

SEPTEMBER 2025



GENEROSITY BUILDS FUTURE

Donation sparks new athletic facility, strengthening FCC's future.



NEW YEAR KICKOFF

Weeks of Welcome connect students with campus, community, and fun.



EXCELLENCE IN NURSING

FCC celebrates historic nursing success with record NCLEX pass rate.



GROUNDBREAKING AHEAD: FCC CELEBRATES \$200,000 DONATION

Frontier Community College has received a generous \$200,000 donation from community member Jerry Cox to support the construction of a new athletic facility on campus. The facility will be located on the southeast side of campus between Mason Hall and Bob Boyles Hall.

At the recent IECC Board Meeting on Tuesday, August 19, the Board approved a \$5,651,000 contract with Bevis Construction of Mt. Vernon, Illinois, to begin the project.

FCC President Dr. Sharmila Kakac expressed her gratitude for the donation, stating, "We are deeply grateful for this incredible gift, which will help build our new athletic facilities and open new opportunities for students and our community. Without this kind of generosity, projects like this would not be possible. This support goes far beyond athletics—it's an investment that will leave a lasting impact on our students and the community for years to come."

The new athletic facility will feature a full-size gymnasium that will serve as the home court for Bobcats Volleyball and a future basketball program. Additional features will include coaches'



From left to right: Luke Harl, FCC Foundation President; Dr. Sharmila Kakac, FCC President; donor Jerry Cox; Camdyn Tappendorf, FCC sophomore volleyball player; Tinlea Webb, FCC freshman volleyball player; and Jeremy Ellis, FCC Athletic Director and Head Softball Coach.

offices, locker rooms, a weight room, and a concession stand. Beyond athletics, the facility will provide space for intramural sports and community events, further strengthening FCC's role as a hub for student and community engagement.

Cox shared that his donation reflects both gratitude and vision for the future: "This college has been such a big part of our community, and supporting this project is my way of giving back. For me, it's not just about sports. It's about education and making sure future generations have opportunities. I see it as an investment in the students, our community, and the future of this area. GO BOBCATS!"

A groundbreaking ceremony for the new facility will be held on Tuesday, September 16, 2025 at 4:30 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

WEEKS OF WELCOME KICK OFF NEW SCHOOL YEAR AT FCC

The 2025-2026 school year has kicked off at Frontier Community College. Before the new school year began, FCC Faculty and Staff were busy getting things prepared for the arrival of new and returning students for many events called Weeks of Welcome, which were events held on and off campus. It all started with New Student Orientation on Tuesday, August 16 and continued through Thursday, September 4.

Over 120 students attended New Student Orientation, which was the highest number in recent years. Lori Noe, Director of Learning Commons says: "New Student Orientation went very smooth. We have a great staff who pull together to create a welcoming and informative experience for our new students. Feedback from our students was very positive, indicating they learned from the information provided. The phrase that was repeated on our surveys over and over again was "everyone was so nice". I cannot think of a better impression to leave on the students for their first day."

Top Photo: Sarah McCorkle (left), Peyton Owen (center), and Evan Polsgrove (right) listen as Kara Blanton shares information about student services inside the Workforce Development Center during New Student Orientation.

Middle Photo: Students enjoy a game of volleyball at the Leo French Park pool during the Back-to-School Splash.

Bottom Right Photo: Drake Buffington poses with his new TV prize. If you look closely, you can spot the winning rubber duck that landed on the target.

A Back-to-School Splash on Wednesday, August 17 was held at Leo French Park where students enjoyed burgers, hot dogs, and an evening swim at the pool.

The first day of classes was held on Thursday, August 18, with a cookout also held at the Dr. Mike L. Dreith Pavilion in Rotary Plaza.

On Friday, August 22 and August 29 card and board games were played at Learning Commons.

On Monday, August 25, TRiO provided donuts to students in the Cox Hall Foyer. Later that afternoon, several students participated in pickleball at Lakeside Park in Fairfield.

On Tuesday, August 26, Sweeties Ice Cream in Wayne City, brought their mobile unit over to Learning Commons where they served ice cream to the faculty, staff, and students. Club Rush was also held at the same time where students found out more information about student clubs and organizations at FCC.

