

OLNEY CENTRAL COLLEGE KNIGHTLINE



JANUARY 2026

CALENDAR

JANUARY

19 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Campus Closed

23 — Radiography Application Meeting, Health Professions Center, 10 a.m.

26 — Last Day for 100 Percent Refund of 16-week Spring Semester Classes

27 — GQ (Gentlemen's Quartet), Southeastern Illinois Concert Association, OCC Theater, 7 p.m.

28 — Nursing Information Session, Health Professions Center, 1 p.m.

FEBRUARY

4 — ACES Academic Challenge

6 — Fine Arts Day for Area High Schools

16 — Presidents Day, Campus Closed

18 — IECC College & Career Fair, OCC Gym, 9 a.m.-noon

Campus Visits

Tables will be located in the hallway outside Student Services.

Feb. 3 — Eastern Illinois University, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Feb. 4 — Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville, 1:30-3:30 p.m.



Olney Central College unveiled its new Health Professions Center on December 11. The state-of-the-art facility includes this simulation lab.

OCC Unveils Health Professions Center with Open House and Dedication

Olney Central College celebrated the opening of its new Health Professions Center with an Open House and Dedication Ceremony on December 11.

More than 200 guests toured the high-tech facility, which features 7,820 square feet of new construction along with 1,900 square feet of renovated space within Dr. Kent L. Wattleworth Hall.

OCC President Chris Simpson expressed his appreciation for the event's strong turnout and is excited to see enthusiasm building as the Health Professions Center prepares to welcome its first students.

"This is a state-of-the-art facility that is really going to enhance the teaching and learning process," he said. "The faculty do a great job getting our students prepared and this is just going to simply enhance that and give them additional tools at their disposal."



More than 200 people attended the Open House and Dedication Ceremony for the Health Professions Center at OCC.

Funded through the Rebuild Illinois capital program, the \$3.5 million investment includes two classrooms, a six-bed nursing skills lab, two nursing simulation labs with an observation area and a new radiography classroom and lab. The facility also offers a conference room, faculty offices and a student commons area.

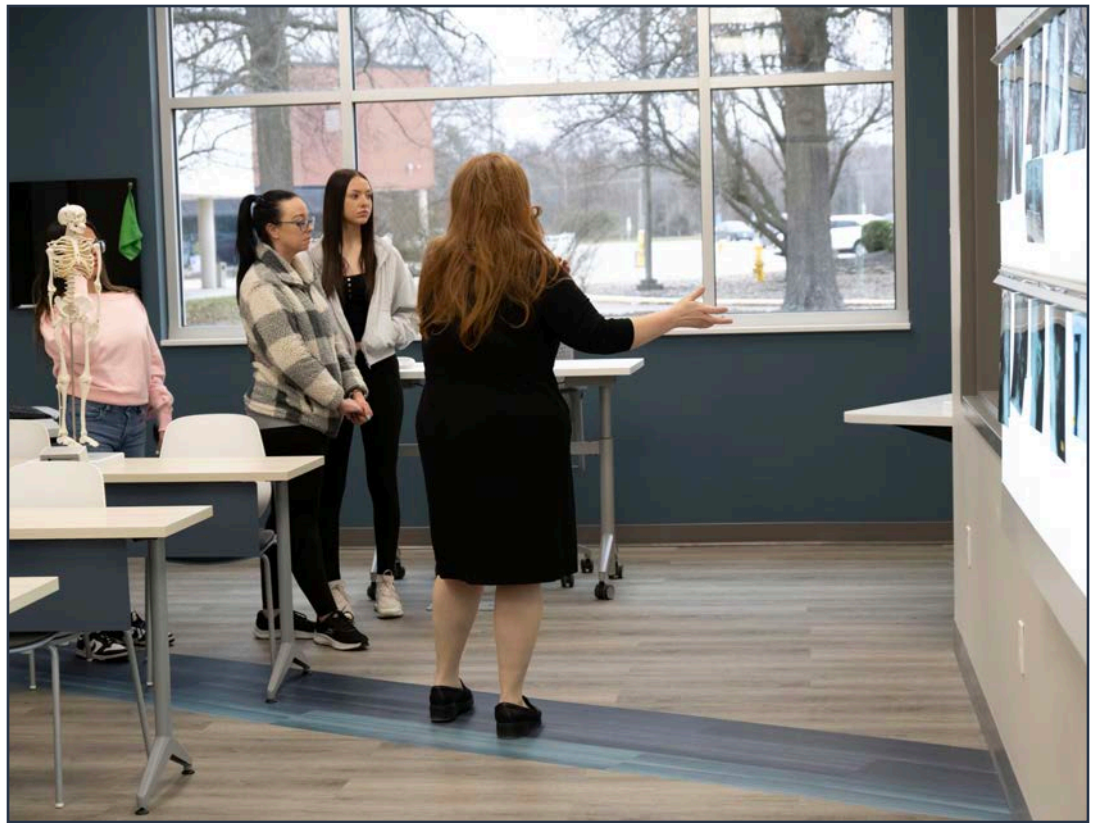
"The completion of this project is a major step forward in advancing healthcare education and workforce readiness in the southeastern region," said Illinois Capital Development Board Construction Administrator Tim Patrick.

