

History

Present-day Gadsden State Community College began with the merger of Alabama Technical College, Gadsden State Technical Institute, Gadsden State Junior College and Harry M. Ayers State Technical College.

One of the initial founding institutions of Gadsden State is Alabama Technical College. Established in 1925 as the Alabama School of Trades, it was the first state-operated trade school in the south and is the oldest of Gadsden State's campuses. Now, it is the home to a number of Gadsden State's technical programs, the One Stop Center, the Joe Ford Center and the Alabama Technology Network. It is known as the East Broad Campus.

Gadsden State Technical Institute began in 1960 as the Gadsden Vocational Trade School, a private vocational training school for African Americans. It was founded by Eugene N. Prater, director of the Veterans Continuation Program for Negroes, in response to discontent expressed by black veterans of Etowah County for being denied admission to the all-white Alabama School of Trades. Currently, it is known as the Valley Street Campus and houses the Construction Technology Program, HVACR Program, Certified Nursing Assistant Program, Diagnostic Medical Sonography Program, Therapeutic Massage Program and several academic courses. The U.S. Department of Education designated this institution as a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) in 1997.

Gadsden State Junior College was established in 1965 by an act of the Alabama State Legislature during the administration of Gov. George C. Wallace. The course offerings included professional programs, such as architecture, dentistry, journalism, law, medicine and teacher education, as well as technical programs in management, nursing, secretarial science and data processing. It is currently identified as the Wallace Drive Campus of Gadsden State and is home to academic courses, the Inzer Student Center, Fowler Residence Hall, Wallace Hall Fine Arts Center and Beck Field House and Conference Center.

Harry M. Ayers State Technical College was founded as a trade school by an act of the Alabama State Legislature on May 3, 1963. In 1972, the institution was designated as a technical college offering associate degrees and certificate programs in such fields as accounting, automotive body repair, carpentry and cosmetology, among others. To eliminate duplication of courses, the consolidation of Gadsden State and Ayers State was completed on July 8, 2003. It is now known as the Ayers Campus of Gadsden State Community College.

In August 2002, Gadsden State Cherokee was opened as an instructional site in response to community and governmental efforts to meet the growing educational needs in the region. A new multi-level complex was opened in August 2008, where Gadsden State Cherokee now offers an expanded list of courses for students wishing to earn an associate degree or transfer to a four-year institution. Gadsden State Cherokee also houses an Economic Development Center, the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce and a multi-purpose 2,500-seat arena.