

SEPTEMBER 2026



PAST MEETS POSSIBILITY

Taylor returns to Frontier with vision for IECC's future.



CAMPUS COMES ALIVE

Frontier welcomes students with fun, friendship, and connection.



EDUCATION OPENS DOORS

Adult Education graduates cross the stage into new possibilities.



FULL CIRCLE: TAYLOR RETURNS TO IECC AS CHANCELLOR

Years after serving as president of Frontier Community College, Dr. Tim Taylor has returned to Illinois Eastern Community Colleges—this time as chancellor of the district. Following approval by the IECC Board of Trustees, Taylor began his new role on August 15. He previously served as president of Shawnee Community College in Ullin, Illinois, from September 2020 through August 2026.

Taylor visited Frontier on Tuesday, August 25, touring campus and meeting with employees and student organization advisors. After arriving at Mason Hall shortly before 9 a.m., he met with members of the operations and maintenance team and FCC's coaching staff. Following lunch, he joined faculty and staff in Bob Boyles Hall to share his personal and professional background, hear their concerns, and discuss opportunities for growth.

Since Taylor's tenure as FCC president, the college has experienced changes in leadership, organizational structure, and campus facilities. Returning gave him an opportunity to reflect on that progress and experience the campus atmosphere firsthand.



Dr. Sharmila Kakac led Dr. Tim Taylor on a tour of FCC's campus, including a stop at the Bobcat Den.

"It's so much more energetic in my mind. It's just a surreal thing. I'm still processing it. I feel really good about the decision, and I'm happy to be here."

Among the priorities Taylor discussed was expanding career and technical education, or CTE, throughout the district. He emphasized the importance of responding to students' changing needs, particularly their interest in short-term credentials that help them enter the workforce quickly.

"Over the course of my career, students have changed. I think we can all agree that today's students are different than they were

10 years ago."

Taylor said programs that prepare students for well-paying jobs with opportunities for advancement could strengthen the district's service to its communities.

"I'll be totally committed to bringing CTE to the entire IECC District. I think that's important."

The visit also brought back memories of helping establish Bobcat athletics. For many years after Frontier's founding in 1976, the college had no athletic teams. Taylor helped change that during his presidency, serving as one of the catalysts for introducing baseball, softball, and volleyball. The visit also brought back memories of helping establish Bobcat athletics. For many years after Frontier's founding in 1976, the college had no athletic teams. Taylor helped change that during his presidency, serving as one of the catalysts for introducing baseball, softball, and volleyball.

While visiting FNB Field with FCC President Dr. Sharmila Kakac, Taylor recalled standing on the site with Terry Ayers and Bob Boyles, using a roll of string to lay out the baseball diamond and envision its future. Seeing the completed field and the growth of athletics was an emotional moment.

"It has exceeded expectations."

Throughout his remarks, Taylor emphasized the central role faculty members play in students' lives.

"Students come here for the faculty. They don't come here for Tim Taylor. When they talk about how their lives are changed, it's not because Tim Taylor did anything. It's because that teacher did something."

He also encouraged exploring technologies and teaching approaches that could enhance the student experience, including competency-based education and immersive learning.

"I think there are all kinds of promising technologies out there that we should be thinking about exploring, experimenting with, and fine-tuning so these students can get the experience."

Taylor recalled visiting Arizona State University two years ago, where he observed biology students using virtual reality as part of an immersive learning experience developed in collaboration with Dreamscape. He described the approach as a way to keep students engaged and excited about learning, with potential applications in subjects such as art and history.

Even as he looks toward new opportunities, Taylor said Frontier's entrepreneurial spirit and close connections with students remain among its defining strengths. He credited founding President Richard Mason with establishing a resourceful, student-centered approach that continues to shape the college.



Dr. Tim Taylor speaks with FCC faculty and staff during a meet and greet in Bob Boyles Hall as part of his visit to Frontier.

"What I think always made Frontier special was we were always the underdog. Richard Mason started this."

Taylor said that spirit encouraged employees to find creative ways to meet students' needs and help them succeed.

"One of the things we focused on was that student experience, even before it became a thing. We have always been connected to students and doing what was necessary to help students succeed."

He contrasted that sense of connection with his experience working at a much larger campus.

"I worked at a big campus in Michigan where you had 26,000 students. It didn't have that same kind of connection like Frontier had."