On Wednesday, August 27, FCC faculty, staff, and students wore their yellow and black and showed off their school spirit as they went to Center Street School to cheer on the Bobcats Volleyball team as they hosted Wabash Valley College in their home opener. The Bobcats prevailed over WVC in five sets. The first 100 students received a pom pom.





Medical Lab Technician instructor, Julie Dehart, talks to her students on the first day of class.

On Thursday, August 28, a chalk walk contest sponsored by Active Minds was held on the sidewalk adjacent to Cox Hall. A popcorn bar was available in the Cox Hall foyer.

BINGO night was originally scheduled for Tuesday, September 2. That event was pushed back due to the Bobcats Volleyball game versus Rend Lake. The event has been pushed back to Monday, September 22 at 7 p.m. at Bob Boyles Hall.

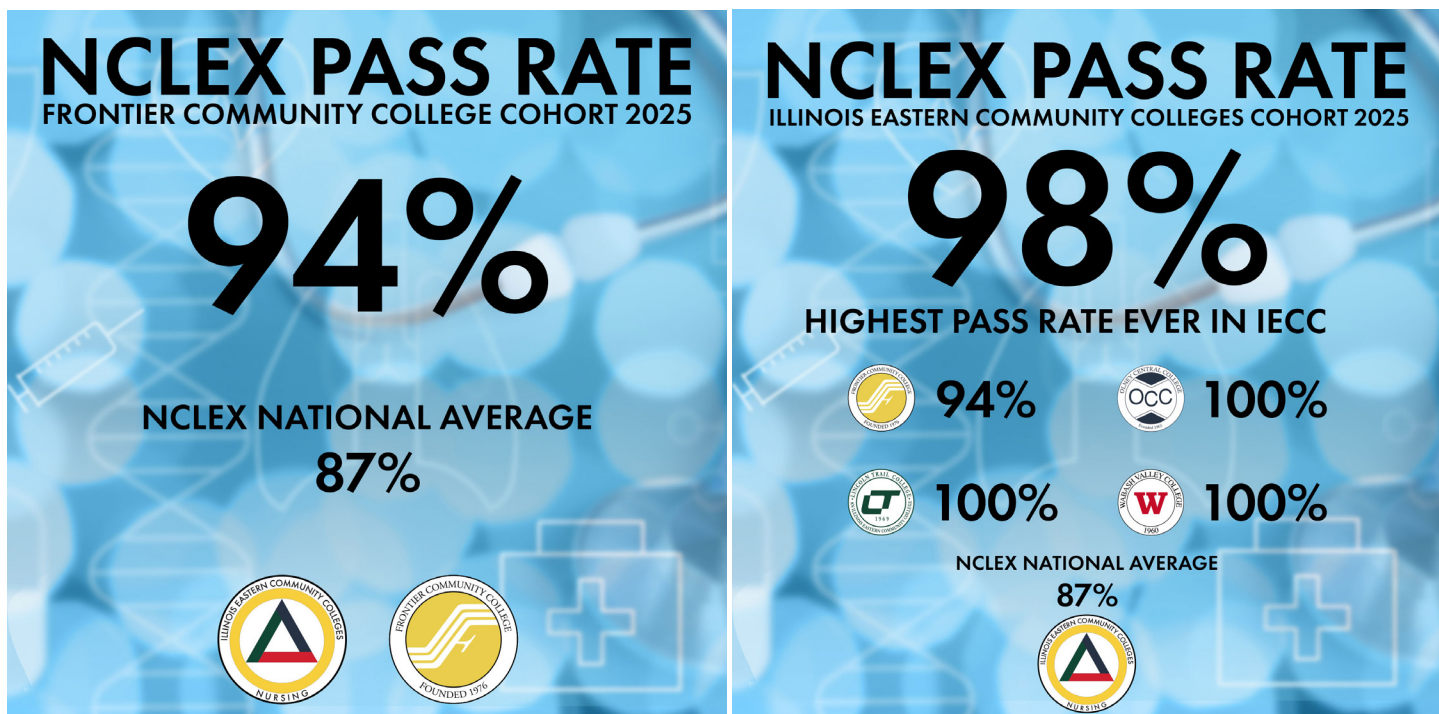
On Wednesday, September 3 at 12 noon, pizza and preparation was held at Learning Commons in Cox Hall as Jordie Higgason, college and career specialist, talked to students about making the most of their college experience and received guidance following Frontier.

