

# Officials cut ribbon on LMC tech center

By RALPH HEIBUTZKI  
HP Correspondent

BENTON TOWN-SHIP — Lake Michigan College's Hanson Technology Center officially opened for business Tuesday at its Napier Avenue campus with a firm focus on the next generation of manufacturers.

Among them is Jeremy Lausch of Buchanan, who's finishing four years of classes — and an apprenticeship at Accudyne Mold in Stevensville — at the end of the year.

"It's beyond what I imagined it would be," said Lausch, as he looked around the roughly 43,000-square-foot building. "It's going to allow students a broader spectrum of study. Right now, especially in my field, there are more people looking to employ, than employees."

Newly-minted mold-makers like Lausch, 24, can expect to earn about \$14 to \$16 an hour locally, and up to \$30 to \$40 an hour in urban areas like Chicago, he said.

"The sky's the limit in this trade," he said.

Lausch was among the guests who spoke during a brief ribbon-cutting ceremony to open the building, whose name was chosen in honor of local industrialist Merlin Hanson and his wife, Carolyn.

Other speakers included Acting President Bob Harrison, LMC Board Chairwoman Mary Jo Tomasini, Cornerstone Alliance Executive Director Rob Cleveland, Edgewater Automation President Rick Blake and Vickers Engineering President Matt Tyler.

The building replaces the M-TEC along Klock Road, where most of LMC's manufacturing technology programs were housed until the college closed it in December 2014.

After the ribbon-cutting, the center remained open from 2 to 6 p.m. for tours of the building, where prospective students, parents and residents could check out its equipment — and ask questions about a career in manufacturing technology. Fall semester classes start Sept. 6.

LMC finished the new center this month for about \$12.1 million, which the college partially offset with contributions from private donors, who got their first extended look at it during a kickoff breakfast, and private tour.

The center is intended to house all of LMC's manufacturing technology programs under one roof while providing an atmosphere that's designed to encourage creativity and collaboration.

Those programs include energy production, engineering, mechatronics, machine tool, skilled trades, and welding production — whose required skills come in sharp contrast to traditional images of manufacturing careers, said Ken Flowers, LMC's dean of career and workforce edu-