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New Southwest Colorado Community College to aid students now, plans for future growth

MANCOS – The unveiling of its logo here today creates an identity for the new Southwest Colorado Community College (SCCC), but most important is that students in this region will now have access to much greater higher education opportunities.

The merger of Pueblo Community College's Southwest Campus and the San Juan Basin Technical College was signed into law recently by Governor Bill Ritter. And while the merger won't become effective until July 1, the SCCC's catalog, career and technical program brochure, and the fall semester class schedule are also debuted today.

With two locations having been established – the West Campus in the former SJBTC building eight miles east of Cortez and the East Campus in The Commons building in downtown Durango, the SCCC focus now turns to the future. The following new directions are planned:

1. The Merger Steering Committee that worked diligently during the past year to bring about the merger will now step back as the transition is made to naming a new, all-inclusive SCCC Advisory Board. Nominations from the community can be submitted to PCC President Dr. J.D. Garvin, and the board is expected to be in place by July 1. While working in an advisory capacity, board members also will create a set of operating bylaws for the college.
2. A separate Development Committee of community volunteers will be created to explore development concepts related to SCCC expansion of facilities to accommodate growth. While this committee will be different from the Advisory Board, individuals could be members of both.

3. Online partnerships will be explored to provide higher education access to the East Campus region, including the Bayfield / Durango area. Funding mechanisms will be identified.
4. A special dedication and community celebration will take place at the West Campus on Aug. 24, the first day of fall semester classes. Showcased that day will be the completed upgrades to the campus and the new Heritage Hall that will provide a visual history of the SJBTC and PCC's Southwest Campus and their merger into SCCC.

"I am really looking forward to developing robust partnerships across the multiple communities in this region and seeing the growth and development that takes place in the future," said Dr. J.D. Garvin, PCC President.

Immediate efforts for the next two weeks will focus on finalizing the SCCC's organizational structure and leveraging the administration and staff to maximize service to both campuses in terms of marketing and providing financial aid and other student services. An executive staff member from PCC will be placed on location in the region until December.

Fall semester course schedules are available at the SCCC campuses and online at www.enrollSouthwest.org. College representatives have converted the SJBTC college course delivery structure to the SCCC class schedule. All credits that have been earned at SJBTC will transfer to SCCC. In addition, recent spring SJBTC graduates have been awarded scholarships that are worth six free credit hours in the fall semester and will be renewable.

SCCC will give students access to an exciting wide range of programs of study and the ability to quickly turn an earned certificate into an associate degree. Having a comprehensive community college in the region will enable them to take technical and vocational programs and enter the workforce, thus having a positive impact on the region's economy. Also, since PCC has several articulation agreements with 4-year schools, there will be an ensured seamless credit transfer for those who want to continue their education by pursuing a bachelor's degree.

Students will also have greater access to financial aid opportunities because of the ample number of scholarships that are available through the PCC Foundation.

SCCC will offer Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science and Associate of General Studies degrees. Students will be able to choose from a wide range of certificate and degree career paths. They also will have access to PCC's extensive online course schedule.

The "student experience" will be enhanced by other upgrades and amenities on the West campus. Physical improvements are being made to the SJBTC building including an infrastructure upgrading for technology. New computers have been purchased and

hooked into the PCC system, and the entire campus will become completely wireless. Surveillance cameras will help protect the safety of staff, students and visitors. New students will have access to the “Go!Zone,” a one-stop student servicing area that will facilitate the entire enrollment and registration process.

College representatives are working with school district officials in this region to explore the options of offering courses at various high school and community sites throughout Southwest Colorado’s Four Corners region that includes Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma and San Juan counties.

More information about courses and programs is available by calling the SCCC offices toll free at 1-877-544-0744.

Founded in 1933, Pueblo Community College is a premier teaching institution focused on providing academic and service excellence to help its students acquire the 21st Century skills needed to better their lives. An educational and technological leader, PCC fosters economic development and utilizes strong partnerships in the communities it serves through its Pueblo, Fremont and Southwest campuses.