Following the faculty and staff gathering, Taylor met with advisors for Phi Theta Kappa, Student Senate, and Student Ambassadors in the Mason Hall Conference Room before continuing his campus tour with Kakac.

Kakac said Taylor enjoyed his visit—a return to familiar surroundings and an opportunity to consider what comes next for Frontier and the district.





A WARM WELCOME TO A NEW YEAR AT FRONTIER

Full parking lots and students making their way to class signaled the start of the 2026–2027 academic year at Frontier Community College. To welcome new and returning students, FCC hosted its annual New Student Orientation and Weeks of Welcome, offering opportunities to connect with classmates, faculty, and staff through activities across campus.

New Student Orientation took place Monday, August 17, in the Workforce Development Center. Incoming students checked in, had their student identification photos taken, visited booths hosted by FCC clubs and local organizations, and enjoyed a free breakfast courtesy of Fairfield Memorial Hospital.

Lori Noe, director of the FCC Learning Commons, said the goals of orientation remain consistent: provide information, ease concerns, build community, and have fun.

Following a welcome from FCC President Dr. Sharmila Kakac and remarks from Noe, students divided into small groups for campus tours and breakout sessions.

“NSO gives students the opportunity to become familiar with campus. At FCC, we place students into groups of 20 for the day, so they have a chance to be in smaller group sessions, hopefully giving them an opportunity to meet some of their classmates. We also try to get them tied into



Students line up for pizza during Pizza and Prep in Bob Boyles Hall.

clubs and future student life activities early to promote positive interactions and campus involvement," Noe said.

Although the orientation survey remained open at the time of writing, early responses indicated that overall feedback was very positive.

Following the breakout sessions, students, faculty, and staff formed the number "50" for an aerial photograph celebrating Frontier's 50th anniversary. Girly Pop sold drinks on campus afterward.

Returning students also helped welcome their new classmates. Noe said their firsthand experience at Frontier makes them a valuable part of orientation.

"We include our returning students in NSO, and they are very helpful in answering questions the incoming students have. They can share their experiences, and their presence puts the new students at ease," she said.

Athlete Orientation followed Tuesday, August 18, in West Hall. Classes began Wednesday, August 19, bringing new and returning students together for the start of the fall semester. A welcome cookout took place at 11 a.m. in the Workforce Development Center after weather conditions prompted its relocation from Dreith Pavilion.

On Thursday, August 20, Jordie Higgason hosted Pizza and Prep at noon in Bob Boyles Hall. That evening, Phi Theta Kappa hosted a Photo Scavenger Hunt at 5:30 p.m., also at Bob Boyles Hall. Participants photographed items and people from a list that took them across campus and into the community.

FCC TRIO Advisor Jaeda Thomason, a local artist, led art sessions in the Bobcat Den at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Fridays, August 21 and 28. Students joined her in sculpting a character from Little Shop of Horrors.

Food and fellowship continued during the second week of activities. One Love Christian Club hosted a Nacho Bar at 11 a.m. Monday, August 24, in Bob Boyles Hall. On Tuesday, August 25, Sweeties of Wayne City brought its mobile unit to the Learning Commons, where students, faculty, and staff enjoyed ice cream. BINGO followed Wednesday, August 26, at Dreith Pavilion, with Kera Vinson serving as the caller.

One of the highlights of Weeks of Welcome was the Duck Drop on Thursday, August 27. Students earned entries by signing in at events throughout the welcome activities. Electrical Distribution Systems instructor Dustin Wiggins dropped ducks from the EDS bucket truck, aiming for the bowl floating in a kiddie pool.

Sophomore Rayonna Ridley won this year's Duck Drop and received a 65-inch smart TV.

