

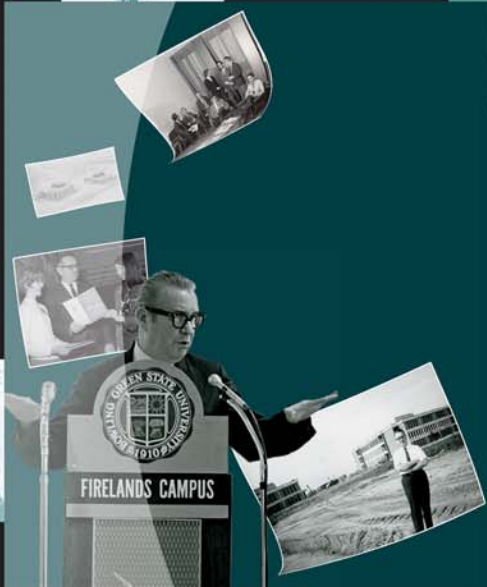
A Window on History

at

BGSU® Firelands

Celebrating





Thousands of students have received degrees, taken courses, attended workshops and received technical training at BGSU Firelands since it opened its doors on September 25, 1968.

Today, BGSU Firelands, located at One University Drive in Huron near the intersection of Ohio Route 2 and Rye Beach Road, within easy commuting distance of most communities in north-central Ohio, continues the tradition of meeting the diverse educational needs of the residents of Erie, Ottawa, Huron, Lorain, Sandusky and Seneca counties.

Introduction

The opportunity for these residents to attend an institution of higher learning exists today because of the wholehearted effort of area citizens to answer a challenge by the Ohio Board of Regents. In November 1964, citizens of The Firelands learned that the Ohio Board of Regents had included Sandusky in a list of recommended cities for a university branch. If a capital improvement bond issue sponsored by Governor James A. Rhodes were to be passed, \$7.5 million would be designated for permanent branch campuses in four areas of the state, including Sandusky.

Led by the Sandusky Chamber of Commerce Education Committee and the Exchange Club of Sandusky, voters began an active campaign to pass the issue that could ensure an institution of higher learning in their backyard. In a statement from the Ohio Board of Regents in February 1965, members of the community learned that a two-year state university branch would cost about 2.4 million and 25 percent of the cost (\$600,000) would have to be raised locally.



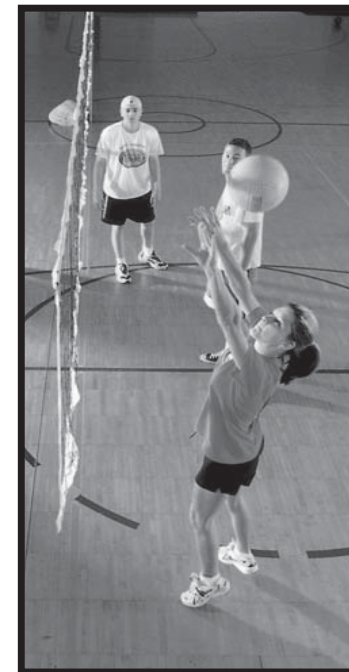
In March, a local committee was granted a non-profit corporation charter and the Committee on Educational Development (COED) came into existence.

Members stated that their purpose was "to promote the establishment of a technical College, a permanent branch of a state university, or other post-high school educational institution in the north-central area of Ohio."

One of COED's first official actions was to campaign actively for the passage of Governor Rhodes' education bond issue. Their efforts were successful; the bond issue passed on May 5, 1965 with strong support from Erie, Ottawa and Huron counties.

COED endorsed the idea of a branch campus in August 1965 by passing a resolution recommending construction of a full-time branch campus instead of a technical school or a community college.

They chose Bowling Green State University as administrator of the local branch. BGSU at the time was operating an Academic Center in Sandusky High School. Thus, the first steps had been taken to provide Firelands residents with a university branch; the challenge would be to raise the \$600,000 mandated by the Ohio Board of Regents.



