

NC Schools celebrates UP Center Groundbreaking

By KATELYN NORRIS knorris@kystandard.com

May 21, 2024



Nelson County School District broke ground on the UP Center on Friday, celebrating the next steps in the district's industry programs. Student representatives from across the programs along with their instructors shoveled the first heap of soil for the upcoming project.

KATELYN NORRIS/The Kentucky Standard

The Nelson County Area Technology Center celebrated transitioning to the UP Center this summer with last week's groundbreaking ceremony.

In June, the ATC will begin its renovations to become the new and improved UP Center.

accomplishments, hosting a groundbreaking to mark the future of the building and programs. Students, district staff, community members and community partners were in attendance to celebrate the groundbreaking.

“We believe that at Nelson County Schools, the thriving communities will continue to invest in uniquely local opportunities like the UP Center,” NCS Superintendent Wes Bradley said. “We believe that it will be local people investing in local places, and uniting together like our schools continue to do in the Nelson County region. Speaking of the future of the UP Center, it’s also important we think about the people in this room today, who will continue to be creating the future.”

Student ambassadors from each of the ATC programs were represented in the groundbreaking Friday, along with their instructors. Each student sported their red blazer, hard hat and shovel, plunging it into the soil marking the beginning of a new era for the programs.

Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton and Rocky Adkins, Senior Advisor to Gov. Andy Beshear, both spoke to the future of education and industry with the creation of the UP Center. Heaton said in the last few years, the district workforce development has been instrumental to local industries. Adkins said the students are the future, noting the programs they are in today will push them to be the leaders of the future. He said the investment they are making in the community will go on to grow, stating it was a great day to celebrate the hard work.

“These students that are coming out to meet the economy of the future, the technology of the future, and that workforce of the future that’s going to be needed,” Adkins said. “They have the opportunity to stay and live in this community if you so choose. To see skilled trades lifted up

to where they should be and where it's demanded to be and where it's respected to be, that all of us are not trained to go on to four and five- and six-year degrees. Some of us have a skill set that is needed throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky and really throughout the world." Kelsey Berryman, UP Center Director, also unveiled their Level UP Contributors, a monetary commitment to the future of the center, programs and students. Berryman said being a Level UP Contributor means recognizing the impact students will have on the future of the community and how being a Contributor means investing in their futures.

Berryman was proud to announce WesBanco as their first Level UP Contributor, donating \$25,000 to the UP Center. Marilyn Ford, City President for the Heartland Region for WesBanco, was eager to be a part of the future of the center, urging others to "level up" and contribute to the school.

A Level UP Contributor is across five tiers: Lift UP (\$1,000), Excavate UP (\$5,000), Vision UP (\$10,000), Empower UP (\$25,000) and Legacy UP (\$50,000). For more information about becoming a Level UP Contributor visit www.theupfoundation.net.

Also at Friday's groundbreaking, Laura Arnold, NCS Director of Workforce Development, was honored with the 30 Year Eye Community Leadership Award. Since beginning her work with the district, Bradley praised Arnold for her dedication, stating getting to the groundbreaking would not have been possible without her.

"These things don't happen by accident," Bradley said. "We need people fighting for students in Nelson County. And we are here today because of Laura's visionary leadership, without question."

