

MARCH 2025



RACING, MEDIA, GROWTH

Lucas Halbert's journey blends motorsports, media, and personal bonds.



PASSION DRIVES SUCCESS

Kohzadi overcomes adversity, fueled by passion and unwavering determination.



BAKING A DIFFERENCE

Phi Theta Kappa to host bake sale for Jaimie Ford's recovery.



CAPTURING SPEED: HOW LUCAS HALBERT FOUND HIS NASCAR DREAM

It's Sunday afternoon at a NASCAR Cup Series race, and the air is electric. Thousands of fans pack the grandstands, their voices drowned out by the deafening roar of 750-horsepower machines tearing down the asphalt. Engines scream, tires grip the track with precision, and the scent of burning rubber and high-octane fuel fills the air. The battle for every inch of track is ruthless as drivers draft, bump, and slingshot their way toward Victory Lane. It's a test of skill, strategy, and sheer guts, where a split-second decision can mean the difference between triumph and disaster.

Among the fiercest competitors on the circuit is Kyle Busch, a driver who has left an indelible mark on the sport. A two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion, Busch has built a career on pure talent, relentless determination, and an uncanny ability to find Victory Lane. Whether behind the wheel of a Cup car or dominating in the lower series, his aggressive racing style and record-breaking wins make him one of the most respected figures in NASCAR history.

Managing the social media presence of Kyle Busch Motorsports is Lucas Halbert, a Fairfield native whose passion for racing started at a young age. A graduate of Fairfield Community High School (Class of 2021) and Frontier Community College (Class of 2021), he is the son of Patrick and Carrie Halbert of Fairfield. His brother, Grant, is a senior at Fairfield Community High School. Even as a fourth grader, Lucas was telling classmates that he would one day live in North Carolina to pursue a career in motorsports—a dream that became a reality years later.

His journey began in 2019 at Wayne County Speedway, south of Wayne City, and has been on an upward trajectory ever since.

“In 2019, I started working at Wayne County Speedway at 16, selling fuel, checking pit passes, and assisting with timing and scoring. When 2020 rolled around, I joined the HART Non-Wing Micro Series, where I announced races and helped wherever needed. At the same time, I launched my own media site, Grassroots Racing News, covering both local and national racing. I continued this in 2021, adding social media management to my skill set through GRN. That same year, I graduated from FCHS in May and FCC in December.



Patrick Halbert, Carrie Halbert, Kyle Busch, and Lucas Halbert take a photo together following a race. Lucas is the Social Media Manager for Kyle Busch Motorsports.

On April 7, 2022, I moved to North Carolina, picking up announcing and social media opportunities wherever I could. In the fall of 2022, I enrolled at Belmont Abbey College to study Motorsport Management. Over the course of three semesters, I completed internships with Charlotte Motor Speedway (communications), Spire Motorsports (sponsorships), and CONVRG Media (social media content for Ricky Stenhouse Jr. and Riley Herbst). In December 2023, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in Motorsport Management.

Upon graduation, I was hired by Kyle Busch Motorsports to manage social media for two-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Kyle Busch and his son, Brexton Busch, who is also a racer. I have been with them since January 2024.”

Starting as a content creator—especially in the racing niche—comes with unique challenges. The motorsports content space is highly competitive, with established creators and brands already commanding large followings. Gaining visibility and growing an audience takes time,

and standing out requires finding unique angles, investing in quality equipment, and ensuring high production value.

Despite the difficulty of breaking through, Lucas Halbert's big break came during his senior year of high school when he worked at the Chili Bowl Nationals for Mounce/Stout Motorsports.

"Finding big success is tough, so you have to celebrate the small wins. You can't expect to go viral overnight—it took me three years to have a video blow up. I went from 5,000 followers to 25,000 overnight after a video hit 16 million views. After that, getting views became easier. Social media works like a snowball—once you start building momentum, it piles up quickly.

