Nov. 20, 2013

Giant flag lowered on RCC Redwood Campus

GRANTS PASS — An 81-foot flagpole located at Rogue Community College, which has flown the largest U.S. flag in the county for almost four decades, has fallen victim to old age.

When a recent inspection revealed serious insect damage to the pole, the college lowered the 15-by-25-foot flag and now intends to remove the pole, according to Bart Van Syoc, director of RCC Facilities and Operations in Josephine County.

“The bugs have gotten to it,” he said. “You can shove a screwdriver 3 ½-inches into the pole.”

The pole is one of two originally used for pole-climbing competitions during timber carnivals on the RCC Redwood Campus, 3345 Redwood Highway, in the mid-70s and early 80s. The carnivals, which spotlighted RCC’s forestry programs and paid tribute to the then-booming timber industry, also featured Jack and Jill bucking and birling (log rolling).

The cost of replacing the flagpole may be prohibitive for the college, according to Van Syoc. A new aluminum pole would run about $7,000 plus $3,000 to erect it, he said.

In hopes of raising enough money to replace the giant pole, the Van Syoc family, whose son Elliot is serving in the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne, has helped establish the Veterans Honor Flagpole fund with a contribution to the RCC Foundation. Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the fund may contact the foundation at 541-956-7327.

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