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Harrisburg CUSD #3 Board of Education Celebrates Ribbon Cutting for the New Rick J. Lane Career and Technical Education Building

HARRISBURG, IL — The Harrisburg CUSD #3 Board of Education recently held an official ribbon-cutting ceremony to signify the opening of the new Rick J. Lane Career and Technical Education (CTE) building, marking a major milestone in expanding hands-on vocational opportunities for local students.

The new facility directly supports the district's motto, "Every Child, Every Chance, Every Day," ensuring that all students graduate high school fully prepared to enter the workforce, further their trade skills, or pursue higher education. Data from the Illinois School Report Card shows that students who complete at least one CTE course achieve higher graduation rates compared to the general student population.

Prior to the opening of this facility, enrollment in CTE courses across the district was limited. Automotive classes, building trades, and welding were all forced to share a single, restricted shop space, which capped student participation. The newly constructed building will serve as the primary home for the building trades program. In turn, relocating building trades creates vital space in the original facility, allowing the automotive, mechanics, and welding programs to expand their footprint, enroll more students, and broaden the technical skills taught.

According to Harrisburg CUSD #3 Superintendent, Dr. Amy Dixon, "This new space will be invaluable in helping us expand opportunities for our students. This is the first step in being able to build homes within our community, a goal identified by community stakeholders."

The building sits on land formerly owned by the Lane family and is named in memory of the late Rick J. Lane, a respected longtime construction business owner in the community.

In a local 1956 newspaper article, former Board President George O. Davenport stated, "If our students do not plan to go to college, we should do our best to equip them for jobs when they

get out of high school.” The opening of the Rick J. Lane CTE building continues to fulfill this long-standing goal within Harrisburg Unit 3, seven decades later.

Constructing the facility and bringing the project to fruition was a top priority identified by the district's Strategic Planning Committee. The entire project, including the salary for the building trades instructor, was funded by a \$1,167,964 grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), delivering a state-of-the-art educational space at no additional burden to local property taxpayers. This grant is a part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) and specifically targeted communities impacted by fossil fuel plant or coal mine closures.

For more information about CTE programs or district initiatives, please contact Harrisburg CUSD #3 administrative offices.