In October, a COED finance committee was formed to head fund raising. The financial campaign began officially when Theodore D. Wakefield of Vermilion accepted chairmanship of the committee. The kick-off dinner was held on January 18, 1966.

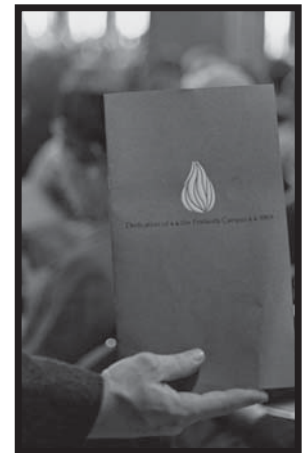
In a pamphlet distributed by COED during this time, the committee stated the educational benefits of this financial investment by citizens of The Firelands as follows:

"The campus will guarantee in the years ahead... that Erie-Huron-Ottawa students will not be denied a college education. Beyond the regular college level programs, the campus will offer technical courses in response to local need. There will also be programs offered for continuing adult education."

COED Campaign

Two months later, not only had The Firelands citizens met their goal; they had exceeded it by more than \$462,000.

"The people of Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties are to be congratulated for their support and the success of the drive," said COED president Dr. Richard A. Jeffrey of Sandusky. "From the Founding Fellows who gave \$1,000 or more to the 22-cent donation received on the house-to-house canvass, each has a personal investment in the future of this university center."





Building A Campus

Building and
site survey
committees

formed during the fund-raising drive chose a 481-acre tract located on the western edge of Huron. The site was bordered by Rye Beach, Boos and Bogart roads. It was approved by the BGSU Board of Trustees and 216.5 acres within the tract were purchased in June 1966. Visnapuu and Gaede, a Cleveland architectural firm, was hired to design the proposed one-building campus. Later the architects would be instructed to design a two-building plan.

The campus was named in October 1966. COED, following consideration of names suggested by the public, chose



"The Firelands Campus of BowlingGreen Green State University" in view of the historical significance of The Firelands area.





On a hot and humid day in July 1967 several people - some formally attired - gathered in a field along the edge of Rye Beach Road in Huron, Ohio to symbolically begin the effort of building a regional campus of Bowling Green State University.

Together, Governor James Rhodes, BGSU President William Jerome, Vice President Kenneth McFall, Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor John D. Millett, State Representative Ethel Swanbeck, as well as several area school children broke ground on what would become the campus of BGSU Firelands.

But before a single brick was set into mortar, pipe could be fitted, or wire strung, work was already underway planning for the curricular and administrative needs of the campus. Before the doors were opened to welcome the first group of students, considerations were underway to develop a broad curriculum of instruction to meet the needs of incoming students and all of the features promised during the fundraising campaign.

Work began on the adaptation of the only two-year program available at the Bowling Green campus: (administrative secretarial). From there, the core work of the university continued by developing a variety of two-year programs, meeting the needs of the community, and satisfying the requirements for the first two years of a bachelor's degree for students wishing to continue their education.

As the construction process developed, classes continued to be offered Sandusky High School, several new faculty members were hired, and the campus advisory board met to help define the institution.

Opening Day

In September 1968, just over a year after the initial ground breaking and a little more than a year and a half from the beginning of the fund raising campaign, BGSU Firelands opened its doors to nearly 600 students. With an initial operating budget of \$419,350 dollars for the 1967-68 school year to

cover the expenses of maintenance, utilities, and faculty and staff salaries, the College began formally offering classes in the two freshly-constructed modern buildings.



The two air-conditioned (a luxury at the time) brick and concrete buildings comprised over 93,000 square feet of office and instructional space. The West Building, the primary

instructional space, was built around 28 classrooms and laboratories, a faculty lounge, 30 faculty offices, three conference rooms, an instructional media center, a language lab, student lockers and lounge, as well as a 90-seat multi-purpose instructional space named the Firelands Room. The East Building (renamed to Foundation Hall in early 2000) housed administrative offices, the campus bookstore, library, mail room, a shipping and receiving dock, and mechanical infrastructure.