That video was my second big break. By then, I had been creating social content for about two years. My first big break came when I got the opportunity to work at the Chili Bowl Nationals for Mounce/Stout Motorsports. I was a senior in high school, and because of COVID, no sports were happening at the time. That experience was the first time I worked for someone else in motorsports and on a national stage."

Halbert keeps an open mindset on race day, adjusting his content based on the results. He typically plans what he wants to capture, but post-race coverage depends on performance. If the team doesn't finish well, he usually refrains from posting. A strong finish warrants two posts—a photo and a video—while a win leads to three or four posts to maximize the moment.

Social media is vital to motorsports partnerships, and Halbert's role is key in creating content that supports partners' marketing strategies. His efforts help maintain strong relationships and drive contract renewals, as many agreements are centered around social media campaigns.

As the social media manager for Kyle Busch Motorsports, Halbert has observed that posts featuring Busch outside of his race car, especially with his family, generate strong engagement. He also keeps a close eye on emerging social media trends to maximize reach and impact.



Halbert chats with family and friends before a race at Wayne County Speedway on June 3, 2023.

"Kyle has the largest following in all of NASCAR. Content showing him as a dad performs exceptionally well, and any race where we compete for wins also drives great engagement. Right now, video is king on social media, and simple iPhone videos of him do really well. While short-form videos are the most important for views and growth, I can see long-form content making a comeback in the next couple of years, particularly on YouTube.

NASCAR recently launched the Driver Ambassador Program (DAP), which rewards drivers for promoting the sport through extracurricular activities such as appearances and media

engagements. This initiative helps NASCAR reach new audiences in areas it traditionally wouldn't. Keep an eye out for drivers making extra public appearances leading up to races."

Outside of his social media work, Halbert has developed a strong relationship with the Busch family. Their children, Lennix and Brexton, feel like a little sister and brother to him.

"My relationship with the Busch family is very different from what most social media managers have with their drivers. Some content creators are friends with their drivers and occasionally hang out, but I typically see the Busch family three to five days a week. At times, I've spent nearly two weeks straight with them due to travel and the busy racing schedule. In March 2024, I spent a week with them in Sedona, Arizona, staying in an Airbnb and following them around for a few days. In November 2024, I traveled with them for 12 days, starting with the Formula 1 race in Las



Brexton Busch and Halbert pose for a photo following the 40th Annual Smileys Tulsa Shootout Jr. Sprint Champion race.

Vegas and then heading to California for Dirt Midget racing. Most recently, I even stayed a night on the team's motorhome. A late night of racing and complicated logistics led to me crashing on the pullout couch—it was pretty comfy. I feel incredibly fortunate to have the relationship I do with the family. I'm especially close with the kids—Lennix (2) and Brexton (9) truly feel like a little sister and brother to me."

With the NASCAR season running from early February through late October, Halbert and the Busch family spend much of the year on the road, traveling across the country.

