



## **NEW JASPER COUNTY LEARNING CENTER**

The Jasper County Board of Supervisors and Jones County Junior College have begun plans to answer a need for more jobs in Jasper County. On Tuesday, July 26 at 9:30 a.m., Jones County Junior College will break ground on the new Jasper County Learning Center, to be located on the lot on the corner of U.S. Highway 15 and CR 1521 in Industrial Park in Bay Springs. The public is invited.

JCJC President Dr. Jessie Smith said that the center will “increase access to college education in Jasper County.”

Jasper County Board of Supervisor President Johnny Rowell said, “Jones County Junior College is ready to expand. Their campus at Ellisville is packed out and they want us to invest... Let’s invest it in Jasper County. Talking with Dr. Smith, we’ve come up with a plan to build a new [center] where a student here in Jasper County can receive a full associate’s degree without ever having to go to Ellisville. Just think of the economic impact four or five hundred kids will do for our community here in Jasper County.”

Beat Five Supervisor Curtis Gray said, “First of all, I think it’s very important to keep our young people close to home, and with the cost of petroleum is on the rise and transportation and so forth, our young people need jobs. And I think it’ll be a good idea on our part if we can make this happen in Jasper County. It will be beneficial to our young people and they can get a job with higher pay and save in travel each and every day on their vehicles. They can get a college education right here in Jasper County without ever having to leave and turn around and serve their community and build homes here and build our tax revenue.”

The proposed building plan includes a machine lab, petroleum lab, wet lab and computer lab, along with an assembly hall and plenty of parking.

Dr. Smith said that a proposal has been made to move the \$3.5 million Machine Center of Excellence to the Jasper County Learning Center.

Dr. Smith said that the center is going to have an impact on the area. He said that the center will help increase the number of JCJC graduates. “There is a correlation between a higher education and higher

income. When you have more qualified workers, companies spend less on workforce training and are more efficient.”

Beat Three Supervisor Lonnie Thigpen said, “We at the Jasper County Board of Supervisors have heard the public’s cry over jobs in Jasper County. We are very concerned about doing what’s needed for the public in Jasper County. One of the ways we think we can provide for a job is through job training. We have many jobs available here, but we don’t have people properly trained for them, and we have people from outside the county coming in and getting those jobs. So, we think we can provide job training for our people here and put people right here from Jasper County to work so they don’t have to leave Jasper County and work right here at home.

Read more: [The Impact - JCJC Jasper County Learning Center to “increase access”](#)