On Thursday, September 4, duck drop was held at Dreith Pavilion. Over the course of Weeks of Welcome, students were encouraged to sign their name at the events they attended, so that

way they can have a rubber duck in the event. Prior to the event, all the ducks were numbered to identify the students ducks. A kiddie pool full of water with a small bowl as the target was set up, just outside the pavilion. If a student's rubber duck landed in the bowl, the student would receive a brand new TV as the prize. Electrical Distribution Systems instructor, Dustin Wiggins, poured out over 200 ducks from the EDS bucket truck. Two ducks landed in the bowl. Thus Dr. Sharmila Kakac drew out of the bowl a duck with number #138. The duck belonged to Drake Buffington, who was awarded the TV.

Lori Noe, Director of Learning Commons at Frontier Community College, says that Weeks of Welcome was not only used for student engagement, but also to help students connect with their peers, "We implemented Weeks of Welcome as a way for students to meet their peers and learn about clubs and activities on campus. Obviously, the events with food were a big hit!"

Noe says the Weeks of Welcome committee was very pleased with how the student engagement went. The committee is brainstorming plans for the next year. If a student has an idea for any of the Weeks of Welcome events next year, contact Noe at Learning Commons.



FCC NURSING STUDENTS ACHIEVE REMARKABLE NCLEX SUCCESS

Frontier Community College is celebrating historic success in its nursing program, with 94% of its 2025 graduates passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX). The achievement outpaces the national average of 87% and highlights FCC's role in Illinois Eastern Community Colleges' (IECC) highest-ever district-wide pass rate.

For the 2025 cohort, IECC nursing students achieved a 98% NCLEX pass rate across all campuses. Lincoln Trail College, Olney Central College, and Wabash Valley College each posted a perfect 100%.

"Our commitment to a student-centered environment has

guided every decision within our nursing program," said Dr. Alani Frederick, IECC Dean of Health Professions. "We continually evaluate our curriculum, teaching methods, and clinical experiences to ensure students have the best chance to obtain their RN license. The results speak for themselves."

Dr. Tracy Hicks, FCC's Department Head of Nursing and Instructor, praised the graduates' achievement and the faculty's dedication. "These results reflect not only the hard work of our students but also the tireless efforts of our faculty and clinical partners," Hicks said. "Passing the NCLEX is a milestone every nursing student strives for, and

to see such a high percentage succeed is incredibly rewarding."

Hicks also emphasized how the results reflect the culture of support within the program. "From day one, we remind our students that they're not walking this journey alone," she said. "They have instructors, classmates, and an entire college cheering them on. This outcome proves what's possible when that kind of support meets student determination."

Dr. Frederick noted that IECC's approach keeps programs responsive and relevant. "Our nursing faculty meet every semester to make curriculum edits, write classroom

activities, discuss clinical experiences, and develop simulations,” she said. “This verifies that student education is adjusted in real time to reflect changes seen in practice and in research.”

Looking ahead, Hicks said FCC intends to build on this momentum. “We are proud of what this year’s graduates accomplished, but we’re just as excited about the next group of students beginning their journey,” she said. “Our mission is to continue offering the supportive, rigorous program that helps our students succeed.”

Applications for IECC’s Nursing programs will open this fall for a Fall 2026 start.



Angel Maguire, Program Director of Adult Education, speaks at the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges’ Adult Education Graduation Ceremony held July 18, 2025, at the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble, Illinois.

IECC CELEBRATES ADULT EDUCATION AND FAMILY LITERACY WEEK

September 14–20 marks Adult Education and Family Literacy Week, a time to recognize the transformative power of adult education in strengthening communities, boosting local economies, and empowering individuals to build brighter futures. For the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) district, this week highlights the impact of its Adult Education program, which provides free, high-quality educational and career pathways to adults across 12 counties in southeastern Illinois.

The need for accessible adult education in the IECC region is significant. According to the 2024 Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIU-E) Index of Need Report, out of an approximate adult population of 82,125, thousands face major barriers to success. The report found that 9,463 adults lack a high school diploma, 3,431 are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners, and nearly 10,000 live at or below the poverty level. The IECC Adult Education program exists to bridge these gaps, offering tools and support for adults striving toward economic independence and lifelong success.

