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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Mark Gunderman, Communications Specialist  
Chippewa Valley Technical College  
Desk: 715-831-7288  
Cell: 715-210-4714  
[mgunderman1@cvtc.edu](mailto:mgunderman1@cvtc.edu)

## **CVTC Referendum Projects Underway**

### ***Ground broken for Manufacturing Center expansion on Monday, Nov. 9***

**Eau Claire, WI** – Construction work on the projects approved in the Chippewa Valley Technical College spring referendum began this week with a groundbreaking at the Manufacturing Education Center on Monday, Nov. 9. Now under construction is a 10,000 square-foot addition onto the southeast corner of the building to expand the existing Welding program facilities.

The Automation Fabrication Lab will help address employers' demands for trained welders, allowing for curriculum enhancements for automation and robotic welding. The new space will include robotic welding cells, laser cutting technology and metal fabrication equipment. Access to this equipment will allow for advanced program integration and manufacturing training, combining skill sets in welding, mechanical design and machine tool.

"The Manufacturing Education Center was originally built with dollars from the 1997 referendum," said CVTC President Bruce Barker, who gave opening remarks at the groundbreaking. "Manufacturing is largest employment sector in the CVTC district, and it is critical that we maintain our commitment to this vital wealth-creating part of our economy."

Also speaking at the event was Jeff Sullivan, dean of apprenticeships, engineering, manufacturing and IT, as well as CVTC Board of Trustees member Justin Zoromski.

SDS Architects designed the addition. Market & Johnson is the general contractor. Construction is scheduled for completion in June, with facility use starting in the fall 2021 semester.

But that's just the start. Voters approved the \$48.8 million referendum by an overwhelming margin last April. Referendum-related projects will be completed over the next three years.

One of the centerpieces will be construction of an approximately 116,000 square foot Energy Education Center at the CVTC West Campus. The facility will be dedicated to educating new students and retraining displaced and incumbent workers in emerging transportation-related occupations. Programs located in the facility will include Auto Mechanics; Auto Collision; Diesel Mechanics; Truck Driver Training; and Motorcycle, Marine and Outdoor Power Products, along with associated welding training.

Construction drawings will be completed by the end of the year, with a bid opening in February and construction beginning in April. Completion is scheduled for June 2022.

Construction of an expansion and remodeling project at the Emergency Service Education Center is also expected to start in April 2021, with completion in June 2022. Expansion will occur through construction of a 25,966 square foot addition to the Emergency Services Education Center including a new 50-yard firing range, apparatus bay and expanded student commons. Remodeling of 22,685 square feet of the center will create a defensive and arrest tactics room, fitness area, simulation space and improved space for Emergency Medical Services.

The referendum included several smaller projects that will also be in development in the coming years. CVTC is conferring with local leaders in River Falls to discuss the best options for development of 6.7 acres of land acquired from the former Moody's auto dealership property adjacent to the CVTC River Falls campus. Improvements are also planned at the Chippewa Falls and Menomonie campuses.

Area high schools will also directly benefit from the referendum, with the development of mobile labs to take CVTC technology and instruction to rural areas.

"Today's groundbreaking represents the start of the major work on our referendum projects, which will help strengthen our close working relationship with the employers in the region and enhance our ability to meet the workforce needs of the region," Barker said. "This is a great day for CVTC, our students and our industry partners."

With over 115 programs offered both online and on-campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College delivers superior, progressive technical education which improves the lives of students, meets the workforce needs of the region, and strengthens the community. CVTC programs are designed with input of business and industry to prepare graduates for today's jobs, with 95 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$47,452.

Cutline:

Breaking ground at the CVTC Manufacturing Education Center in Eau Claire Monday, Nov.9, representing the start of construction on the projects approved in the April referendum are, from left, Dale Poynter, principal architect at SDS Architects; Jerry Shea, general contractor Market & Johnson; Julie Furst-Bowe, vice president of instruction; Bruce Barker, CVTC president; Justin Zoromski, CVTC Board of Trustees member; and Jeff Sullivan, dean of apprenticeships, engineering, manufacturing and IT.

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