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### **EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND AT TECHNOLOGY CENTER**

Wynne facility provides place for East Arkansas Community College courses

WYNNE – When East Arkansas Community College officials began to search in 2005 for a new location for their class offerings in Wynne, they found the perfect solution - the Technology Center for the Delta (Tech Center).

The Tech Center was once a K-Mart store left vacant for many years until Cross County economic development leaders decided to use the building for the betterment of their county. Today, hundreds of students utilize the facility for its educational offerings through EACC.

“We were already in the process of looking for a facility there,” said Coy Grace, EACC president. “When the Tech Center became available, it was more attractive due to its location, expanded parking and the amount of space we were able to acquire. That has allowed us to develop classrooms and laboratories. There was a lot of flexibility. Plus, it was located in a mainstream area where other activities are taking place.”

Grace said being housed in the Tech Center allows students from northern areas of the EACC region to attend the school without having to go to the college’s main campus in Forrest City.

“While some students from certain reaches of the counties we serve won’t drive all the way to Forrest City, it has been our hope that they would drive as far as Wynne,” said Grace. “Plus, at the Tech Center, we have the ability to offer daytime courses to those

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who are working full time and couldn't come all the way to Forrest City.”

Prior to locating in the Tech Center, EACC had offered classes at the Wynne School District. However, only night classes were available due to the schedule.

Despite the change in location from the Wynne School District to the Tech Center for its classes, EACC continues a strong working relationship with the school system as well as with the Cross County School District.

“We offer concurrent credit courses to high school students at both Wynne and Cross County School districts,” said Joanne Lawson, EACC coordinator of off-campus programs. “Students can graduate from high school already having a year or more of college credit.”

To take concurrent credit classes, which gives students both a high school and college credit for the course, a student must have the approval of his or her principal. If approved, the student is allowed to leave campus and attend the concurrent credit course at EACC.

For students who want to eventually transfer to a four-year institution, the EACC Wynne site offers most of the classes required for their associate of arts degree through either traditional in-class instruction, compressed video instruction or online class work.

“Students can get most of their basics here,” said Lawson. “The general education courses offered here will transfer to any four-year institution in the state of Arkansas.”

EACC's Forrest City campus offers some programs of study that may be completed entirely at Forrest City, such as its nursing and renewable energy programs. However, before moving to the main campus, students have the opportunity to complete their pre-requisite courses in Wynne without having to make the longer trip. Lawson also added that the EACC Wynne site's staff makes taking courses in Wynne even more beneficial.

“Our instructors really get to know their students,” said Lawson. “Robyn Klerk, our administrative specialist, is very personable and gets to know all of our students and can assist them with whatever they need.”

Lawson said that the Wynne site can also help students with financial aid applications, class scheduling and even with enrolling for courses at the Forrest City site.

Non-traditional students, those students who are older than the typical undergraduate age

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of 18 to 25 who have interrupted their studies earlier in life, make up a big portion of the approximately 300 students who attend the EACC Wynne class offerings each semester.

The number of non-traditional students attending the site also continues to grow, said Lawson.

She also noted that several classes are available in a variety of subjects for retirees.

“We have a lot of classes for retirees,” said Lawson. “We offer Intro to Computers for those who are not familiar with computers or don’t know a lot about them. We also offer Microsoft Word, and an Internet course that teaches people how to surf the web and use e-mail.”

The college also has classes in yoga, as well as conversational Japanese and Spanish. EACC’s Wynne site offers access to a brand new computer laboratory, a mathematics laboratory and special classes in the music department including voice, guitar and piano courses.

Working through the Wynne site has been enjoyable for Lawson, who added that the Cross County Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Corp. staff has been a good co-inhabitant of the Tech Center.

“The Chamber of Commerce and CCEDC have been a great asset to EACC,” she said. “They step in and help direct students to the classrooms and even suggest courses that might be of interest in this area.”

Aaron Stewart, Chamber/CCEDC executive director, added that having a solid educational foundation is crucial to the economic development functions his office performs.

“We have a good relationship with EACC,” said Stewart. “When companies look to locate or even expand in a given community, educational and workforce training opportunities are two of the most important factors they look at before making a final decision. Also, with a number of students coming from outlying areas of Cross County, it makes the EACC Wynne campus a regional hub for education, something that our county benefits from economically when those students eat at our local restaurants and visit our local retail outlets.”

While students from Cross County make up the majority of the EACC Wynne roster, students from locations such as Augusta, McCrory and Earle also attend classes at the Tech Center facility.

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For additional information on EACC, its Wynne site and class offerings, visit [www.eacc.edu](http://www.eacc.edu).