A New Direction

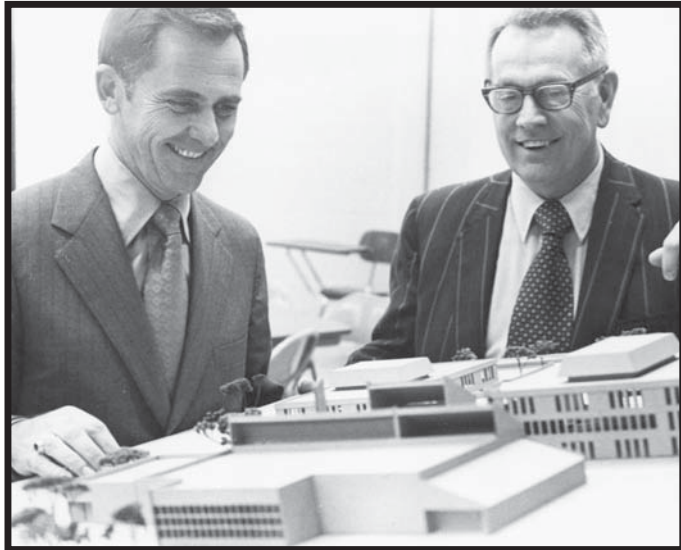
Initially appointed as Director of the campus and charged with the transition from the BGSU Sandusky Academic Center to the Firelands campus, Dr. James H. McBride would become the College's first Dean. Dr. McBride's personal efforts and dedicated service would shepherd the campus through its critical formative years and set the tone for the College's future.

Somewhat ahead of his time, Dr. McBride made it his mission to listen to his students, respect them and their opinions, and foster an environment where the needs and ideas of the students were reflected in the institution. Despite the turmoil of the time period, the competing economic and social pressures of the day, and the constraints confronting area students, Dr. McBride made sure that the promise of Firelands was fulfilled for the people of the surrounding communities who had nurtured and supported the idea of local access to higher education.

His focus on the area communities and commitment to area students who would one day become active and engaged citizens and leaders is perhaps his most lasting and endearing legacy.



It would only be a few short years until the growing technical and development needs of the community as well as the expanding social engagement of the student body would combine in the drive for expansion of the College.



Area businesses were actively seeking individuals with a college-level education in a variety of technical fields ranging from electronics and computer technology to drafting and design. The student population, spurred on by the events of the decade and increased social engagement, sought a center for social activities and events beyond the walls of the classroom.



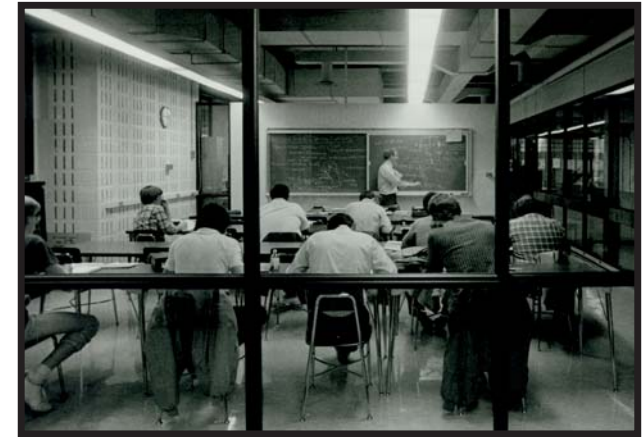
Funded through an investment of over \$2.5 million dollars by the State of Ohio, the planning and preparations for the construction of another new building were launched.

Initially known only as Phase II, the structure which would come to meet the complex needs of the College would eventually be known as the North Building. Included in the plans were a full intercollegiate sized gymnasium completed to accommodate both health and physical education activities as well as large-scale demonstrations, exhibitions, programs and festivals.

North Building Constructed



The new building would also contain a 300-seat auditorium - intentionally planned for flexibility - and designed to become the center of cultural activities on the campus. New instructional spaces would include a Data Processing Center for computer technology instruction, an Engineering Graphics Center, a fully functional machine shop and electronics lab, as well as recreational and lounge facilities for student use.



