

News

Trustees Approve Jones Regional Ed Center

Board of Trustees Approve Bond Sale for Jones Regional Education Center, Construction to Begin Soon

September 27th, 2008

What began as a groundbreaking concept in education partnership will soon move to a literal ground-breaking moment on the edge of Monticello. The Kirkwood Community College Board of Trustees voted September 25 to approve the sale of bonds to finance the Jones Regional Education Center.

The college leadership voted unanimously to approve sale of just over \$6 million in bonds to fund the center construction near the intersection of Highway 151 and County X-44 on the southeast edge of the city.

The 30,000 square foot facility will be constructed on eight acres of land donated by the Lloyd and Joyce Welter family, which made the project possible. The Kirkwood governing body also approved the bid of Portzen Construction of Dubuque as general contractor for the JREC project.

The center was announced to the public in a program hosted by Kirkwood, City of Monticello and regional school partners in December 2007 at the Monticello Community Center. Key elements of the center will include a regional career academy program with eight school districts sharing career, technical and core curriculum classes in the center.

Kirkwood will move its Jones County headquarters from the former McDonald Hospital building to the new center and provide college courses and other community services from the new location. The eight participating school districts include Monticello, Midland, Anamosa, Olin, Cascade/Western Dubuque, Central City, Maquoketa Valley and Springville. The districts agreed to assist in enrolling students in programs at the new center and made commitments of certain enrollments to make the partnership a reality.

Kirkwood Vice President of Instruction, Bill Lamb called the center “a bold yet common-sense solution” to needs shared by the college, school districts and wider community.

“We are pleased once again to take the next step in this exciting partnership. This will save money for our partner school districts, for sure. But beyond that, this is about increasing and expanding opportunities for learning in many different areas. The combined resources will mean a broader set of choices for students and their families, including more ways to earn college credit while they are still in high school. In building this new center we are building a new set of options for years to come,” Lamb said.

Keith Stamp of Monticello represents the area on the Kirkwood Board of

Trustees. In comments following the Sept. 25 meeting he added his praise to the cooperation and support that has aided the Jones regional center plans.

“We have to thank the City of Monticello for making the road access to the future site and utility service possible. Alliant Energy has also been most cooperative and supportive as we moved forward on the project. And again, we thank the Welter family for having the vision and seeing the possibilities we will realize together. This is a moment that makes me proud to be from Jones County,” Stamp said.

Earlier this summer Alliant Energy also announced a grant to support technical education at the Jones Regional Education Center. The Alliant Foundation awarded about \$21,000 to the Kirkwood partnership to equip a computer lab for Project Lead the Way. The nationally recognized curriculum is aimed at encouraging students in middle and high school grades to explore and pursue careers in engineering, math and the sciences.

At the December 2007 community announcement, Kirkwood and the eight partner school districts outlined their shared goals, including:

- Career Academy programs targeted at future workforce needs.
- Early College offerings that will allow students to get a head start on college.
- Shared high school career & technical programs that may be difficult for individual districts to offer & sustain.
- Shared high school courses in advanced math, science or other technical areas.
- Career and college transition (career planning, academic advising, college readiness assessment, etc.)
- Career exploration experiences coordinated through the Workplace Learning Connection.
- Other programs or services requested by school districts or local workforce partners.

Northland Securities of Minneapolis submitted the winning bond bid of \$6.037 million, with financial procedures managed for Kirkwood by Paper Jaffray & Co. of Des Moines. The bonds have a 5.0 percent stated rate with a true interest figure of 5.1724 percent. The securities will mature in October 2011.

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