

A Decade of Community Impact

Ten years ago, Lee College and five local school districts came together around a shared vision: bring higher education and workforce training closer to the students, families and communities of South Liberty County.

On Sept. 10, Lee College Education Center - South Liberty County celebrated that vision and a decade of partnership, recognizing the students, educators, community leaders and organizations that have helped make the center a regional resource for education and workforce development.

The center's managing board includes Anahuac, Dayton, Hardin, Hull-Daisetta and Liberty ISDs, whose continued partnership has helped create opportunities for students to begin college, prepare for careers and pursue new possibilities without leaving their communities.

"The one thing that is non-negotiable, that has been the cornerstone between Lee College and the partnerships with the school districts here at this campus, is students first," said Superintendent Tim Bartram, speaking on behalf of the center's managing board. "That has never changed."

Lee College President Jacob Atkin said the center represents what can happen when communities and educational institutions work together toward a common goal.

"Today, we're celebrating more than just a 10-year anniversary," Atkin said. "We're celebrating the realization of the vision that is possible when several entities come together for the greater good of the community."

Since opening in September 2016, the center has served more than 2,800 students through its partnerships and has awarded more than 400 certificates and degrees to students in Lee College Education Center pathways. The center has also helped adult learners create new opportunities, including 13 local community members who have earned their GEDs.

The center's impact is built on a commitment to making education accessible close to home. That includes dual credit opportunities that allow high school students to earn college credit while completing their diplomas, as well as technical and workforce training and educational opportunities for adult learners.

State Rep. Janice Holt, a former educator and school board member, emphasized the importance of those opportunities for students.

"It is amazing to me how important it is for kids who are in high school to be able to get a leg up and to get some of these dual credits done," Holt said. "And then also the opportunities for alternative programs. Not everybody is geared for a four-year college program."

During the anniversary celebration, the cities of Liberty and Dayton jointly proclaimed Sept. 10, 2026, as Lee College Education Center - South Liberty County Day, recognizing the center's contributions to educational opportunity, workforce development and the region's future.

The center's first decade also represents a foundation for what comes next. Atkin said Lee College is committed to continuing to adapt to the changing needs of students, employers and communities throughout the region.

That could include expanding workforce training opportunities at the center, creating more pathways for students to develop in-demand technical skills close to home.

“As we celebrate the first 10 years, we can’t do anything but look ahead,” Atkin said.

“The needs for students, for employees, for communities, continue to evolve, and Lee College is committed to evolving in the way that this community needs.”

As the center looks toward its next 10 years, Lee College and its South Liberty County partners remain focused on building on that foundation and creating even more opportunities for students and families throughout the region.