The building opened in September of 1972 and was immediately embraced by both the student body and the community. The technical and instructional capacity offered as a result of the new facilities, along with the social and cultural opportunities afforded by the creation of a space for student activities and engagement, served to bring together the needs of the community with the vision and mission of the College to expand and develop the educational opportunities of the region.



The Architect: Fred S. Toguchi

Winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize in Architecture, Toguchi often used building mechanical features and utilitarian elements such as heat ducts and large conduit pipes to add to the interest of interior spaces. This "functionalist" aesthetic was often enhanced by the use of color, large skylights and large amounts of glass - all elements of the North Building - as a means of bringing the outdoors into the interior space.



While the College faculty, staff and students supported and regularly staged theatre productions across a range of genres and periods, they had no dedicated space for rehearsals, construction or production. Unfortunately, at the time, the presiding Chancellor over two-year colleges in Ohio was against the construction of any college theatre facilities.



Firelands College Theatre

When the time came to present the plans for the North Building addition, many of the names of the rooms disguised their final intended use. The Auditorium was renamed a Large Group Instruction Hall. The Theatre Workshop and Costume Room were labeled as a Photo Studio and Chair Storage, and the Lighting Booth was labeled as an Audio-Visual room.

Soon after construction was completed on the building, the theatre faculty set to work building a stage and covering the walls with wooden slats to soften the acoustics of the space. The College would have its stage.





Less fleeting than an hour upon the stage is another of the core commitments that the promise of BGSU Firelands offers; being a cultural and artistic center for the surrounding communities. Enhanced by the space afforded to the students and programs alike by the addition of the North Building, the commitment of the College to support and highlight the fine arts continues today.

The Arts

The faculty at BGSU Firelands had been committed to providing accessible courses on art history and technique to students. Whether students were intent on developing their talents and continuing on to study art as

a profession or follow their muses on a more personal level, the faculty valued and supported the creative efforts of the student body.

With the addition of a large student lounge, and eventually The Little Gallery, the College continues to not only present the work and effort of professional artists to the students and community, but also to present the myriad of artistic achievements of the students to the community at large.

Prints, paintings and sculptural pieces created by the students, faculty, staff and area artists serve as opportunities for both instruction and inspiration throughout the halls and grounds of the campus.



Student Activities

With the installment of the first student government at the College, being elected in 1969, the student body of the College demonstrated very early that it was committed to the development of the school as a social being. In spite of the fact that the makeup of the student population often necessitates that student social and recreational activities be organized around the campus' commuter orientation, the commitment of the students to be an active force in the life of the College has remained strong.



While several student organizations have stood the test of time, the face of the student body has reflected the changing interests and ideals of the student population. Student interest and participation in intramural and intercollegiate sports has fielded teams in sports ranging from football, volleyball, basketball and soccer.





Arts and cultural organizations like the Speech Activities Organization - Theatre, choral groups such as the Firebelles, and student publications ranging from an early weekly student newspaper, The Lamp, to small press and poetry readings have served to foster creative growth and expression among the student body.



Students interested in political, social and environmental issues have made their voices heard through a variety of clubs and organizations - bringing with them thoughtful political debates, philanthropic and fund raising drives to benefit the less fortunate and applying lessons learned in the classroom to effect change in the world around them.



Embracing

The BGSU Firelands Instructional Media Center provided responsive and flexible instructional television and media support for faculty, staff and students primarily through an internal eight-channel television system, a two-channel microwave television link with the Bowling Green campus, and a community cable television channel designated the Firelands Knowledge Network.



In August, 1994, the BGSU Firelands Instructional Media Center officially became the IDEACenter (Interactive Distance Education and Conferencing Center). The first official use of the system was August 22 that same year, when about 25 people at BGSU Firelands participated interactively with about 500 people attending the dedication of the new Paul J. Olscamp Hall on the main campus. On August 25, 1994, eight students at BGSU Firelands participated in BA 390, "An Introduction to International Business," the first interactive distance education class in the history of BGSU.