OCTOBER 2026

2	VB vs Kaskaskia	6:30 PM
3	Scout Connect Showcase	9 AM & 11:45 AM
3	SB @ Henderson, KY	TBD
4	SB @ Henderson, KY	TBD
5	VB @ Wabash Valley College	6:30 PM
8	VB vs Rend Lake College	6:30 PM
9	District Professional Dev - No Classes	
10	BB @ Rend Lake College	TBD
12	Columbus Day - Campuses Closed	
12	VB @ Lincoln Trail College	6:30 PM
14	Fall Midterm	
14	BB vs Southwestern Illinois College	TBD
17	VB @ Southeastern Illinois	11 AM
17	VB vs Lewis & Clark @ SIC	1 PM
17	BB vs Shawnee (Fall Fan Fest)	TBD
17	SB @ IU-Southeast (DH)	1/3 EST
18	SB @ University of Evansville	1 PM
19	VB @ Shawnee CC	6:30 PM
20	Spring Registration Begins	
20	IECC Board of Trustees Meeting @ OCC	6:15 PM
21	VB @ Lake Land CC	6:30 PM
23	VB @ Southwestern Illinois	6:30 PM
23	BB @ Eastern Illinois University	TBD
23	SB @ Henderson, KY vs Shawnee	3 PM
23	SB @ Henderson, KY vs Brescia University	7 PM
24	SB @ Kentucky Wesleyan University (DH)	1/3 PM

NOVEMBER 2026

3	Election Day - Campuses Closed	6:30
11	Veterans Day - Campuses Closed	9 A/11:45 A
17	IECC Board of Trustees Meeting @ WVC	
25	Last Day to Withdraw from Fall Courses	
26 & 27	Thanksgiving - Campuses Closed	



Rayonna Ridley poses with the 65-inch smart TV she won after her duck landed in the target during this year's Duck Drop.

"It feels good. I was surprised because my name was in there once or twice. I was excited," Ridley said.

The Cypress, Illinois, native praised the welcoming atmosphere at Frontier and in Fairfield.

"I like it here. I think it's a great small town. I think coming here it's so welcoming. It's so small and easy to fit in. The athletics are good too. We have good coaches," she said.

Ridley also praised FCC's efforts to bring students together through campus events. Along with the Duck Drop, students enjoyed lawn games and popsicles at Dreith Pavilion.

Weeks of Welcome concluded Monday, August 31, with doughnuts at 8 a.m. in the Learning Commons at Cox Hall. Active Minds sponsored the event.

Reflecting on the activities, Noe said events featuring food attracted the largest crowds.

"Food events are always popular! We had the biggest turnout when we had Sweeties ice cream on campus. It's a local favorite!" she said.

Noe also credited FCC faculty and staff for helping make the August 17–31 activities a successful start to the academic year.

"These events were only possible because of our awesome faculty and staff, who were willing to volunteer at the busiest time of the year and be part of the experience. Research consistently shows that meaningful involvement with faculty and staff drives student engagement, persistence, and retention. That's the goal – to have students who are locked in and a campus that is ready to provide that experience!" she said.

At a recent FCC Communications Team meeting, Noe shared that planning is already underway for next year's New Student Orientation and Weeks of Welcome.



CROSSING THE STAGE, OPENING NEW DOORS

Joy, pride, and a sense of accomplishment filled the Terry L. Bruce West Richland Center in Noble, Illinois, on Friday, July 17, 2026, as Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) hosted its Adult Education Commencement and Reception. Held at the centrally located venue for the third consecutive year, the ceremony drew a record-breaking gathering of graduates, loved ones, and educators. A crowd of 185 friends and family members cheered on 33 graduates who crossed the stage, celebrating a milestone year for the program.

During fiscal year 2026, 96 students earned their Illinois High School Diploma through Alternative Methods of Credentialing (AMOC), a pathway that combines traditional GED testing with previously earned high school credits.

Program Director Angelique Maguire delivered the opening and closing remarks, emphasizing personal growth, perseverance, and the life-changing impact of education.

Throughout the evening, speakers offered encouragement and reflected on the graduates' achievements. Kyla Mansfield, a program alumna who now serves as the Adult Education Data Entry and Tech Specialist, encouraged graduates to stay curious, continue learning, and embrace the next chapter of their lives.

Regina Draper, a Frontier Community College Adult Education instructor, expressed gratitude for the opportunity to guide her students and watch them reach this important milestone.

Jeremy Brush, Superintendent of the Regional Office of Education 12, praised the graduates' resilience and highlighted AMOC's role in opening doors to further education and meaningful career opportunities.

Graduate speaker Quinnlan Shock shared a moving message about overcoming personal barriers and trusting the support of family and friends along the way.

The celebration capped a yearlong effort by the Adult Education team to create a "red carpet" experience honoring each learner's hard work. Graduates received caps and gowns at no cost to keep as mementos of their achievement. One graduate added a personal touch by decorating her cap for the walk across the stage.

