

# Groundbreaking held for University Center

By Joyce Russell  
Courtesy of the NWI Times

PORTAGE | Education partners in the new University Center-Portage see the new building as a model for seamless education in the city and region. Ivy Tech Community College Northwest Region Chancellor J. Guadalupe Valtierra said Thursday during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new building the University Center will be a place for students to come, attend a class or two, get acquainted with his school or its partners and move forward with their education.

"It is wonderful. But we need to think of this as a starting point," Valtierra said.

Valtierra said Ivy Tech is already offering classes at the Portage Adult Education Center, but those classes will be transitioned over to the new building once it is completed in June 2012.

Ivy Tech, Purdue University North Central, Indiana University Northwest and Valparaiso University are slated to partner to offer classes in the nearly 32,000-square-foot building. WorkOne will also be moving to the building. Stephen Turner, vice chancellor for administration for PNC, said they are working on academic programming to be offered in the 12 classrooms.

"We want to offer meaningful classes," said Turner, adding that PNC is the largest provider of dual credit classes for high school students.

"We want to make sure we are consistent (in programming), but not step on each other's toes," said Valtierra, adding it will be a "true model of seamlessness" in providing higher education.

Rich Piazza, with SEH, said work will begin in earnest next week on the \$6.1 million project.

"This is a dream come true," Mayor Olga Velazquez said. "It has been talked about through several administrations to provide the opportunity to bring together several institutions for higher learning in the city."