Technology

The College began to develop plans for a World Wide Web site in October 1995. In spring 1996, a preliminary website was up and running. Currently, the College has an extensive web site linked to main campus, its own server, and the following Internet address: <http://www.firelands.bgsu.edu/>

In the 1995-96 academic year, the newly formed Information Technology Committee examined the hardware and software needs of BGSU Firelands. A five-year plan was developed to meet those needs. The Technology Enhancement Project involved the installation of over \$600,000 in hardware and software upgrades in the 1995-96 and 1996-97 academic years. Over \$100,000 in private funds were raised through a Technology Enhancement Fund to provide state-of-the-art computers for faculty. This ongoing initiative makes sure that students, faculty and staff have access to state-of-the-art computer technology to enhance their teaching and learning.

One of the very first completely online courses ever delivered by Bowling Green State University was developed and taught by Dr. Christopher Mruk, a Professor of Psychology at BGSU Firelands.





Lions of Firelands

Standing at the east entrance to the James H. McBride Arboretum, two silent sentinels gaze in the direction of the morning sun. Symbols of courage, strength and wisdom, the lions were carved by hand from Berea Limestone over a two year period. Finished in 1894, the lions are the work of John A. Kramer, a German-born immigrant sculptor and stone mason who lived and worked in nearby Sandusky, Ohio.

Much like their creator, the lion sculptures also travelled a good deal before finally finding their home in The Firelands. For several years they stood as landmarks in the yard of the Kramer family home. During the 1930's the lions were purchased by Sidney Frohman, and placed in the park of his boathouse just west of the Sandusky Yacht Club. They remained there until 1953, when the smaller, crouching lion mysteriously disappeared.





The police were alerted, the surrounding waterways dredged, and the area canvassed, but the half-ton sculpture had vanished without a trace - until nearly two years later.

As it happened, a former President of Bowling Green State University and Sandusky native, Dr. Frank J. Prout - who knew the Frohman family and had heard of the missing sculpture - was then serving as the acting President

of Ohio Wesleyan University. And it was there that he recognized - under a coat of paint in front of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity house - the missing lion statue. He immediately ordered that the lion be returned. And so, in the dead of night, carrying a letter from Dr. Prout to explain themselves to the local police should they be discovered, two trucks full of young men from the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity returned the statue.

In 1966 the Frohman Foundation gave the lions to the family of the late Dr. Dean Sheldon, with the condition that - should the family relinquish ownership of Sheldon's Folly (now Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve) - the Lions be offered to Firelands College. In a letter marking the safe arrival and placement of the lions, Dr. James McBride noted that the lions now gaze across the courtyard at Foundation Hall where - during the very first social event ever held at the College on Sept. 18, 1968 - Charles Frohman relayed the story of The Firelands to some of the very first students to attend the College.



James H. McBride



In 1988, construction and planting began for the James H. McBride Arboretum, a more than twenty-acre site of trees, shrubs, plant collections, ponds, wetlands, walking paths, and open green space located behind the West Building on the BGSU Firelands campus. Currently under long-term development and managed by Erie MetroParks, the arboretum was named for the first dean, Dr. James H. McBride.

The arboretum is renowned for its 40 varieties of crabapple trees which bloom each May in a festival of color and fragrance. In addition to the flowering trees, the arboretum boasts a bevy of colorful flowering plants and distinctive trees, such as rare bald cypress trees and soaring sycamore trees.



