Early Childhood Center groundbreaking celebration
and early literacy conference set for RCC

Years of planning and fundraising for a new Early Childhood Center will come to fruition Oct. 22 when the groundbreaking ceremony for the facility takes place at Rogue Community College’s Redwood Campus.

An early literacy conference, “It’s more than A, B, C’s,” will be also be held in conjunction with the celebration, offering a wide range of free workshops for parents, teachers and caregivers of young children. Fun activities for younger children are also planned.

“All parents and young children --birth to age eight--are invited, along with all early childhood teachers and caregivers,” said Connie Denham, RCC’s Early Childhood Education department head.

Events are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Registration and refreshments begins at 8:30 a.m. with the groundbreaking celebration set for 9 a.m. Keynote speaker Mary Curtis Gramley is a former associate dean in the SOU Education Department and director of the Early Childhood program. Diana Lewis, a Head Start staff member and professional singer will perform and lead songs with children, families and teachers.

Workshops, taught by early childhood professionals, are designed to help parents and teachers use teaching strategies such as talking, singing and playing with language, reading aloud, and storytelling. Other sessions will focus on enhancing children’s literacy through play. Many workshops will be hands-on with participants being able to “make and take” a literacy teaching resource.

Five training hours will be awarded to childcare providers. Information and registration forms are available at http://learn.roguecc.edu/earlychild/literacyconference/ or by calling Community Education at 956-7303. The campus is located at 3345 Redwood Highway, Grants Pass.

Conference sponsors include the Rogue Community College Early Childhood Education Department, Southern Oregon Head Start, Josephine County Early Intervention Services, The Job Council through a grant from Qwest, and the Josephine County Chapter of the Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children.

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The center is a collaborative effort of Southern Oregon Head Start, Josephine County Early Intervention Services, and the City of Grants Pass, with RCC providing the land. RCC crews have been busy clearing and preparing the site. The facility will house some of Head Start’s programs in Josephine County. The lab school will provide teaching, learning and observation opportunities for RCC students. Completion is expected in summer of 2006.

Much of the $1.2 million dollars needed to cover construction costs has been raised through grants, donations, and cookbook sales, but the project still needs financial support, said Denham.

In addition to a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, funding has come from a community development block grant through the City of Grants Pass, and grants from the RCC Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Collins Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, Carpenter Foundation, and others.

For additional information contact Connie Denham, Early Childhood Education department head, 956-7053.

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