

Colusa board approves \$600,000 for college

[By Ryan McCarthy/Appeal-Democrat](#)

2009-07-01 00:35:13

A pledge that new college buildings won't close preceded the Colusa County supervisors' approval Tuesday to provide \$600,000 toward developing the first permanent college facility in the county.

"Yes, this is a bit of a gamble," Supervisor Kim Dolbow Vann said of the contribution of county Tobacco Settlement Funds toward construction of the \$4.5 million Yuba Community College District project in Williams.

But Vann said she is "absolutely comfortable" with providing the funds for the 9,000-square-foot facility.

The Yuba College district closed leased facilities in Colusa County in 2003 for financial reasons and offered a reduced class schedule at local high schools.

The 4-acre site at Husted Road and E Street near the California Highway Patrol office is expected to offer classes in spring 2011. The facility will be able accommodate 120 students.

Supervisor Mark D. Marshall praised what he said will be a wonderful facility, but also spoke about the "rocky road" involving the college district and the county. He asked for assurances the previous closing won't be repeated.

"This will be a permanent facility owned by the district," said Angela Fairchilds, president of Woodland Community College, part of the Yuba College district and the agency that will manage the new facility. "I've given you my personal commitment. The services will be there."

Marshall said he was "comfortable this is an appropriate use of (the tobacco) money."

The funds stem from the settlement of lawsuits brought a decade ago by states against the tobacco industry and resulting in payments that include money to California counties.

Supervisor Thomas A. Indrieri, reading constituent questions, asked whether the county would be out the \$600,000 if the new facility closes in 10 years.

Yes, Indrieri, was told.

Fairchilds said after the meeting that the college district has not closed a facility it owns in the 80-year history of the district.

Ben Pearson, a college trustee who linked his election last year in part to his support for improved college facilities in Colusa County, praised the supervisors' decision.

"The county is going to get so much back from their investment," said Pearson.

Fairchilds said she was "just so excited to get that first shovel in the ground" in October.

The Measure J funds that will help pay for the project can only be used for facilities construction, Fairchilds noted. Voters in 2006 approved the \$190 million bond measure.

"We're going to have a real special place," said Steve Tofft, project manager for developer V & R Land Investments of Williams. "What's happening here is historic."

The resolution approved by supervisors states Colusa County is one of only eight counties in California without a community college educational facility.

"Students are going to have a home," said Trustee Alan Flory.

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