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**YMCA Breaks Ground on New Facility**

On Tuesday morning, dozens of Muncie community members gathered to witness the groundbreaking for the new Y facility. Currently, the Muncie Y has two locations, one downtown and one on the northwest side, which have increasingly needed updates and greater access to the community. Now, the Y is combining the two locations and constructing a state-of-the-art, 73,000 square foot facility.

The vision is for a community gathering space, centered around wellbeing. The Y will be partnering with IU Health, Ivy Tech, Ball State, Open Door, and other community partners to provide a well-rounded approach to wellness. According to President and CEO Chad Zaucha, the Y is on a mission to “Adapt to the changing needs of our community and remain relevant.”

The new facility will be located next to Muncie Central High School near the McKinley Neighborhood, which has received significant investment from the City. Mayor Dan Ridenour explained that when the Y selected their new location, the City decided to focus the READI grant towards infrastructure improvements, and expanding the downtown boulevard all the way to the Cardinal Greenway. “We shifted our focus to this particular area…it’s a key centerpiece for Downtown, the McKinley Neighborhood, and Muncie Community Schools,” Mayor Ridenour stated at the groundbreaking.

“Dan and the City have just been amazingly supportive of us and everything we’ve done,” commented Mike Lunsford, who served as the co-chair for the silent fundraising campaign for the new Y. The committee has raised $29.6 million and plans to raise 1.36 more, with First Merchants Bank offering a dollar-for-dollar match up to $1 million.

Construction is estimated to take about 19 months, and will be completed by Weigand Construction. This will be Weigand’s 30th YMCA project. “This is what can happen when we collaborate,” stated Dr. Keith O’Neil. “The beneficiaries will be the children, the families, and the community at large.” 