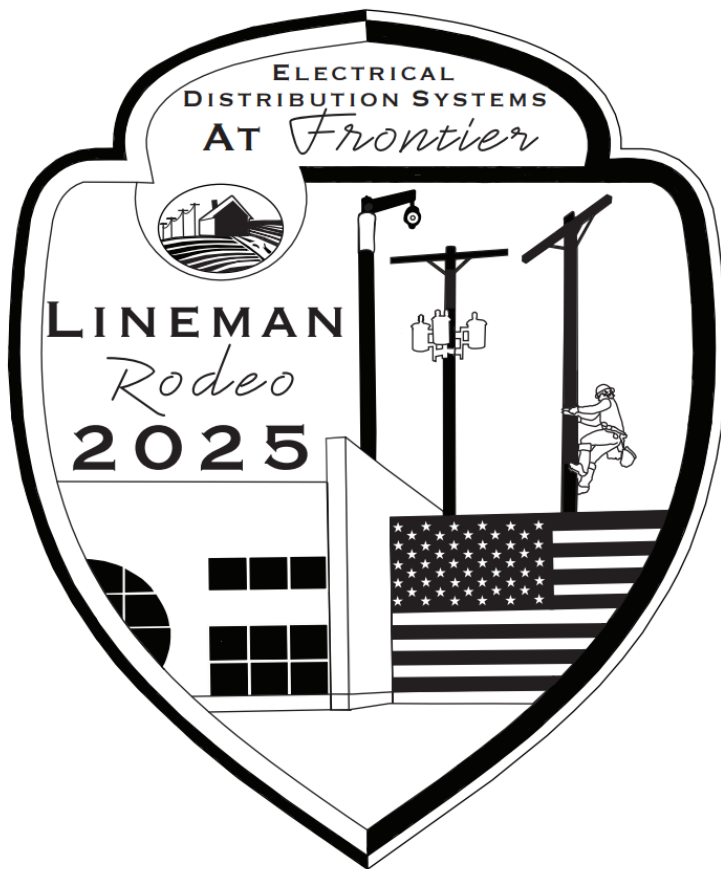
"My job is intense—I'm on the road or at a racetrack for more than half the year. In 2024, I estimated that I spent around 200 days traveling. As of February 2025, I had already been away for 30 out of 59 days. But I love what I do, and I have a lot of fun. There's a future in following Brexton's racing career, and I'm excited to be part of it."

CLIMBING TO THE TOP: FCC'S LINEMAN RODEO SET FOR APRIL 12

The Frontier Community College Electrical Distribution Systems (EDS) program will host its annual Lineman Rodeo on Saturday, April 12, beginning at 9 a.m. The event will take place at the utility poles behind the Workforce Development Center.

EDS students will compete in various events to showcase the skills they have acquired in the program. Competitions such as hurt man rescue, speed climb, and using a mini excavator to stack objects will be featured. The fastest times for each competition will be displayed on a board for students and spectators to view.

Leading up to the event, first-year Graphic Arts & Design (GAD) students, taught by Cheryl Harl, created, submitted, and presented Lineman Rodeo T-shirt logo designs for judging. To gain inspiration for their designs, GAD students observed EDS students practicing their competitions before spring break, taking photos, sketching, and asking questions to EDS lead instructor Dustin Wiggins and students about what it takes to be a lineman.



Amanda Burkett's 2025 Lineman Rodeo T-shirt design. The crest on the left will be featured on the front of the shirt, while the sponsor list design on the right will appear on the back.

After discussion among the judges, Amanda Burkett's design was selected as the best of the group. During her presentation, Burkett explained that her crest design encapsulated EDS while also representing the brotherhood and unity among linemen. As for the skull used for the list of sponsors, Burkett described it as symbolizing strength, fearlessness, and the reality that linemen face danger daily.

The public is invited to bring lawn chairs, enjoy free food, and watch the friendly competition. Lineman Rodeo T-shirts will be available for purchase.

For more information, call 618-842-3711. Details about the EDS program are available at iecc.edu/fcc/eds.



SUMMER AND FALL REGISTRATION OPEN AT FRONTIER

Tuesday, March 11, marked the opening date for summer and fall registration at Frontier Community College. Both traditional students, such as graduating high school seniors, and non-traditional students looking to continue their education or start a new career, can register for classes. Summer courses begin on Monday, June 9, while fall classes start on Thursday, August 21. For more information or to begin the registration process, visit iecc.edu/fcc or call 618-842-3711 to speak with an advisor today.

HEART OF A CHAMPION: LAELA KOHZADI'S UNSTOPPABLE SPIRIT

From the moment her hands first touched a volleyball, it was clear—she wasn't just playing a game; she was stepping into a lifelong passion. For Frontier Community College sophomore outside hitter, Laela Kohzadi, volleyball is more than just a sport—it's a driving force in her life. From representing her hometown of West Frankfort, Illinois, to wearing the yellow and black at Frontier, her journey with volleyball began at an early age.

