• L&T staff report

The Liberal High School Career Technical Education hosted a community event on Thursday in which more than 300 community professionals and educators attended. Professionals and teachers from nearby communities were also in attendance.

CTE department head Mariah Cline welcomed the large group in the LHS cafeteria, before an address from Kansas State Department of Education Assistant CTE Director Jay Scott. Scott addressed the importance of Career Technical Education to the state of Kansas, and the educators within that department.

Groups were then broken up by pathway and led by advisory council leaders to their meeting place. During their breakout session, groups members introduced themselves and discussed the following questions: How can we get Southwest Kansas youth to return to this area for work? How do we give students hands-on experience in your field of expertise? What do those opportunities look like? What soft/technical skills are necessary for students to be college and career ready?

After groups collaborated answers and ideas, they returned to the cafeteria to share their main ideas from group discussion. Prizes were handed out to attending council members, as they enjoyed refreshments prepared by the FACS department.

“This was an important event for CTE and the community of Liberal,” said Ted Diepenbrock, LHS news adviser and CTE staff member. “It was a big deal last year when 150 people attended. This year, more than 300 people attended, and you could feel the unity in the room as acquaintances, old and new, shook hands and shared ideas about their career pathway.”

The Building Bridges event benefited not only the relationship between community leaders and students, but was a positive event for teachers as well. It will afffect how teachers development curriculum, according to Diepenbrock.

“As advisory council leaders, we are responsible to organize and host a minimum of two advisory council meetings per year,” Diepenbrock said. “By keeping LHS teachers responsible in this regard, we must interact with professionals within the community to strengthen our curriculum and classroom activities.”