Early construction of the facility rotunda, which is the central point of the Secondary Center.

Although the school has been open for two years, it is still being discovered and sought out as a model. “We are getting more and more businesses and other schools visiting. Sometimes, they don’t always know where we are located; but before too long, they’re setting up a tour,” said Ronald A. Cassidy, C-TEC superintendent.

As these visitors walk through the building, they learn about the clean inside air (air quality is monitored in every classroom), paint without fumes, chairs made of totally recycled products and waterless urinals. Hidden in the back of the building they’ll find a composting pile, 250 newly-planted trees (a total of 1,060 shrubs and trees on the entire property) and a storm-water retention pool.

The Color of Money—Green

The decision to go green was well researched given a tough economy when schools are facing financial concerns. Rick Orr, facilities manager for C-TEC, said the benefits are tangible: Constructing and renovating buildings that meet environmental standards may cost more in the short term compared to meeting regular building codes and standards. However, just how costly depends on the selection of materials, what is done, the size of the building and other factors.

“Helping people become aware of why a school would spend more money up front is a huge part of this process,” Orr said. “The message has to be this: Going green is a long-term view and the most responsible thing to do—for the students, environment and taxpayers.”

According to Orr, there were three primary reasons the district went green: long-term financial and energy savings; a healthier environment; and environmental stewardship. He invested considerable time in documenting operational costs for the previous building and researching the rationale behind the green construction. The decision to go green didn’t happen overnight, Orr said. In 1998 he observed a sharp rise in the cost of utilities. That year, electricity and water bills reached a total of $200,000. Minor actions, like tightening faucets and turning off lights, brought a 15 percent savings the following year.

At the same time, Cassidy looked at enrollment, especially the adult population. The current facility could not accommodate the needs. Plus, new Ohio academic standards, particularly in science, necessitated additional room for high school classes. Career and technical education offerings at satellite locations helped, but with 700 high school students and 3,900 adult students served annually, Cassidy can’t attribute the increase in student attendance specifically to the healthier internal environment; but there has been improvement. The student attendance rate in 2005, prior to the new facility, was 93 percent. In 2008, the rate was 96 percent. Faculty and staff health insurance costs also decreased 11 percent in the first year in the new building.

Breathe Deeply—

Attendance Improves

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Waste Not, Want Not

C-TEC requested that no soil leave the property during the construction, Cassidy said. “Instead, it was utilized to enhance the landscape features by mounding,” he notes. “This enabled us to save signifi-

BY ANGIE KRALL

Driving by the one-story facility on the quiet residential street in rural Ohio, a visitor would never guess the environmentally friendly conservation strategies behind the construction of the Career and Technology Education Centers (C-TEC) of Licking County in Newark, Ohio. But one step inside the building, opened in 2006, and it’s another story. Inside, one is greeted by plenty of natural light, pure, monitored airflow and cool earth tones. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by the U.S. Green Building Council proudly hangs on the wall.

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Fuel efficiencies and recycling enabled students and staff to feel a part of the process and ambassadors of a green environment.

Culinary Arts
For electricity instructor Greg King, there is a larger mission for practicing and teaching greenness to his students—industry competitiveness.

“The construction business is a green business,” he said. “This is the direction our industry is going; my students need to be on the cutting-edge of that awareness.”

C-TEC juniors in Holton's environmental science classes are developing a plan to encourage more students and staff to live green. This includes a campaign to stimulate overall awareness of the effects of various practices on the environment, such as turning off computers and recycling the paper, plastic, metal and cardboard used in classrooms. The class has taken this process seriously. They have formed an Environmental Club which now has three committees: teach, live and help.

Teach—Committee members will be involved in activities that educate others (students, staff, community) about environmental issues. Members are in the process of developing a schoolwide theme and logo content for the club.

Live—Committee members will be involved in activities that promote green living at C-TEC and foster the development of lifelong skills for environmentally conscious living. Students are developing a schoolwide recycling plan for paper, plastic, glass, metal and cell phones.

Help—Committee members will plan community service activities that help make our environment a better place. The club is participating in the Licking County Adopt-a-Road Program, and will be selecting an animal cause to support through their various activities.

Protecting Our Students’ Futures
Cassidy expressed his appreciation to the board of education, advisory committees, staff, students, parents and community members who understood the value of the decision to build a green facility and support it.

“Our community realizes that the decision to go green strongly supports the district’s vision about creating community-minded citizens, and that all students can learn in a safe and structured environment,” he said. “We have a responsibility for our environment,” said Cassidy. “If we all keep going at the rate we are, we’re leaving the very students we’re educating with a serious problem.”