"I started taking volleyball lessons when I was 10 years old. I wasn't sure about it at first, but after my first lesson, I remember telling my mom that I loved volleyball and wanted to go back later that week! A family friend who coached volleyball in my hometown told me that gymnasts often made great volleyball players. Since I loved staying active as a kid and never liked sitting still, he suggested to my mom that I try volleyball lessons—and it quickly became one of my favorite things."

Beyond volleyball, Kohzadi was involved in competitive cheer and dance since the age of three through high school, winning 10 national dance titles and one world title. She was also a four-year member of her high school track team. Her athletic growth continued steadily until she received unexpected news in seventh grade—she was diagnosed with a coronary fistula in her heart. Later, doctors implanted two devices in an attempt to close a hole that had formed. She was then diagnosed with atrial tachycardia and atrial fibrillation, both heart rhythm disorders. Atrial tachycardia causes a fast heart rate due to abnormal electrical connections, while atrial fibrillation leads to irregular beating of the upper heart chambers.

"These obstacles were difficult for me growing up because I never liked to be last or fall behind in anything I did. I also never wanted to stand out in a different way from the people around me. But my condition made me the last one to cross the finish line—or sometimes not cross it at all. I also fell behind after my surgeries."



Laela Kohzadi

Despite these struggles, she found motivation through sports and the unwavering support of her family.

"What kept me pushing through was my passion for sports and my amazing family. After several doctors told me that playing sports wasn't a good idea, and after long trips to specialists, my parents took matters into their own hands. They found me the best care possible, tracking nothing a group of doctors who could figure out what was wrong after nearly a year of being told nothing was wrong. Their determination inspired me—if they were willing to fight for me, I could push through and continue doing what I loved most."

Kohzadi's volleyball career flourished at Frankfort Community High School, where she played for the Lady Redbirds. She was named to the Southern Illinois River-to-River All-Conference Team in both her junior and senior years and was recognized as an All-South player in her senior year. She also played travel volleyball for the S.I. Wave team out of Nashville, Illinois.

Academically, she excelled as well. She ranked in the top ten of her class all four years and was recognized as a National Honor Student. She credits her family, friends, and coaches for their unwavering support.

APRIL 2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

2	Bobcats Softball @ John A. Logan DH	2:00
3	Bobcats Baseball @ Kaskaskia	8:00
5	Bobcats Baseball vs Kaskaskia DH	12:00
5	Bobcats Softball @ Spoon River College DH	12:00
6	Bobcats Softball @ Wabash Valley College DH	12:00
7	Bobcats Baseball @ McKendree	2:00
8	Bobcats Baseball @ John A. Logan	3:00
9	Bobcats Softball vs Southwestern IL DH	2:00
10	Bobcats Baseball @ Southeastern IL	12:00
12	FCC EDS Lineman Rodeo	9 a.m.
12	Bobcats Baseball vs Southeastern IL DH	12:00
12	Bobcats Softball @ Southeastern IL DH	12:00
13	Bobcats Softball vs Shawnee CC DH	12:00
15	Bobcats Baseball vs John A. Logan	3:00
16	Bobcats Softball @ Rend Lake College DH	2:00
17	Last Day to Withdraw from Spring Courses	
17	Bobcats Baseball vs Southwestern IL	3:00
18	FCC Campus Closed - Spring Holiday	
18	Bobcats Baseball @ Southwestern IL	12:00
18	Bobcats Softball vs Olney Central College DH	12:00
19	Bobcats Softball @ Lincoln Trail College DH	12:00
22	IECC Board of Trustees Meeting @ WVC	6:15
22	Bobcats Baseball @ John A. Logan	3:00
23	Bobcats Softball vs Lake Land College	2:00
24	Bobcats Baseball @ Lake Land College	3:00
26	Bobcats Baseball vs Lake Land College DH	12:00
26	Bobcats Softball @ Kaskaskia DH	12:00
27	Bobcats Softball vs John A. Logan DH	12:00

* All times listed are P.M., unless otherwise noted.

