Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant will help fund new RCC Early Childhood Center

The Rogue Community College Board of Education accepted seven grants Aug. 16, including a $250,000 challenge grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation toward construction of the college’s new Early Childhood Center.

The board also authorized RCC President Peter Angstadt to implement human resource contracts, including new hires, contract renewals, and terminations. Under previous policy, newly hired employees had to wait until the board held its monthly meeting and formally approved their contracts.

The Early Childhood Center, for which construction is set to begin this year on the Redwood Campus in Grants Pass, got a boost from the Gates Foundation’s Pacific Northwest Program. The foundation has allocated a $250,000 challenge grant contingent upon RCC receiving an additional $950,000 in support.

The center is a collaborative effort by Southern Oregon Head Start, Josephine County Early Intervention Services, the City of Grants Pass, and Rogue Community College. The college is providing the land. Construction is slated to start this fall, and RCC crews have begun clearing and preparing the site.

Much of the $1.2 million dollars needed to cover construction costs has been raised through grants, donations, and other fundraising efforts, but the college is still seeking financial support. In addition to the Gates Foundation, funding has come from a community development block grant through the City of Grants Pass, and grants from the Meyer Memorial Trust, Collins Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation, Carpenter Foundation, and others.

“We are in the final stages of fundraising to complete this project,” said Nancy Maxwell, executive dean of Redwood Campus. “The college and the RCC Foundation will be seeking in-kind and/or cash donations to assist with infrastructure costs such as extending the sewer line, power upgrades, parking lot and fire protection requirements,” she added.

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The center 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 summer 2006. RCC is planning a groundbreaking celebration in October.

In other business the RCC Board accepted the following grants:

- A $15,000 Oregon Community Foundation grant to continue developing a leadership and mentoring program designed to encourage Hispanic youth to attend college. New at RCC this past year, the Oregon Leadership Institute is presented in conjunction with the Oregon Council for Hispanic Leadership. The OLI fosters secondary and postsecondary completion, service learning, and leadership development among Hispanic high school and community college students through mentoring, leadership, career exploration, and teambuilding. The Collyer Hitchcock Family Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation awarded a $3,000 grant, and the Grace Bascom Fund provided $12,000.

- A $30,250 grant award from Lane Community College, acting through the Oregon Small Business Development Center, to provide counseling and training to existing and potential small business owners and operators. The college must provide a cash match of at least $15,125.

- A $18,550 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Fremont-Winema National Forests to complete a high mountain lakes survey.

- A $10,000 grant from the Oregon Department of Education for the annual Southern Oregon Women in Trades Fair and School Outreach. The annual fair provides information to girls and women about nontraditional occupations and opportunities.

- A subgrant of $4,281 from the State Board of Higher Education on behalf of Oregon State University for ground water and surface water resources research in the Williams Creek watershed.

- A $204,167 grant from the Oregon Department of Human Services to provide occupational short-term skills training for students with disabilities. The grant calls for a match of $67,374 from RCC.

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