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RCC and Avista Corp. Collaborate on New Center for Entrepreneurship

MEDFORD — Rogue Community College and Avista Corp. are collaborating to open the Avista Center for Entrepreneurship in early 2013, which will be located at the Higher Education Center in downtown Medford. The Center will help prospective and existing business owners more effectively launch and grow their small businesses. The Center will also be open to traditional community college students working toward an Associate degree or planning to transfer to a four-year institution.

“We have chosen RCC as one of four community colleges in our three-state service area to implement a nationally-recognized entrepreneurship program curriculum,” according to Steve Vincent, Oregon regional business manager for Avista. “The growth of small businesses is a catalyst for economic development. As an energy provider and active community partner, we are interested in enhancing the economic vitality of the communities we serve. We are pleased to partner with RCC to make this program available.”

Rick Leibowitz will serve as the Director of the Avista Center for Entrepreneurship, along with his existing duties as Director of the Rogue Community College Small Business Development Center. He also serves on the National Board of Directors of Sigma Nu Tau, the only academic honor society dedicated to entrepreneurship. “I am excited about this opportunity to partner with Avista in delivering this innovative curriculum,” said Rick Leibowitz. “It focuses on validating business theory with practical business applications. Our classes will be taught by instructors who have real world experience bringing concepts from idea to reality. We also plan to collaborate with a rich network of local resources by working with our partners at SOU, SOREDI and the Sustainable Valley Technology Group. This will help ensure students have broad access to a diverse group of experienced mentors to supplement their entrepreneurial education as they pursue their journey towards success.”

A limited offering of classes will begin in March and full implementation of the program will begin in the summer of 2013. In addition to supporting the offering of classes at the Center for Entrepreneurship, Avista is creating a micro-enterprise loan fund for qualified students who successfully complete the program. For more information about this program, please visit www.launchyourbiz.org.

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