** All athletic events are tentatively scheduled, and can change at any time due to weather, etc.

*** Home games will be live streamed on Bobcat Nation YouTube channel, unless otherwise noted through their social media channels.

"My family and friends were my biggest supporters. No matter what I needed, I was always grateful to have amazing people helping me through it. My teammates knew my condition so well that they could tell how I was feeling just by looking at me. I was also fortunate to have understanding coaches who always told me, 'I don't fully understand what you're going through, but I want to help you through it.' That support meant the world to me. They knew how much sports meant to me, and everyone in my life did everything they could to keep me in the game."

Being a student-athlete teaches resilience, time management, and perseverance. Every challenge—whether a tough loss or a difficult exam—becomes a stepping stone to success. Kohzadi has learned life lessons that extend beyond athletics.

"My journey has taught me patience, discipline, and gratitude for my health. Now that I'm older, I still face struggles, but not like I used to. I think many people take their health for granted—I know I once did. Another lesson I've learned is that you never truly know what someone else is going through. Kindness and patience with others are so important, and I wish more people understood that."

At Frontier, Kohzadi has made her mark both on and off the court. She was named one of the volleyball team captains during the fall season and currently serves as President of Phi Theta Kappa and President of the FCC Student Senate. She is also a member of the One Love Christian Club, TRiO, and works as a tutor at Frontier. Outside of school, she gives back to the sport she loves by serving as a volunteer assistant coach for the Jasper Grade School junior high girls' volleyball team.

After graduating from Frontier, Kohzadi plans to attend nursing school, though she has yet to decide which school to attend. Her goal is to become a Cardiac Nurse Practitioner, helping children and young adults who, like her, need someone who truly understands what they are going through.

"I want to be a part of someone's life the way so many amazing medical professionals have been a part of mine."



Kohzadi and her family. L to R: Father Bobby, mother Iris, brother Layton, and Laela.

As she prepares to walk across the graduation stage this May, Kohzadi reflects on her time at Frontier—from her first steps on campus to the moment she receives her degree.

“When coaches first reached out to me about playing, I was nervous about competing at the collegiate level. But when I got a call from Nixie and took a campus tour of FCC, everything clicked. I was so excited! Every staff member I met made me feel welcome, and the school itself felt like home. Because of

Frontier, I’ve met some of the most special people in my life. I have so many unforgettable laughs and memories tied to this school! The people I’ve met here and the incredible faculty and staff at FCC will always hold a special place in my heart.”

MORE THAN A BREAK: FCC’S WEEK OF FUN AND SERVICE

Spring break is a time for students to step away from their regular schedules—resting and recharging for the remainder of the semester, working hours they would typically spend in class, taking brief vacations, or, for student-athletes in spring sports like baseball and softball, attending practices and competing in games throughout the week.

While students were away, business continued as usual at Frontier Community College, with doors remaining open. However, FCC faculty and staff had their own version of spring break, filled with fun activities and volunteer work. The 2024 spring break featured an exciting twist—not only were enjoyable events planned, such as morning breakfasts, trivia, and pickleball, but faculty and staff also dedicated time to community service, volunteering at WADI and the Wayne County Senior Citizens Center.

This year’s spring break took place March 3-7. Though like last year, a few changes were made. The week kicked off Monday with a breakfast gathering in Cox Hall’s Learning Commons, where faculty and staff enjoyed breakfast pizza and donuts.

On Tuesday, Tara Farleigh, Carrie Halbert, Kim Wellen and Derek Dunn volunteered at Hope Ministries in Geff, assisting with packing boxes filled with tortilla chips and saltine crackers. Richard Brown of Hope Ministries expressed appreciation for their help.



Carrie Halbert and Tara Farleigh put tortilla chips into boxes at Hope Ministries in Geff.

On Wednesday, March 5, Farleigh and Dunn helped deliver meals to senior citizens, while Lori Noe, Kathy Wheeler and Megan Black assisted at the Wayne County Senior Citizens Center in Fairfield, serving ice cream and cake to seniors during lunch.