To meet these diverse needs, the Adult Education Department offers a wide range of services. From foundational education and high school diploma preparation to English language instruction and career training, the department works one-on-one with students to create individualized pathways. Classes are offered at all four IECC colleges—Frontier Community College in Fairfield, Lincoln Trail College in Robinson, Olney Central College in Olney, and Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel—as well as at satellite sites in Flora, Newton, and Lawrenceville.

Recognizing that adult learners often juggle work, family, and personal commitments, the Adult Education Department emphasizes flexibility. Students can choose from day, evening, or online classes, with all resources and supplies provided at no cost. In addition, the Alternative Method of Credentialing (AMOC) allows students to apply credit from prior learning to fast-track their high school diploma.

But the department's mission goes beyond education—it creates career opportunities. Through partnerships with WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) agencies and local employers, the Adult Education Department offers Integrated Career and Academic Preparation Systems (ICAPS). These specialized programs enable students to earn both their Illinois High School Diploma and an Industry-Recognized Credential (IRC) in high-demand fields such as Welding, Broadband, CNA, and Manufacturing.

The results speak for themselves. In the last fiscal year, the Adult Education Department served about 300 adult learners and proudly celebrated 85 graduates. These numbers represent more than statistics—they reflect lives changed, families strengthened, and communities supported. Along the way, students gain not only academic knowledge, but also digital literacy, numeracy, and workforce readiness skills that are essential in today's job market.

As Adult Education and Family Literacy Week shines a spotlight on this vital work, the Adult Education Department invites community members to spread the word. If you or someone you know could benefit from these services, help is just a phone call or click away. To learn more, visit iecc.edu/adulted, call (618) 847-9157, or email maguirea@iecc.edu.

This week—and every week—the Adult Education Department is committed to opening doors, breaking down barriers, and guiding adult learners toward new beginnings.

FCC ALUMNA EARNS TOP TRANSFER HONOR



FCC alumna Lucy Britt (center) was recently honored with the Distinguished Transfer Student Award at the University of Southern Indiana in Evansville.

Frontier Community College alumna, Lucy Britt, has been recognized for her outstanding academic success and dedication to learning. On Thursday, August 14, Britt received the Distinguished Transfer Student Award at the University of Southern Indiana (USI) in Evansville. A 2024 graduate of FCC with an Associate in Arts & Science, she is now excelling in her studies at USI.

Britt described the award as both exciting and reassuring. “I worked hard for my grades in my first semester at USI, and I was glad that it was recognized by the professor who nominated me,” she said. “I was a little nervous at first because I didn’t know how challenging my courses would be. I put my best foot forward, and it was nice to see that my hard work paid off. It gave me peace of mind knowing if I did my best, I could achieve the grades I wanted.”

Her professors quickly noticed the qualities that set her apart. Britt committed herself fully to assignments and class discussions, often going above and beyond what was required. She even attended extra lectures outside of class when recommended by her instructors. “I think what set me apart for earning this award was that I always went above and beyond with my assignments and tried to always participate in class discussions,” Britt explained.

Britt also credits her start at Frontier for preparing her to thrive at a four-year university. “Going to Frontier for my first year of college prepared me for my future at USI. I had the comfort of staying at home, smaller class sizes, and approachable professors who took an interest in every student in the room,” she said. “They not only taught effectively but cared about us as people. That made all the difference.”

Her journey hasn’t been without challenges. After completing her year at Frontier, Britt had to delay her enrollment at USI due to military training. She worried about losing momentum but

overcame the setback with discipline and focus. “I made sure to prepare for tests, balance my time to get homework accomplished, and ask questions if I needed help,” she said.

Now thriving at USI, Britt encourages current FCC students who plan to transfer to stay committed to their goals. “It’s going to be an adjustment and different than Frontier, but if you are always doing your best, your hard work will pay off,” she advised. “Attending FCC was extremely helpful in getting my general education classes done. When I got to USI, I was able to immediately start my major requirements, which kept me interested and motivated.”



DIAMONDS IN THE DUST

Emmy Vinson (left) and Kyndall Webb (right) pose with the Strikers, the youth softball team they coached over the summer as part of the Johnson County Youth League.

Before lacing up their cleats for another season with the Frontier Community College Bobcats, sophomores Emmy Vinson and Kyndall Webb stepped into a brand-new role—coaching youth softball for the first time as part of the Johnson County Youth League. Emmy, a native of Vienna, Illinois, and Kyndall, from nearby Goreville, returned to the Vienna area this summer to lead a youth softball team nicknamed the Strikers. Trading the batter’s box for the dugout, the duo brought their passion, energy, and love for the game to a new generation of players. What began as a summer opportunity quickly turned into a meaningful experience, as they inspired young athletes and discovered the joy of giving back to the sport that shaped them.

