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Making an Economic Impact: Cedarville's \$21 Million Summer Projects Focus on Students

CEDARVILLE, OHIO -- While most college campuses typically take on a quieter atmosphere when classes are not in session during the summer months, [Cedarville University](#) is anything but quiet. That's because the university has more than 45 construction, renovation, and improvement projects all over campus.

With Cedarville University spending more than \$21 million this summer on its long list of projects, it is becoming a major economic generator in the Miami Valley and statewide. These projects total an economic impact of \$37 million and represent Cedarville's investment in its students and the growth of the university.

From the continued construction of the new Lorne C. Scharnberg Business Center to flooring replacements in the Dixon Ministry Center, Engineering and Science Center and Centennial Library, construction crews have been busy at one of the largest private Christian universities in the nation. The high volume of projects this summer is unprecedented and is the result of Cedarville's successful [One Thousand Days Transformed: The Campaign for Cedarville](#) initiative that's received \$132.4 million in financial commitments toward its \$175 million goal.

"There's no doubt this has been the busiest summer for construction and renovation projects at Cedarville University in a very long time — maybe in the history of the university," said Rod Johnson, associate vice president for operations. "This work reflects our growth as a university.

The campus work also reflects the commitment of Cedarville's administration to provide the best learning facilities and campus experience for its students when classes begin in August.

Some of the work, like repairing parking lots and sidewalks, repairing roofing, installing a new HVAC unit in the Centennial Library and performing routine preventative maintenance, will be more invisible to the campus community. But students will notice the new Panda Express restaurant in the Stevens Student Center that will open in August and the new furniture in several residence halls.

While construction on college campuses indicates growth, it also provides a significant economic boost to the local and state economies. According to the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), a 2019 study showed construction in Ohio alone contributed \$26.2 billion to the state's gross domestic product (GDP). Construction is a known entity to contribute economic growth, both locally and nationally.

A 2021 article by [Hogan Homes](#) highlighted the benefit of construction on the local economy. The article stated that the construction industry provides jobs and wages and keeps the income in the community, while also providing economic value as construction workers make purchases that affect the community's economy.

In fall of 2022, Cedarville broke ground on its largest current construction project, the Scharnberg [Business Center](#). This 65,000-square-foot, \$40 million project will provide business, communication and cybersecurity students with classrooms and labs that will enrich their learning experiences. The facility will also offer an Einstein Bagels shop for students, faculty and guests. The building is scheduled to open in August 2024.

The Scharnberg Business Center will also have a 500-seat auditorium that will be used for large gatherings and classes, as well as serve as an overflow for Cedarville's daily chapel program. Currently, the chapel inside the Dixon Ministry Center seats 3,400 students.

With the university's 14th consecutive record enrollment, and another record expected in August, university leaders are also preparing for more students living on the largely residential campus. That's why Cedarville is near to completing Morton Hall, a residence hall that will open in August, while also constructing a housing village along the southwestern edge of campus that will provide housing for 350 students.

Cedarville's enrollment has steadily climbed from 3,038 in 2009 to 5,082 last year. Projections from the admissions department for 2023-24 show another record enrollment with a total number of undergraduate, graduate, and dual-enrollment students surpassing 5,100 for the first time in history.

All of this work is why there seemingly has been more construction workers on campus during the first part of the summer than staff members or individuals from outside camps. In fact, on one day recently, there were 115 construction workers and contractors on campus focusing on just five of the 45 projects.

Cedarville University, as evidenced by the myriad of construction and renovation projects currently underway, is a university that is making a difference in the lives of its students and Ohio's economy.

Located in southwest Ohio, [Cedarville University](#) is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 5,082 undergraduate, graduate, and dual-enrolled high school students in more than 175 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is one of the largest private universities in Ohio, recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, high graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and the #4 national ranking by the Wall Street Journal for student engagement. For more information about the University, visit cedarville.edu.

Written By Caroline Tomlinson

Photo Cutlines: All photos taken by Scott Huck

1. Construction of the Lorne C. Sharnberg Business Center is moving closer to completion. The Business Center will open in August 2024.

2. A larger patio for students, alumni, and guests outside of the Stevens Student Center takes shape next to Cedar Lake at Cedarville University

3. The new patio is located between the Stevens Student Center and the new Scharnberg Business Center

4. Much work was done on Centennial Library, including a new HVAC unit, new carpet, and paint on the interior walls.

5. A new residence hall is now under construction along the southwest side of campus.