On Thursday afternoon, faculty and staff gathered in the Learning Commons for about an hour of board games and snacks, enjoying a relaxing break together.

The fun-filled week concluded Friday, March 7, with a pizza lunch at Bob Boyles Hall.

BAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR JAIMIE FORD

The scent of fresh-baked cookies and warm cinnamon rolls will soon fill Bob Boyles Hall at Frontier Community College, but this isn't just any bake sale—it's a heartfelt mission to support a cherished member of the community.

Jaimie Ford, the owner of Bold Goat Coffee Company, has always been a steadfast supporter of Frontier's Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) honor society. Whether it was cheering on student initiatives, or simply offering encouragement, Jaimie's generosity never wavered. But now, the community she has supported so dearly is rallying behind her.

In September 2024, Jaimie received a life-changing diagnosis: cancer. Since then, she has faced months of treatment, travel, and the overwhelming costs that come with battling the disease. Determined to give back to the woman who has given so much, PTK has organized "Baking a Difference," a community-wide bake sale to help ease Jaimie's financial burden.

On March 20th, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Bob Boyles Hall will transform into a hub of sweet treats and warm hearts. PTK members, local bakers, and volunteers will offer an array of homemade goodies—pies, cakes, cookies, candy, cupcakes, and bread—all to raise funds for Jaimie's treatment and travel expenses. But the effort doesn't stop there.


Community members are encouraged to contribute by donating baked goods, and those unable to attend the sale can still make a monetary donation. PTK members are also selling \$1 raffle tickets for a chance to win two special cakes, lovingly crafted by McKenna Shelby of McKenna's Macarons and More and Amy Hohlbaugh, former owner of Amy's Sweet Shop in downtown Fairfield.

And what's a bake sale without coffee? Fusion Coffee will have a coffee cart on-site, donating a portion of their sales to Jaimie.

Through all the whisking, rolling, and baking, one thing is certain—this isn't just about cookies and cakes. It's about a community coming together, one sweet treat at a time, to lift up someone who has lifted them for so long.

For those interested in donating baked goods or contributing, please contact Zoe Wiggins at 618-731-0116. Phi Theta Kappa and Frontier Community College invite everyone to join in Baking a Difference—because even the smallest act of kindness can have the biggest impact.

Cake Raffle



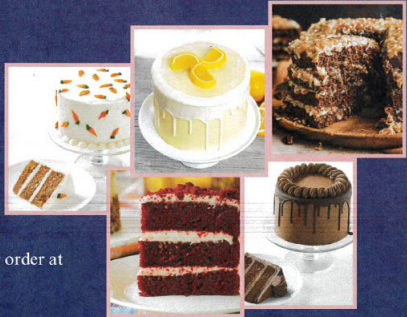
Cake Donated By McKenna's Macarons and More
Will be available for pick up on day of bake sale

