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Cleveland County celebrates education and behavioral health facility with open house

NORMAN, OKLA. — The culmination of years of planning and dedication were marked today during a brief ceremony and open house at the Education and Behavioral Health Extension of the Alan J. Couch Juvenile Detention Center.

“Today marked a significant milestone for juvenile justice not only at Cleveland County, but for the state,” said Cleveland County Commissioner Rod Cleveland, who called the latest addition to the Couch Center’s renovation a “move that puts our county and this facility on the cutting edge for addressing crime at its root.”

In November 2019, Cleveland County voters overwhelmingly supported the county’s one-eighth-percent Public Safety Sales Tax which included the multi-million-dollar upgrade of the juvenile detention center. Groundbreaking commenced in January 2022, and on May 31, 2023, the community celebrated the successful completion of Phase I, which primarily focused on a complete renovation of the detention side of the facility.

“This new Education and Behavioral Health Extension is a significant aspect of the comprehensive renovation of our juvenile-justice facility,” said County Commissioner Jacob McHughes. “The newly renovated space is poised to make a positive impact on the lives of the people of Cleveland County through providing education and behavioral health services to justice-involved and at-risk youth and families.”

Collaborating closely with Cleveland County, our local judges and Community Works professionals identified services that would be of the most value for youth and their families outside of the detention facility. Community Works has operated the facility since 2006.

“The Education and Behavioral Health Extension is designed to provide expanded access to GED education, jobs training, and counseling services for at-risk youth and their families,” said County Commissioner Rusty Grissom. “This strategic initiative underscores our commitment to the people of Cleveland County, recognizing the importance of addressing issues that lead to a pattern of criminal activity later in life. We want these young people to grow up to become productive, contributing members of society.”

Cleveland County extends its gratitude to the community for its unwavering support throughout this transformative journey.

“Today, we celebrate not just a renovated facility, but a renewed commitment to the well-being and future prospects of our youth,” McHughes said.

Cleveland agreed, adding that the project would not have been possible without valued partnerships with local experts.

“We truly appreciate the Cleveland County judiciary, bar association, and nonprofit entities in addressing at-risk juveniles,” he said.