Arboretum

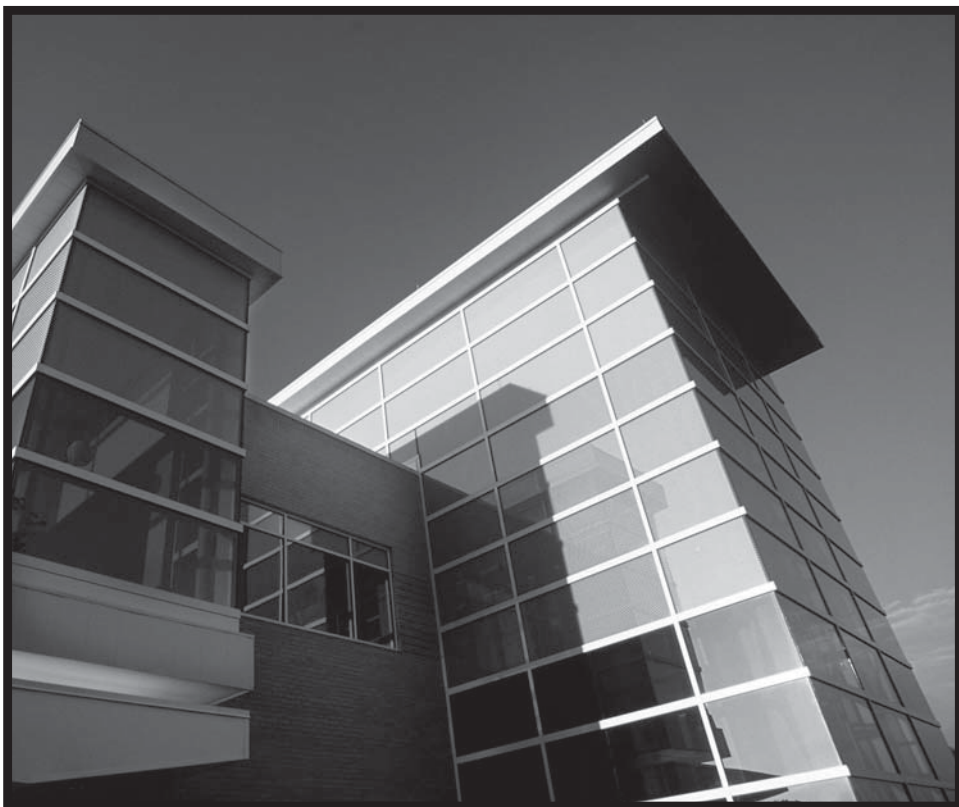
The William J. Parker Lake, which rests at the heart of the arboretum, is surrounded by a paved walking path and bordered by numerous types of native grasses. The two sides of the lake are connected across a narrows by an arched bridge allowing visitors to feed the resident fish and water fowl.

Along the southern bank of the lake is the Deering Family Terrace, an open sitting area which extends out onto the waters of the lake. Scattered along the path surrounding the entire lake are a number of wooden benches which have been donated by area residents and friends of the arboretum, providing spectacular



views of the lake and surrounding gardens. A connecting wilderness trail leads visitors back through the nearby woods, ideal for those looking for a bit more adventure in their hike. Passing through the trellised garden, visitors can follow the mile-long trail as it winds along the edge of a small creek.





Redefining

On February 11, 1998, BGSU Firelands sponsored a Community Open Forum to get local input on a new building, then termed The University Center. Mr. George Mayer, former District President of KeyBank, served as general campaign chair. Supported by local community volunteers in Erie, Huron and Ottawa counties, the team set out on the most ambitious fund-raising campaign since the College's founding drive. By the year 2000, over \$2.5 million had been raised and the project was renamed the Cedar Point Center at Firelands College, thanks to a leadership gift of \$1 million from Cedar Point. The

"Walk of Honor" campaign - phase two of the fund raising process - began in 2000. Its goal was to raise \$200,000 for student technology in the new Cedar Point Center at BGSU Firelands.



A Campus

On Friday, September 12, 2003, BGSU Firelands recognized major donors to the Cedar Point Center with a Grand Opening Gala.

The Cedar Point Center, designed by Gordon, Collens, & Bostwick of Cleveland, hosts a variety of junior, senior and graduate courses, non-credit lifelong learning courses, as well as workshops and seminars through the Office of Educational Outreach. These learning opportunities are enhanced by the advanced technology available in this facility. Kids Dream BIG is a new series of offerings from OEO while a local

Elder College Board, working in cooperation with OEO, makes a wide variety of courses and workshops available to citizens 50 and over.