“What inspired us to take on this role is that we’re both pursuing degrees in education and hope to coach in the future,” Vinson explained. “We saw this as a great opportunity to gain experience—and to help these girls have a great first experience with the game we grew up loving so much.”

Vinson is a pitcher for the Bobcats, while Webb plays in the outfield. Playing the game is one thing—but coaching it from the dugout is an entirely different challenge.

“The transition from player to coach was challenging, but in a positive way,” Webb said. “It

SEPT. 2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

10	Bobcats Volleyball @ Kaskaskia	6:30 P.M.
12	Bobcats Volleyball @ Lake Land Tourney	9:00
13	Bobcats Volleyball @ Lake Land Tourney	
13	Bobcats Baseball @ Puma Classic	9 A.M./3 P.M.
15	Bobcats Volleyball vs Lake Land	6:30 P.M.
16	FCC Athletic Facility Groundbreaking	4:30 P.M.
16	IECC Board of Trustees Meeting @ FCC	6:15 P.M.
16	Bobcats Baseball @ SIC	2:00 P.M.
17	U.S. Constitution Observance Day - Classes in Session	
17	Bobcats Volleyball vs SWIC	6:30 P.M.
19	Bobcats Volleyball @ John A. Logan	6:30 P.M.
19	Bobcats Baseball @ Mt. Dew Park vs Vol St	2:20 P.M.
19	Bobcats Baseball @ SIU-C vs Vincennes	7:40 P.M.
22	BINGO Night @ Bob Boyles Hall (Students Only)	7 P.M.
23	Bobcats Baseball @ NKU	1 P.M.
24	Bobcats Volleyball vs SIC	6:30 P.M.
26	Bobcats Softball @ Deaconess SportsPark	
27	Bobcats Softball @ Deaconess SportsPark	
29	Bobcats Volleyball vs Kaskaskia	6:30 P.M.

OCTOBER 2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

1	Bobcats Volleyball @ Wabash Valley	6:30 P.M.
3	Bobcats Volleyball vs Shawnee	4 P.M.
3	Bobcats Baseball @ USA Stadium Showcase	
3	Bobcats Volleyball vs East Central College	8 P.M.
5	Bobcats Softball @ University of Evansville	1/3 P.M.
6	Bobcats Volleyball @ Rend Lake	6:30 P.M.
8	Bobcats Volleyball @ Lincoln Trail	6:30 P.M.
8	Bobcats Baseball @ DACC	
10	No Classes District Faculty & Staff Personal Dev. Day	
10	Bobcats Volleyball @ SIC	6:30 P.M.
11	Bobcats Baseball @ EIU vs Parkland	
11	Bobcats Softball @ Oakland City Univ	12/2 P.M.
12	Bobcats Softball @ Kentucky Wesleyan Univ	1/3 P.M.
13	Campuses Closed - Columbus Day	
13	Bobcats Volleyball vs St. Louis CC	2 P.M.
13	Bobcats Volleyball vs Vincennes University	6 P.M.
14	Bobcats Baseball vs Rend Lake	
15	Bobcats Volleyball @ Shawnee	6:30 P.M.
16	Fall Midterm	
17	Bobcats Baseball @ Vincennes	
18	Bobcats Baseball vs Shawnee	12 P.M.
18	Bobcats Softball vs Oakland City Univ	12/2 P.M.
19	Bobcats Volleyball @ Parkland	1 P.M.
20	Bobcats Volleyball @ Lake Land	6:30 P.M.
21	Spring Registration Begins	
21	IECC Board of Trustees Meeting at LTC	6:15 P.M.
22	Bobcats Volleyball @ SWIC	6:30 P.M.
25	Bobcats Volleyball @ Danville CC	11 A.M.
25	Bobcats Baseball Fall Fan Fest/W.S. Game 1	
27	Bobcats Baseball - Fall World Series Game 2	
28	Bobcats Baseball - Fall World Series Game 3	
29	Bobcats Volleyball vs John A. Logan	6:30 P.M.