Cheers rang through the hall as each graduate's name was called. Following the ceremony, graduates, families, and instructors gathered for a lively reception, posing for photos, sharing memories, and celebrating the opportunities ahead.

For more information about the IECC Adult Education program or to register for upcoming classes, contact Angelique Maguire at 618-847-9160 or maguirea@iecc.edu.



Kyla Mansfield, a program alumna who now serves as the Adult Education Data Entry and Tech Specialist, addresses the audience during the Adult Education Commencement.

AEFL WEEK HIGHLIGHTS THE POWER OF LEARNING

Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL) Week will be observed September 13–19, 2026, according to the National Coalition for Literacy.

Established in 2009, this annual, congressionally recognized observance highlights the importance of adult education and family literacy across the United States. The National Coalition for Literacy (NCL) leads the national effort, with support from organizations such as the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) and TESOL International Association.

The week raises public awareness of the need for adult literacy, numeracy, and digital skills while promoting educational opportunities and celebrating the achievements of learners, educators, and community partners.

According to data shared by TESOL for AEFL Week, nearly 25 million adults in the United States speak English less than “very well.” More than 700,000 adult English learners receive support through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). TESOL also reports that only 12% of adult education teachers hold TESOL certification.

AEFL Week encourages continued efforts to expand access to adult education and highlights the lasting impact these programs have on individuals, families, and communities.

For more information about the Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IECC) Adult Education program or to register for upcoming classes, contact Angelique Maguire at 618-847-9160 or maguirea@iecc.edu.

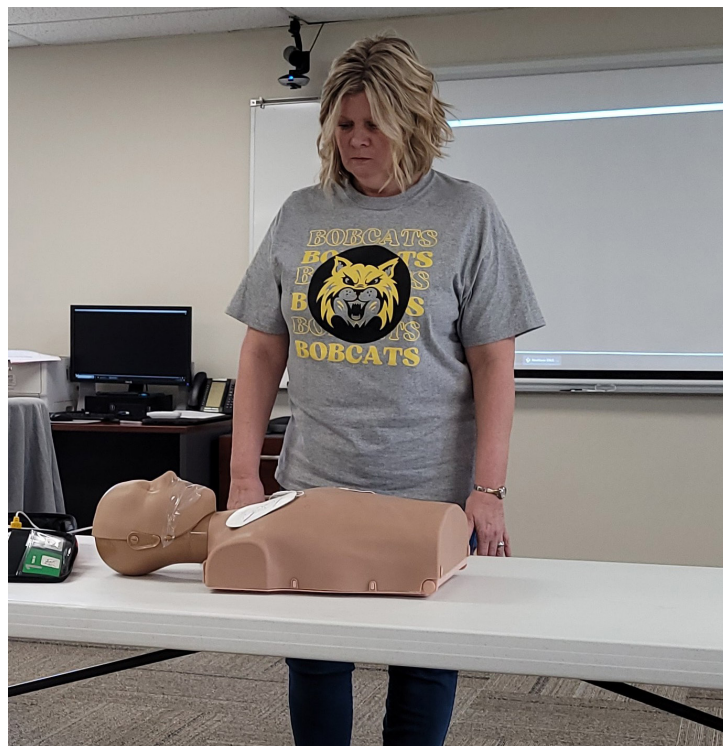
IECC OFFERS CPR AND BLS TRAINING ACROSS THE DISTRICT

When an emergency happens, every second matters. The Illinois Eastern Community Colleges Business & Industry Division offers cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic life support (BLS) classes throughout the district for employees and the public.

Both courses teach lifesaving skills, but they serve different audiences. According to the American Red Cross, CPR classes are designed for anyone interested in learning how to respond to cardiac emergencies involving adults, children or infants at home, at school or in the community. BLS training builds on those skills and is geared primarily toward healthcare professionals and first responders, including police officers, firefighters, EMTs and paramedics. It includes additional techniques for assisting people experiencing cardiac arrest, respiratory distress or an obstructed airway.

Each CPR and BLS class offered within the IECC district requires a minimum of six participants. Advance registration is required, and participants should click “Submit” after completing the registration form to secure their spot. Each course is worth 0.5 college credit.

Keeping these skills current is essential. American Red Cross CPR and BLS certifications are valid for two years, with recertification courses available to refresh participants' knowledge and skills.