or

Your choice of 8" 4-layer cake

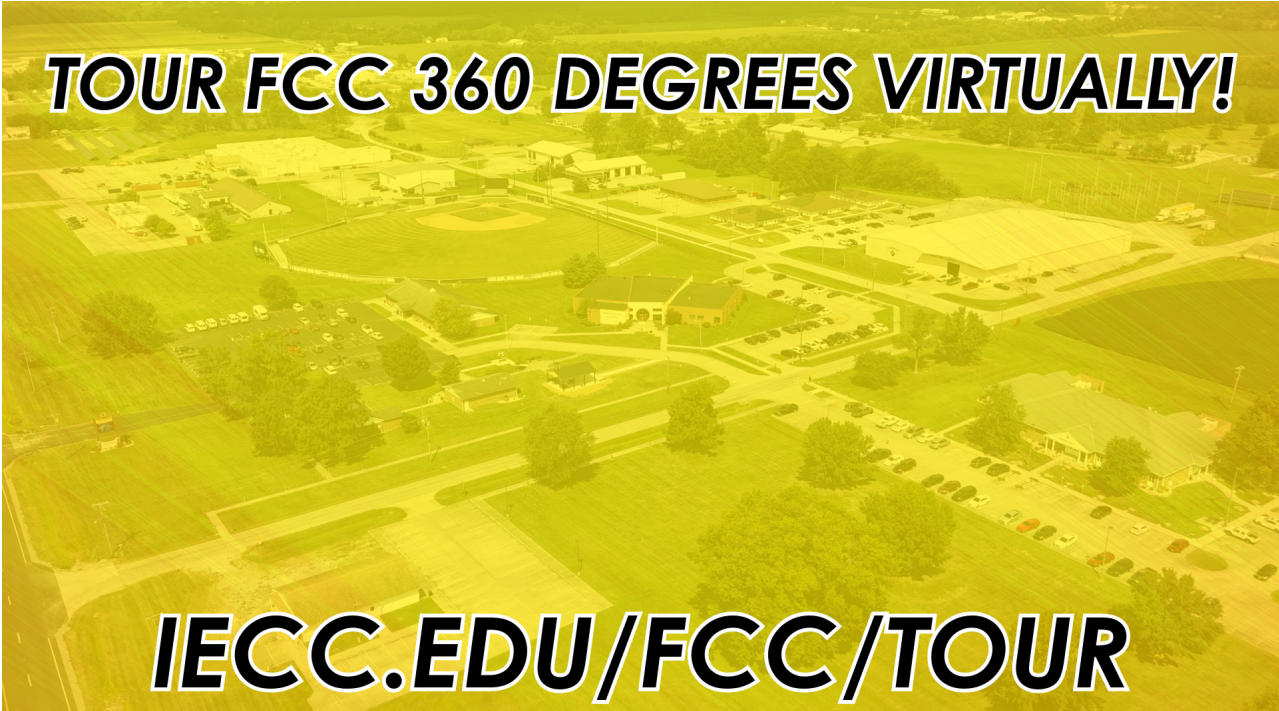
Donated By
Amy Holbaugh

Will be available for order at
your convenience



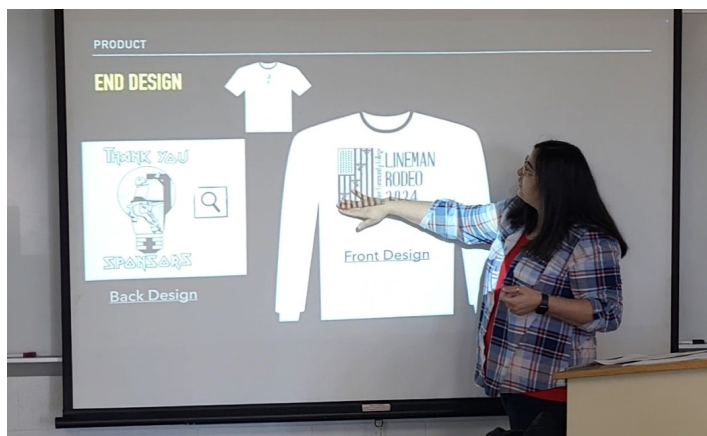
TICKETS ARE \$1 EACH - WINNERS WILL BE DRAWN ON MARCH 20TH!

TOUR FCC 360 DEGREES VIRTUALLY!



IECC.EDU/FCC/TOUR

FCC IN PICTURES



1 Maryn Vaughn gives a speech to her classmates in Kim Wellen's public speaking class.

3 Lori Noe, Kalyn Meritt, and Robert Tennyson play the board game, Hues and Cues, during spring break.

5 Bobcats Baseball enjoyed playing games in Pensacola, Florida and enjoyed the beach weather over the cold weather in Illinois.

2 Maci Warner, Alicia Stanley, and Kinley Sparks enjoyed the ice cream during Midterm Meltdown.

4 Students converse before trivia night in West Hall on February 20.

6 Graphic Arts & Design student, Courtney Cline, gives a presentation of a design in class.