NWACC Panel Recommends Pursuing Washington County Location

College Has Been Considering Instructional Center in Springdale

BENTONVILLE, Ark. (May 10, 2012) – The Land Use Committee of NorthWest Arkansas Community College has voted to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the College enter preliminary discussion with a land owner for a site that would become the Washington County Instructional Center.

The committee reviewed the proposal at its meeting on Thursday, May 10, and approved the suggested recommendation to the Board of Trustees.

The land is located directly west of the home of the Northwest Arkansas Naturals baseball team and is owned by Philip Taldo.

Dr. Steven Gates, senior vice president for learning & provost, said the College was attracted to the property for several reasons: access and visibility to I-540, accessibility from all of Washington County, potential for development, planned improvements for roads and infrastructure by the City of Springdale, and the location on the west side of Springdale and I-540.

NWACC leaders have been looking at land for nearly 18 months and recently narrowed its preferred site list to the Taldo property, an estimated 39 acres, currently undeveloped and zoned as Commercial.

Preliminary discussion with the landowner will now focus on exploring various options to keep costs down and add value through creative partnerships for development, building, and purchase. If discussion is successful, the College anticipates then seeking approval from the Board of Trustees to enter formal negotiations with the landowner.

Gates said the City of Springdale and the Springdale Chamber of Commerce have been very supportive of the College’s interest in land in the Springdale area.
The College anticipates a long-term need of an estimated 120,000 square feet of instructional space that could be built in 1-3 building phases, depending on terms of agreement with the landowner and potential partners for development.

The College’s enrollment with a Washington County address represents 40 percent (2,531) of its total student population. The College also has seen increased enrollment of students living in the Siloam Springs area. For students in this geographic area of the College’s two-county service area, a permanent instructional center in Washington County would provide greater access to postsecondary education and workforce training. Increased access was cited as a critical need by stakeholders during regional focus groups held in early 2008 as part of the College’s Master Planning process.

The College currently leases property in Washington County to operate instructional centers.

**NorthWest Arkansas Community College is a comprehensive, public two-year college that serves and strengthens the community through learning for living.** NWACC’s service area is defined by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education as Benton and Washington counties in extreme northwest Arkansas. The commitment of NWACC to life-long learning can be seen in the quality of instruction it offers, and the variety of programs it has designed to move students into the job market in a minimum amount of time, enrich people's lives, and prepare them to further their education. For more information, visit [www.nwacc.edu](http://www.nwacc.edu).