

Office of Marketing and Communications  
911 Boling Highway  
Wharton, Texas 77488

800.561.9252, ext. 6322  
Office: 979.532.6322  
Fax: 979.532.6493

## **FULL SPEED AHEAD**

*WCJC's Johnson Health Occupations Center project moves forward*

WHARTON, TEXAS – A \$6.5 million project to expand and renovate Wharton County Junior College's Johnson Health Occupations Center is moving ahead as scheduled.

Despite inclement weather, work has progressed on a new 18,000 square foot addition being constructed on the facility's north side. The project began in June of 2017, with a formal groundbreaking ceremony held on Oct. 26, 2017.

The current status of the new addition:

- Exterior walls are complete
- Damp-proofing has begun
- Roofing will soon be complete
- Structural steel is finished
- Interior walls are 65 percent done
- Electrical and plumbing is underway
- Mechanical has begun

The new addition is only the first phase of the project. A second phase entails the large-scale remodeling of the existing 34,000 square foot structure. That portion of the project will begin in May of 2018 and is anticipated to be completed by the start of the Fall 2018 semester.

The WCJC Board of Trustees awarded a construction bid last May. The cost of the project is around \$6.5 million, not including equipment and furnishings.

WCJC President Betty McCrohan said the renovation and expansion of the Johnson Health Occupations Center will enable the college to offer the cutting-edge training needed for successful employment in the healthcare field. The Johnson Health Occupations Center contains the bulk of the college's Allied Health programs, which include Associate Degree Nursing, Dental Hygiene, Health Information Technology, Human Services, Physical Therapist Assistant, Radiologic Technology, Vocational Nursing and Pre-baccalaureate Nursing.

“Through this project, we can continue to offer students hands-on training opportunities that will provide them with the edge they need to be successful in these competitive careers,” McCrohan said.

McCrohan said the college received crucial financial support that helped make the project a reality.

“None of this would have been possible if not for the generosity of the Johnson Foundation and the Gulf Coast Medical Foundation,” McCrohan said. “We are extremely grateful for their support.”

Once the renovations are completed, the college's Emergency Medical Services program will relocate from the LaDieu Technology Center to the Johnson Health Occupations Center.

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