March 9, 2006

Community input sought on RCC/SOU education center

The public is invited to attend a March 14 planning session for the education center Rogue Community College and Southern Oregon University will build and share in downtown Medford.

SERA Architects, the Portland firm recently hired to design and engineer the facility, will conduct the community meeting from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the RCC Riverside Campus, in the lobby area of G Building, 117 S. Central Ave., Medford.

The meeting is a “charette” or creative process akin to visual brainstorming, used by design professionals to develop solutions to a design problem within a limited timeframe. The public is invited to discuss how the building might serve to interact with the community, what exterior features the building should have to complement the downtown area, and what challenges and opportunities the project will present.

Construction is slated to begin late fall or early winter and be completed by January 2008. The downtown learning center is expected to be between 75,000 and 95,000 square feet and cost an estimated $21.15 million. The building will be located in the block bounded by East Eighth, Ninth, and South Bartlett streets and South Riverside Avenue.

The project is the first of its kind in Oregon and will likely be viewed as a model for future cooperative programs between two- and four-year institutions in Oregon. The building will facilitate dual enrollment for RCC and SOU students by providing a seamless integration of programs and services, college officials say, and will encourage transfer from the community college to the university.

The shared facility also will optimize service to the business community by SOU and RCC combining resources, coordinating work with business partners, and providing a shared location for workforce training, internships, and research. All of these elements are expected to contribute to the economic development of downtown Medford.

Funding for the building comes in part from the Oregon Legislature and from a $24 million RCC capital construction bond measure, approved November 2005 by Jackson County
voters. Last summer, the Legislature approved $5.5 million in bonding authority and $3
million outright in state funding for SOU, and another $4.1 million in state bonding authority
for RCC. Rogue has promised $5.75 million from its bond measure, and SOU is working to
raise $2.5 million.

For additional information contact Mary Louise Doran, executive dean, Riverside Campus,
245-7742, or Lynn Green, development and communications officer, Southern Oregon
University, 552-8467.

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