



CONTACT:
Office of College Relations
1401 S. College Ave.
Levelland, Texas 79336
(806) 894-9611, ext. 2211
Fax: (806) 894-4701

**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Aug. 4, 2015**

**CONTACT: MYRNA WHITEHEAD
806-716-2212**

SOUTH PLAINS COLLEGE ANNOUNCES PLANS TO EXPAND INTO NEW INSTRUCTIONAL CENTER

LUBBOCK – South Plains College announced plans today (Aug. 4) to purchase a 70,000 sq. ft. facility at 3907 Ave. Q that will be renovated into a new South Plains College Lubbock Center.

The college also announced financial commitments totaling \$9.9 million from the Helen Jones Foundation, The CH Foundation and the Lubbock Economic Development Alliance that will be used to renovate and equip 45,000 sq. ft. of the new educational center in a Phase I project.

“We are extremely grateful for the support from these community partners,” said Dr. Kelvin Sharp, president of South Plains College. “This initiative will create many opportunities for South Plains College students and the citizens of Lubbock to access a comprehensive community college program within the City of Lubbock. It will also greatly enhance our ability and capacity to address the workforce training needs of local business and industry and contribute substantially to Lubbock’s economic development initiatives.”

The Ave. Q facility, which sits on a seven-acre site, is owned by Group 1 Auto, the parent company of Gene Messer Auto Group, and is the former location of the Shamrock Chevrolet dealership. The South Plains College Board of Regents has approved a purchase price of \$2 million.

SPC will relocate its nine career and technical education programs housed at the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center to the new location allowing Lubbock ISD to expand its CTE programs in response to HB5 reforms (83rd Texas Legislature). Both SPC and LISD programs at the BMATC have outgrown the center’s available instructional space.

Additionally, South Plains College will partner with Group 1 Auto and other area auto dealers to explore the creation of a regional industry-certified auto technician training center.

Renovation costs of the building have been estimated by BGR Architects of Lubbock and McCutchin Construction of Levelland to be \$7 million. The Helen Jones Foundation has pledged \$4 million and The CH Foundation the remaining \$3 million to fund renovation of the building into a state-of-the-art educational and training center.

- more -

According to Jim Arnold, president and executive director of the Helen Jones Foundation, Helen DeVitt Jones had an intense desire to promote better education with her gifts to society. She financed programs that lent support to talented individuals, especially if their skills were intended to lead to employment in a practical field. South Plains College's project directly reflects Mrs. Jones' philosophy, he said.

The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) will contribute \$1.9 million that will be used to expand technical education programs offered through the center, including the purchase of equipment and fixtures for the building. LEDA has pledged to hold an additional \$1 million in reserve for future program expansion and/or new program start-up as operational needs are identified.

"Today's announcement is an enormous game changer for Lubbock. Not only because of how many entities joined together to make it happen, but also because we all see our workforce as an imperative infrastructure for the long-term health of our economy," said Tim Collins, Chairman of the LEDA Board of Directors.

South Plains College currently leases approximately 36,000 square feet of instructional space in the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center. The 45,000 sq. ft. of renovation planned for the new center will allow SPC's nine career and technology programs to expand. These programs include automotive technology, industrial manufacturing/emerging technologies, computer information systems, office technology, accounting associate, business management, real estate, paralegal studies, fire technology, general education academic coursework and workforce development.

"This new facility will not only allow us to expand our workforce development efforts in Lubbock but will also allow us to strengthen our dual credit CTE pathways with Lubbock ISD and other Lubbock County school districts," Dr. Sharp said. "This location gives South Plains College a solid footprint in Lubbock."

The partners in the program have agreed to create an advisory committee with representation from all financial partners and local business and industry to provide input into the development of the South Plains College Lubbock Center and its educational programs.

The College is planning to open the center in early 2017.