Lori Noe, Director of Learning Commons, prepares to use an AED on a mannequin during a 2025 CPR training session. CPR and BLS classes are available to IECC employees and the public.

Participants should confirm renewal eligibility requirements before registering. More information is available on the Red Cross's CPR renewal and BLS renewal pages.

For questions or additional information, contact Charlana Wayland at waylandc@iecc.edu or 618-847-9163, or visit iecc.edu/businessindustry.



GAS UTILITY PROGRAM OFFERS A PATH TO A NEW CAREER

Whether you're starting your career or ready for a change, the Gas Utility program offers hands-on training to help you take the next step. Two cohorts remain in 2026: October 12–23 and December 7–18. Each session includes 10 training days and is limited to 10 students.

Held at Wabash Valley College in Mt. Carmel, Illinois, this certificate program prepares students for entry-level careers with gas utilities and pipeline contractors. Participants gain practical experience in gas main and service installation, safety procedures, and Department of Transportation (DOT) Operator Qualifications (OQ) readiness.

The program packs 90 hours of instruction into two weeks, allowing students to complete their training and begin applying for jobs in less than a month. Classes meet from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The first week focuses on safety fundamentals, materials, and equipment familiarization, while the second emphasizes field applications, installation practice, and OQ readiness.

Leading the program is Jack Tribe, a professional OQ trainer and evaluator with more than 40 years of experience in the natural gas industry. Certified by Veriforce, NCCER, ITS, and EWN, Tribe

has worked as a journeyman pipefitter/welder, technical college instructor, and gas training specialist for utilities and contractors. His expertise includes Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements and gas utility safety standards.

"My purpose is for every student to succeed – not to fail anyone. My goal is 100% job placement," said Tribe.

Through hands-on equipment training, construction practice, and emergency response instruction, students develop skills to help launch their careers. Participants learn to join polyethylene (PE) pipe using butt fusion and electrofusion, install 2-inch gas mains and 1-inch service lines, and perform pressure testing, purging, and meter set assembly.

Training also covers OSHA-compliant excavation and trench safety, 811 Dig Safe and damage prevention protocols, and responses to abnormal operating conditions. Throughout the program, students develop professional conduct, teamwork, and communication skills while learning the importance of a strong safety culture.

Students must attend all 10 training days, pass a background check and drug screening, maintain a clean driving record, and be willing to travel or relocate for work.

The total program cost is \$1,200. To learn more or complete an application form, visit iecc.edu/gas-utility.

For questions or additional information, contact Dr. Sharmila Kakac, Dean of Business and Industry, at kakacs@iecc.edu or 618-393-3534, ext. 5834. Explore additional IECC Business and Industry certificates and programs at iecc.edu/businessandindustry.



FRONTIER COMMUNITY COLLEGE

SENIOR CITIZENS EVENT DAY



Friday, September 25, 2026



West Hall 103-105

Join us for a special morning of learning, wellness, and community.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 8:00-8:30 a.m. | Registration & Breakfast |
| 8:30-9:00 a.m. | Opening Remarks - Dr. Sharmila Kakac & Lori Noe |
| 9:00-9:30 a.m. | Financial Estate Planning - Luke Harl |
| 9:45-10:15 a.m. | Resiliency Through Life Challenges & Specialized Resources - Dana Taylor |
| 10:15-10:30 a.m. | Guided Breathing Imagery - FMH |
| 10:30-11:15 a.m. | Healthy Snacks - Healthy Meals with Whitney Buckles |
| 11:15-11:30 a.m. | Adult Education - Tutoring Opportunities with Sharis Wilson |
| 11:30-12 p.m. | Door Prizes & Adjourn |



This is a free event. Advance registration is required.



Learning Commons tour available upon request.



Register today by calling 618-842-3711.

FCC IN PICTURES



1 A grasshopper makes a stop on the sidewalk in front of Mason Hall..

2 Garrett Schmidt brings his game face to a round of ping pong in the Bobcat Den.

3 Electrical Distribution Systems students practice their skills in the morning before the heat sets in.

4 A Medical Laboratory Technician student examines blood cells through a microscope.

5 Nixie Hnetkovsky guides her human anatomy students through a lab activity.

6 Construction crews work on the roof of the Jerry Cox Athletic Center on campus.