"Congratulations to Olney Central College. We know you will do incredible things with this new Health Professions Center."

Dr. Alani Frederick, Dean of Health Professions at Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, said the nursing simulation center will enable students to work through real-world scenarios, while the skills lab will offer a flexible space for hands-on learning in a safe, realistic environment. The center will provide the Radiography Program with its first energized lab, enabling students to practice projections in a controlled setting.

"To prepare our students for the real world, they need to be workforce ready, and we are committed to doing that," Frederick said. "We work really hard to make sure that the equipment available in these rooms is very similar to what is used in the actual clinic site. That way, our students know what to use and how to use it. What we're able to do here, in both nursing and radiography, is work even harder to make sure our students are prepared so not only will they maintain our high standards, but they'll exceed them."

Envisioned more than two decades ago, Frederick said the facility was originally designed for a much different purpose, with plans focused primarily on expanding classrooms and office space. Over time, however, both healthcare education



Top, Dr. Alani Frederick leads a prospective student on a tour of the Health Professions Center. Above, Tim Patrick, of the Illinois Capital Development Board, describes the new Health Professions Center as a significant advancement for healthcare education and workforce development in the region.



The \$3.5 million Health Professions Center will give radiography students access to an energized lab, the first in IECC history.

and the needs of students evolved.

Frederick explained that today's design reflects a deliberate shift toward hands-on, student-focused learning and long-term planning for the future of healthcare education.

"It looks different because Illinois Eastern Community Colleges is different," Frederick said. "It looks different because this is a student-first college that asks the question, what does a student need to be successful today as a new graduate? What type of training makes sure that the graduate is safe, effective and ready to support our community? It looks different because this is a college that asked its faculty and staff, how do you see it? How can we help you teach in the best way possible? What do you need? It looks different because this is a college that asked, how can we build to ensure that in the next five, ten and 15 years that we are meeting and exceeding our own expectations about students and outcomes?"

She continued, "This building is different for all the right reasons. It's different because a state believed that rural education is worthy of funding. It is different because generous donors saw the vision of the Health Professions Center and agreed to fill the gaps. It is different because all of you in this room believe in the simple message that healthcare education supports America, healthcare education supports Southern Illinois and healthcare education supports us."

Dr. Ryan Gower, Chancellor of Illinois Eastern Community Colleges, recognized the leadership and long-term vision of the IECC Board of Trustees in bringing the Health Professions Center to fruition, as well as their commitment to future projects that expand opportunities for students across the district.

"Education is in a time of change not just in the state of Illinois, but really all across the nation and there's a lot of uncertainty," he said. "I think it takes a lot of courage for a board of trustees to look past what's happening today and to look three, five, 10 years into the future and think, what will our students of tomorrow need? The fact that we're standing in this building is a testament to the fact that our board of trustees has done that."

Gower took the opportunity to also acknowledge the many nursing and radiography students in attendance.

"I'm looking around today and I see a lot of our students here in the building and I think it's really important for us to pause because what we're celebrating today is not really concrete, drywall and paint — although it really does

look nice — what we're really celebrating is what we get to do in this building," he said. "Buildings like this are simply a tool. They are a tool that allows our administration and our faculty members to reach our students and to serve them and to train them."

OCC radiography student Tabitha Brown was among those who attended the event.

"To see this building open up today, it's very exciting," she said. "There's a lot of new things, new technology, a lot of things for the students to be able to use to better utilize their education and the resources that they have here at OCC. Having an energized lab will be a very big help considering now we get to see the images that we take. We also have a C-arm machine as well and it will be nice to just be able to practice with that before we go off to clinicals."

Simpson said fellow students share Brown's enthusiasm.

"You can certainly see that there's a level of excitement for them to get a chance to see this new area. Unfortunately for some of them, they're going to only be here for one more semester," he said. "We actually have several prospective students coming through and I think the Health Professions Center is going to be a real selling point for them."

In addition to state funding, OCC received more than \$400,000 in financial support from the community to complete the project. Simpson recognized those donors during the dedication ceremony. These benefactors include the Olney Central College Foundation, the Johnsie Flock Fildes Foundation, Wabash General Hospital, the Richland County Board, and the City of Olney. OCC also received a generous gift given in memory of Phyllis Fehrenbacher by her family. Carle RMH is supporting the project through the donation of medical equipment for student use.

