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College's Dallas Center to have own facility

Students no longer will be housed at the high school

BY GEOFF PARKS
Special to the Statesman Journal

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Beginning in September, high school graduates moving on to the Chemeketa Community College Dallas Center will be able to take their classes right outside the high school building.

The college's Dallas Center building is planned for the southeast corner of the high school's parking lot.

Since vacating its home in the Academy Building two years ago, Chemeketa Dallas Center has held day classes in the high school's extra classrooms and evening classes in the school's computer and science labs.

The center was moved from the Academy Building in 2004 because "It was a smart move for the Dallas School District and Chemeketa to find a way to use limited public resources to serve the small rural communities of our district," said Janine Moothart, the Dallas Center's director. "By using existing facilities at the high school, we got the most bang for the buck."

But sharing buildings has had a downside, she said. Enrollments dipped, classes had to be cut or curtailed and the arrangement was hard on two groups of students.

High school graduates moving to the two-year college after graduation had to attend classes in their high school building, and older adults attending Chemeketa had to compete for space with current high-schoolers in hallways, break rooms and parking lots.

The new 7,100-square-foot structure will house the Dallas Center's staff offices and a student-services area, along with a computer and science laboratory classroom, a learning center and a multipurpose room.

"We still will rent classroom space and our science labs to the college for its evening classes," said Keith Ussery, Dallas High School's principal. "The only thing that will end is the daytime occupancy."

After the building is constructed, high-schoolers will have a more realistic feeling of going to college because they will have a separate building, Ussery said, and "older patrons won't then have to come into a high school and brave the activities that go on there just to take a college class."

Construction plans were generated this year with a goal of adding offerings to the professional-technical courses, the lower-division transfer program and the community education classes.

Moothart said that the construction of the center was not contingent on the passing of Chemeketa's bond-levy request, rejected by voters in November. But although the Academy Building sold for \$1 million -- which is earmarked for the new construction -- the new center's total cost will approach \$1.8 million.

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A rendition shows what the new Dallas Center near Dallas High School is expected to look like.



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Janine Moothart is the director of the Chemeketa Community College Dallas Center.

Construction plans

Chemeketa Community College's Dallas Center construction is expected to begin in spring 2007, barring delays. A grand opening is planned for Aug. 31, said center director Janine Moothart. The 7,100-

"We don't have any quick answer for where that \$800,000 will come from, but it will be raised," she said.


Linda Kaufmann, an advising specialist at the Dallas Center, said she's excited about developing student services at the center.

"In addition to expanding our English Now (for limited-English speakers) program and developing GED services in the Independence-Monmouth area, we'll be able to revive some community-education classes here," she said.

Those noncredit community-education classes "sort of went by the wayside" when the college programs left the Academy Building, Moothart said.

"We now want to add classes and provide more and more offerings each year."

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square-foot building will be in the southeast corner of Dallas High School's parking area at 1340 SE Holman.

The building will house staff offices, a student advising area and three classrooms. It will serve students in professional-technical programs, the lower-division transfer program and noncredit community education classes.

Other Polk County sites that hold Chemeketa-sponsored classes include the Independence Public Library, Western Oregon University, Central High School and Talmadge Middle School.

For information, call the Chemeketa Community College Dallas Center at (503) 623-5567.

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