Lincoln Trail's style, mentality and teamwork to become immediately recognizable to opponents.

"I want other teams to look at us and recognize Lincoln Trail," Dantas said. "I want them to know how we play and the mentality we bring."

He also wants Lincoln Trail to become known as a program that prepares student-athletes to continue their academic and athletic careers at four-year institutions.

"I want this to be a well-known program where players come here, develop and have the opportunity to move on to bigger schools," Dantas said. "I think Lincoln Trail has everything it needs to achieve that."

LTC IN PICTURES



Lincoln Trail College faculty and staff gather during the college's annual Faculty-Staff Workshop, preparing for the academic year through updates, collaboration and professional development activities.



IECC Chancellor Dr. Tim Taylor, left, reconnects with former Lincoln Trail College President Mitch Hannahs during a recent LTC Foundation event, bringing longtime friends together.



New students explore LTC during New Student Orientation, getting familiar with campus, meeting classmates and preparing to begin their college experience this fall.



New students get in on the fun during Lincoln Trail College's New Student Orientation, competing in a Minute to Win It challenge on stage together.



Lincoln Trail College Advisor Angel Kerner helps students find their way around campus on the first day of classes, offering directions and a welcoming smile.



Lincoln Trail College Instructor Travis Matthews reviews the course syllabus with students on the first day of classes, outlining expectations and preparing for the semester ahead.



Lincoln Trail College students enjoy lunch and together during Club Rush, an opportunity to connect with classmates, explore campus organizations and activities and get involved.



Lincoln Trail College's August Speed attacks the net. Speed was named NJCAA Region 24 Athlete of the Week after a pair of standout performances.