Simpson added, "Without the generous support of our donors, we wouldn't have been able to complete the facility as we needed to, so we are really appreciative of their generosity."

At right, OCC nursing students attend the Health Professions Center's Dedication Ceremony.



During the Open House, visitors had an opportunity to tour the classrooms and labs in the Health Professions Center and enjoy refreshments.





Jon Wright Honored

Olney Mayor Mark Lambird (right) presents Olney Central College Theater Director Jon Wright with a key to the city in recognition of his incredible work honoring OCC Theater's 50th anniversary in 2025 and his decade of outstanding leadership of the program.



OCC Food Drives

The OCC Student Senate, Radiography Program and Communication & Food class came together to support local families this season through recent food drives. Altogether, 977 food items were collected for area food pantries. Advisor Jodi Schneider and Dean of Instruction Amy Tarr assisted students in sorting and counting the donations.

Sports Schedule

Women's Basketball

Jan. 14 — vs. John A. Logan, 5 p.m. at home
Jan. 17 — at Wabash Valley, 1 p.m.
Jan. 21 — vs. Vincennes, 5 p.m. at home
Jan. 24 — at Southwestern Illinois, 1 p.m.
Jan. 31 — vs. Rend Lake, 1 p.m. at home
Feb. 2 — at Shawnee, 5 p.m.
Feb. 5 — vs. Greenville JV, 6 p.m. at home
Feb. 7 — at Lincoln Trail, 1 p.m.
Feb. 14 — vs. Shawnee, 1 p.m. at home
Feb. 21 — vs. Wabash Valley, 1 p.m. at home

Men's Basketball

Jan. 14 — vs. John A. Logan, 7 p.m. at home
Jan. 17 — at Wabash Valley, 3 p.m.
Jan. 21 — vs. Vincennes, 7 p.m. at home
Jan. 24 — at Southwestern Illinois, 3 p.m.
Jan. 28 — at Kaskaskia, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 31 — at Moberly Area, 3 p.m.
Feb. 4 — vs. Lake Land, 7 p.m. at home
Feb. 7 — at Lincoln Trail, 3 p.m.
Feb. 14 — vs. Shawnee, 3 p.m. at home
Feb. 18 — at John A. Logan, 7 p.m.
Feb. 21 — vs. Wabash Valley, 3 p.m. at home

Baseball

Jan. 30 — at Itawamba, 1 & 4 p.m.
Jan. 31 — at Itawamba, 1 & 4 p.m.

OCC Accounting Student Nathan Legg Gains National Experience at Two-Year Bridge Symposium

Nathan Legg, of Fairfield, was among accounting students from across the nation selected to participate in the 2025 Two-Year Bridge Symposium hosted by the American Accounting Association Foundation.

The one-day event is designed for two-year college students, providing the opportunity to connect with accounting professionals, learn about career and transfer pathways and get real-world advice on how to succeed in the accounting field.

The symposiums are held in several U.S. cities with attendees' expenses fully covered. Legg attended the St. Louis event at KPMG, a professional services firm that provides audit, tax and advisory services to businesses and organizations throughout the region.

Legg, who will earn his associate degree from OCC this spring, said the event was highly beneficial, providing valuable insight into various areas of accounting and the credentials he may pursue.

"I learned a lot more about the accounting field through the symposium and I really enjoyed it," Legg said. "It taught me what other aspects of accounting would look like. They had a panel discussion that included someone who was still in college, and others who had two years', six years' and 20 years' experience in the field. They discussed the areas they were working in, and it was interesting to see how their jobs looked in those different intervals."

After graduating from OCC, Legg plans to transfer to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and double major in accounting and finance. He would like to pursue a career in managerial accounting, working for a small company or financial institution.

Olney Central College's Accounting Program enables students to earn an associate degree and enter the workforce immediately after graduation, or with a few additional courses, transfer to complete a bachelor's degree. The ability to finish the two-year degree fully online is another big advantage.

In addition to the associate degree, OCC offers Bookkeeping and QuickBooks certificates, which can add another skillset for students.

"OCC has been awesome," Legg emphasized. "I like the intensity of the accounting classes, and the instructors are very good. With my Instructor Amie Mayhall, I know if I ever need anything, I can email her or talk to her in class. She is always available to help."



NATHAN LEGG



Holiday Celebrations

Above, an OCC Christmas tradition continued on December 10 as Professor David Denton and his students served up free waffles in the Student Union. At left, OCC staff member Terrilynn Majors donated a Christmas tree for the children at the Buckeroo Early Education Center.

OCC Music Department Concerts

The Olney Central College Music Department celebrated the close of the fall semester with the Instrumental Winter Concert on December 3, followed by the annual Christmas Concert featuring the OCC Community Choir on December 12.