A Strong Foundation

In 1969, Robert Clasen - then the Director of Student Affairs - devoted his time and efforts to making sure that students were kept abreast of campus events, student organizations, as well as resources available to them. Today, one of the newest additions to the campus, the Clasen Welcome Center, bears his name. This repurposing of space, and recommitment to the community is among a myriad of examples of how alumni, faculty, staff and student organizations at BGSU Firelands continue to reinvent and reexamine what the promise of higher education can mean for them.

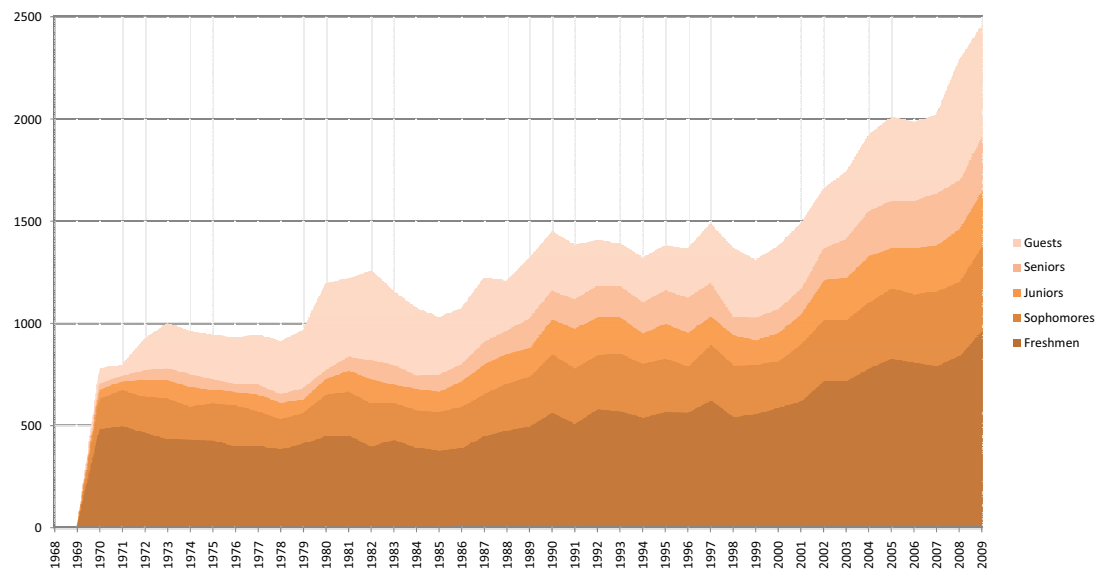
Throughout the history of BGSU Firelands, the College has been a representation of the promise and possibilities which come with access to higher education. As the College has grown physically, this symbol of what the people of the surrounding communities in cooperation with the faculty and staff of Bowling Green State University have accomplished - and are able to accomplish - grows as well.



A Bright Future

Today BGSU Firelands, which moved from being a regional campus to a full college of BGSU in 1976, is an accredited member of the North Central Association of Colleges. As the College continues to grow, faculty and staff work to to strengthen ties to the community and expand and adapt the courses and programs offered. Increases in enrollment, combined with a recommitment to apply best-practice thinking to student support and retention have brought new challenges and new ideas to the fore.

Student enrollment has quadrupled since the first students walked through the doors to the college in 1968. Bolstered by new and creative teaching strategies, expanding partnerships with area stakeholders and advances in technology BGSU Firelands continues to offer the community that built and continues to support the college a wide array of educational opportunities for the benefit of the Firelands region.



The Firelands

The history of The Firelands dates back to the Revolutionary War when Connecticut residents were given land grants in what is now Huron and Erie counties and the townships of Danbury in Ottawa county and Ruggles in Ashland county.

On May 10, 1792, in response to the appeals of Connecticut settlers whose properties had been burned and pillaged by the British (1777-1781), the General Assembly of Connecticut designated as restitution 500,000 acres of land (that belonged to the state) at the western end of the Connecticut Western Reserve. The land was divided among 1,870 people in proportion to their respective losses. This area was called the "Sufferers' Lands" or "Fire Lands" because the principal losses had been by fire.