COOS BAY – A $100,000 grant from the Coquille Indian Tribe will kick-start fundraising efforts for a Health & Science Technology Building at Southwestern Oregon Community College.

“Educating more health-care professionals is a vital need on the South Coast,” said tribal Chairperson Brenda Meade. “It’s important not only to our quality of life, but also to the community’s ability to develop and sustain a strong economy.”

Each year the Coquille Tribe sets aside a portion of gaming revenue from The Mill Casino to support non-profit organizations in the tribe’s five-county service area. Since its inception, the Coquille Tribal Community Fund has provided more than $5 million in grants for charitable efforts throughout the region.

Most of this year’s grants will be announced in late February. Today’s early announcement of the grant to Southwestern is designed to focus community attention on the college’s fundraising effort – and the project’s importance to the community.

“We’re delighted to give this project some initial momentum,” Meade said. “We encourage other organizations and individuals to step up and do their part.”

The tribe, like the rest of the community, will benefit from enhancing Southwestern’s health-care education opportunities. The tribe’s clinic near Charleston is among the many local institutions that rely on Southwestern to supply skilled health-care professionals.

“This building will ensure our community and college continue to provide our students with the highest quality instruction, hands-on training and technologies,” said Dr. Patty Scott, president of Southwestern.

Southwestern plans to expand and modernize its labs, classrooms and technology with a 46,000-square-foot building. The State of Oregon has committed $8 million toward the $16 million construction cost, if the college and the community can raise the remaining $8 million.

“The Coquille Tribe demonstrates year after year an unequaled commitment to investment in our college and future generations of students,” Scott said. “We are very pleased and honored to have the tribe be our first major partner in this project for our community.”

Prospective donors can support the project by sending tax-deductible gifts to the Southwestern Oregon Community College Foundation. Contact Executive Director Elise Hamner at (541) 888-7211, or visit www.socc.edu/foundation.

About the Coquille Tribal Community Fund: The Coquille Indian Tribe is among Coos County’s largest employers, and its Community Fund represents the tribe’s commitment to community well-being.
The Community Fund’s board of trustees includes representatives of the Coquille Tribe and the Coquille Economic Development Corp., along with Coos County Commissioner John Sweet, North Bend Mayor Rick Wetherell, and Coos Bay Mayor Crystal Shoji.

The Community Fund supports projects related to education, health, public safety, problem gaming, environmental issues, arts and culture, and historic preservation. Organizations wishing to be considered for the next round of grants may submit letters of inquiry from Sept. 1 through Oct. 31. For more information, visit the fund’s website at www.coquilletribalfund.org.

Southwestern Oregon Community College has served South Coast citizens of all ages for more than 50 years, providing access to lifelong learning and community engagement in a sustainable manner. With its Coos and Curry campuses, the college provides quality training and business development to address changing workforce needs.

The Southwestern Oregon Community College Foundation and its community volunteers work exclusively to benefit higher education at Southwestern Oregon Community College and provide adequate resources to improve every citizen socially, culturally, economically and educationally.

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