

Tech Center Update

Included in the new gift to Sheridan College from Whitney Benefits is a commitment of \$6 million to go toward renovation and expansion of the College's Technical Education Center. The current facility was built in 1977 and is in need of upgrades and repairs, SC officials said. Planned expansion has been a priority on the College's master plan for several years and would create new space that would potentially quadruple enrollment in the Welding Technology, Diesel Technology, Construction Technology and Machine Tool Technology programs.

"If our goal is to accept more students into high-demand programs that lead to good, high-paying jobs, then we have to address the need for additional, safe learning space," said Kati Sherwood, Northern Wyoming Community College District Board Chair.

The College asked voters from Sheridan County in August of 2013 to support a general obligation bond for \$15.8M to pay for the project, but the vote did not pass. Matching an earlier gift of \$500,000 from Whitney Benefits with contributions from private individuals who have pledged another \$500,000, the College has been able to start on \$1M of immediate improvements to the aging facility.

Those improvements, which are already underway, will include a 2,500 sq. ft. addition and 5,000 sq. ft. renovation to the Machine Tool Technology space and a 1,200 sq. ft. addition and 7,000 sq. ft. renovation to the Diesel Technology, Welding Technology and Construction Technology areas.

"This important first phase of the Tech Center project will really help us move forward," said Sheridan College President Dr. Paul Young. "The College hopes to use the \$6 million gift from Whitney as a match for a planned request of \$6.5 million from the state of Wyoming in the 2016 legislative session."