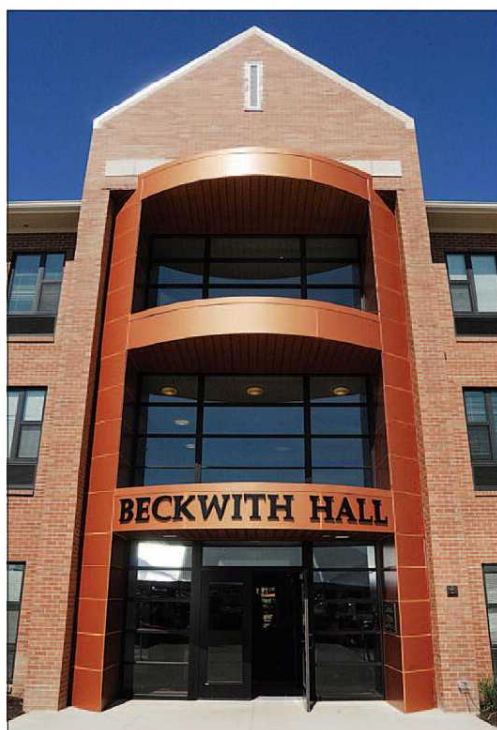




# Campus living



Don Campbell / HP staff

**TOP:** Visitors on Friday tour one of the four-bedroom apartments in Beckwith Hall, the new residence hall at Lake Michigan College's Napier Avenue campus. **ABOVE:** Beckwith Hall will host up to 188 LMC students. Officials say about 80 percent of accommodations are spoken for.

## LMC officials sense success, and a little fun, in first dorm

By RALPH HEIBUTZKI  
HP Correspondent

**BENTON TOWNSHIP** — Lake Michigan College officials lauded what they call a new era Friday with the grand opening of Beckwith Hall, the first on-campus student housing complex in its history.

For LMC, the 188-unit facility's completion represents "one of those monumental moments where things change in the future," LMC President Bob Harrison said.

"This is not just the dedication of a building," Harrison said. "With the opening of Beckwith Hall, we take a different place in the higher education hierarchy."

Beckwith's construction makes LMC the seventh Michigan community college to offer student housing. The idea seemed a long way away when Board of Trustees Chairman Dr. Da-

vid Maysick first came to the Napier Avenue campus in 1979.

"In that day, this was not even a dream in anyone's mind," Maysick said. "What a tremendous opportunity for our college. It's going to change our college forever."

LMC broke ground last July for the 64,000-square-foot building, which features 41 four-bedroom suites, and 12 two-bedroom suites.

Students arriving at Beckwith this fall will be greeted by fully furnished apartments with everything needed for a livable campus experience — such as a dining table and chairs, dishwasher, full-sized refrigerator, stove and oven.

The inclusion of these features represents a significant departure from the traditional image of campus housing, as LMC's vice president of student services, Clint Gabbard, noted in his own brief comments.

"We apologize right up front for the cognitive dissonance that we've created because every possible mental picture that you have of 'dorm living' has gone out the window," Gabbard said.

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“Animal House,’ this is not. Nor is it like anything I ever experienced, in any residence hall I’ve ever lived in.”

However, though these amenities are impressive, LMC had a larger vision in mind when it began developing Beckwith Hall, Harrison said.

“This cements us – in the minds of the region – that we can offer our students a real collegiate experience by letting them live on campus, have some fun, and engage with our commuter students in ways that we never envisioned,” he said.

Beckwith Hall’s long-term purpose is to provide a positive, supportive environment that ensures students’ success, Gabbard said.

“We want you to be reassured that we’re dedicating ourselves to making this a place where living and learning happen. We intend Beckwith Hall as a launching ground for students who’ll finish degrees that they start,” he said.

The new complex is named for Clarence G. Beckwith, who served as the first dean of LMC’s predecessor – the Junior College of Benton Harbor – when it opened in 1946,

according to Friday’s program notes.

When the institution’s name changed to the Benton Harbor Community College and Technical Institute in 1954, Beckwith served as its first president until he retired in 1962, after a 16-year career.

In many ways, the project represents a tribute to the vision and drive that Beckwith showed in ensuring LMC’s success, Maysick said.

“I think it’s tremendous to see the name ‘Beckwith’ on this building. He had a tremendous amount to do with the success of the college,” he said.

Several Beckwith family members were on hand, including the late president’s daughter, Carolyn Beckwith Schultz – who graduated from the University of Michigan, and now lives in Ann Arbor, Harrison said.

Schultz’s brother, Glen Beckwith, lives in Kissimmee, Fla., but was unable to attend Friday’s ceremony for health reasons.

Schultz described herself as “feeling really humbled to be here because I didn’t do anything,” she said.

“I’m awed and thankful – not for myself, but for the sake of the family name. It’s (Beckwith Hall) something that offers an opportunity for students in a modest town situation, for kids to



Don Campbell / HP staff

**Carolyn Beckwith Schultz, the daughter of Clarence Beckwith, speaks during a ribbon-cutting ceremony Friday for Lake Michigan College’s first residence hall. Clarence Beckwith served in leadership roles for LMC’s predecessors.**

go on to school,” Schultz said. “It’s the next step in our school’s history.”

LMC spokeswoman Laura Kraklau said about 80 percent of Beckwith’s accommodations are spoken for, though students must first undergo the registration and application process before they’re assigned housing.

The project cost about

\$8.3 million, which the college developed with Student Suites, a company that specializes in developing campus housing.

CPM Construction was the general contractor, and Beaudoin Electrical Construction did the electrical work. Hollis & Miller served as the project’s architect, while Whirlpool Corp. furnished the appliances.