DISCLAIMER: Bobcats Volleyball game schedules and results can be found at fccbobcats.com as well as on the NJCAA website. Please note that all Bobcats Baseball and Softball contests this fall are scrimmages and do not count toward the regular season. Bobcats Baseball may also add games during the fall sports season. For additional events, please visit our calendar located under the "Community" tab at iecc.edu/fcc.

made us look at things from a different perspective and opened our eyes to just how much goes into the game on that side."

Earlier in the year, during the winter sports season, both Vinson and Webb served as volunteer assistant coaches for the New Simpson Hill junior high girls basketball team. Located just up the road from Vienna in the tiny village of Ozark, New Simpson Hill saw the coaching duo—alongside Aerial Ford and Beth Palmer—help lead the Mustangs to a third-place finish in Class S of the Southern Illinois Junior High School Athletic Association (SIJHSAA). Both had played basketball for years at their respective high schools before coming to Frontier to focus on softball.

"The experience we were given this winter carried over into the summer with our girls," Vinson added. "It was different, though, because this time we were calling our own shots instead of just observing like we had been during basketball season."

Vinson and Webb found that their own recent transition to college softball helped them relate to their young players, using that experience to guide the girls through their own learning curve.

"We were able to translate our own experiences, even at our level, to their level," Webb said. "This gave them a better understanding of the game—even at the age of 8. We took our recent experience as freshmen, learning how to adapt to change and the jump in levels, and used it to teach them how to adjust to a more structured game. While their shift was just from the chaos of t-ball, we were still able to apply our experience and help them adapt."

Building chemistry and trust with players at that age starts with patience, encouragement, and consistency. Vinson and Webb focused on creating a positive environment where their young athletes felt supported, valued, and excited to learn—laying the foundation for growth both on and off the field.

"These girls were still very young, so we knew we had to keep the game fun and not too intense," Vinson said. "If we kept it fun, they'd keep wanting to learn and show up. Since we're also young adults and not too far removed from that age ourselves, they seemed to connect with us better and didn't

feel intimidated. We also applied skills we learned in our education courses at Frontier to help build those connections.”

For Vinson and Webb, the goal wasn't just to win games—it was to help each player grow. They emphasized the importance of improving a little each day, teaching their team that progress, not perfection, is what truly matters. That mindset carried them all the way to a championship game appearance. Championship games can be intimidating, but for the Strikers, it was their best performance of the season.

“The championship game was awesome! That game was the best the girls had played all year,” Webb said. “In the first inning, they came out and made three amazing plays to get a three-up, three-down inning. The energy was incredible, and the girls were having so much fun. As coaches, it was the best experience to see. In that moment, we knew we had made an impact on these young girls and couldn't have been more proud.”

For the duo, the biggest reward wasn't found in the win column—it was in watching their players grow and fall in love with the game.



Emmy Vinson coaches first base for The Strikers.

“The most rewarding part of coaching this team was seeing the improvement each one of those girls made in such a short time,” Vinson said. “At the end of the season, they were all telling us how much they loved softball and wanted us to coach them again next year. That was the most rewarding part.”

Coaching from the dugout also gave them a new perspective—one that confirmed their career goals in both education and athletics.

“Seeing the game we love so much from a different view, and being able to share that love with others, really finalized our decision to pursue education and coaching,” said Webb.

Their leadership didn't go unnoticed by those who know them best.

“Both Emmy and Kyndall have a great knowledge of basketball and softball,” said Bobcats Assistant Coach Marty Slover. “When recruiting them, it was easy to see they understood the strategy of the game. But they also possess those special qualities it takes to be great coaches. It's not just about X's and O's or mechanics—it's about working with athletes to bring out their very best. Not everyone can truly coach, but they both have that ability. I'm very proud of them and their accomplishments—now and in the future.”

FCC IN PICTURES



1 Libby Lingafelter, Executive Director of the Greater Fairfield Chamber of Commerce shares about the Chamber during NSO.

3 Two students receive hands-on experience with the human cadaver machine in Nixie's science class.

5 Students make their way to class at Mason Hall.

2 Marty Slover and Jeremy Ellis grill up hot dogs and porkburgers.

4 Students enjoy donuts from TRiO's Wain Davis during 'Donut Stress with TRiO,' one of several Weeks of Welcome events.

6 FCC students and staff gather for a photo outside Northside School after the first High-Five Friday of the year.