



Diversity Works

Office of University Partnerships

Minority-Serving Institutions Developing Partnerships, Building Communities

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Pasco, Washington, Gets FIRST Facelift

Pasco, Washington's downtown business district is undergoing a transformation. Once a thriving shopping core, the downtown area experienced a decline in business flow due to high increases in commercial and residential growth. This record growth was accompanied by an increasing number of the population opting to live and shop in new areas, resulting in a migration of shoppers from the downtown area. In addition, the city of Pasco is experiencing a boon in Latino small businesses, which are serving the needs of the city's growing Latino population. However, many of these business owners do not have much business experience and lack formal education on U.S. business practices such

as basic taxes and bookkeeping, marketing, and computer expertise. Columbia Basin College (CBC) is using its 2009 Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities (HSIAC) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to implement the Façade Improvement, Revitalization, and Support Training (FIRST) program to address the city's urgent need for downtown economic revitalization and continuing business education for small business owners.

Economic Revitalization

"CBC's HUD HSIAC grant, in partnership with the city of Pasco, which received a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to revitalize the downtown area, is giving Pasco business owners expertise to improve economic conditions in downtown Pasco," said HUD HSIAC Director Rolando Garcia. "Members of the community as well as business owners in the downtown business district have voiced their concern about the appearance of the downtown business corridor. The FIRST program is a collaborative effort to revitalize an area that is in desperate need of change. As other neighboring cities continue to renovate their respective downtown areas, it is important for the city of Pasco to follow suit. The assembled partners working together and using their expertise and resources will facilitate the revitalization of the Pasco downtown area."



Small business education class.



According to the city of Pasco, the primary barriers that prevent local merchants from taking advantage of the façade program is their lack of necessary capital and their inability to design a façade plan. Through CBC's FIRST program, student design teams and local architects assist participants by developing architectural renderings of how their stores would look after façade improvement. In addition, the city of Pasco's CDBG funds assist with construction by providing financial assistance for 75 percent of eligible front costs, up to a maximum of \$20,000, with the applicant paying the remaining 25 percent or the remaining balance on the project if the maximum is exceeded. These funds will be used for building exterior façades that are visible to pedestrians, specifically façade renovations and restorations, awnings, canopies, painting, windows, lighting, entryways, cornices, and signage.

"This much-needed facelift should give customers a more inviting environment where they could choose to spend their money," said Garcia "Increasing the business traffic flow as well as increasing the variety of customers will be beneficial to improving the economy."

Currently, seven businesses have been chosen to receive façade improvements, and façade construction has begun. CBC faculty and students are working with local architecture firms and downtown businesses to design and construct improved storefronts. In addition, CBC is collaborating with the city of Pasco to develop a comprehensive marketing plan to increase the business traffic flow in the downtown business core. Their efforts include enhancing existing downtown events, creating promotional materials, establishing marketing strategies, and identifying new opportunities.



Viera Bakery, FIRST program participant.

Business Basics

In addition to façade improvement, providing physical improvement, and developing strategies to increase business flow, the FIRST program focuses on helping new business owners stabilize and grow while helping

existing business owners with better business methods and practices. Through FIRST, CBC is collaborating with the Tri-Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Development Center, and the city of Pasco to sponsor a customized curriculum of bilingual business education, training, counseling, and other resources to downtown Pasco merchants.

CBC's Columbia Business Access Center sponsors a series of workshops two to three times a year on topics dealing with the development and retention of small businesses. Classes have become crucial to business owners because they allow them to learn and apply these new better business methods to their current business. Courses such as screening a business idea, customer and competitor analysis, basic accounting principles, basic marketing principles, the legal issues of starting a business, and development of business plans all help business owners toward their goal. CBC HUD grant staff also provide more simplified one-on-one continuing education classes on the same subjects in downtown Pasco tailored to match the needs of individual business owners. To date, approximately 40 business owners have used those services and resources.

Combined Efforts—Stronger Community

"This project has allowed Columbia Basin College to utilize its resources and expertise to help the local community of Pasco," said Garcia. "This project has also allowed us to see our efforts come to fruition to make our community a bit better. All of the grant efforts fit in line with the overall mission of the college to educate and provide educational resource to the local communities.

"The establishment of continued working relationships with business owners has also been beneficial for us. We have become more approachable to these merchants. The collaboration between all three entities involved in the FIRST program has also shown these business owners that we care about the community and are willing to gear our efforts to better them as a whole," explained Garcia.

Through the overall physical change of buildings in downtown Pasco, marketing strategies implemented by CBC business faculty and students, and the continuous business education, the anticipated increase in commerce will provide proof of this project's full impact on the community. However, active communication and participation of CBC, the city of Pasco, the Pasco Downtown Development Association, and downtown Pasco business owners should inaugurate a new age of economic revitalization.

For more information on the FIRST program, contact Rolando Garcia, HUD HSIAC Director, Columbia Basin College, at 509-542-5601 or e-mail rgarcia@columbiabasin.edu.

New Library Facility Provides Safe Haven of Learning

Diné College in Shiprock, New Mexico, will soon host the grand opening of the Shiprock Public-Access Library at its new Shiprock South Campus. With funds from its 2006 Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Diné College invested in this new structure to improve the daily operations of the college's library system, preserve the college's accreditation status, and increase the college's capacity to support 4-year degree programs. The 20,413-square-foot facility is expected to open in August 2011.

Limitations and Inadequacies

The Shiprock North Campus had occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs building since 1982, and by 1997, this structure, including the library, was at a critical point of deterioration. By 2005, the physical and functional inadequacies of the North Campus library rendered it unable to meet the needs of the college and its constituents, specifically the Navajo nation. Mold infestation; a cracked floor joist; seemingly irreparable electrical, lighting, air conditioning, and ventilation problems; and the presence of asbestos and lead all posed ongoing health and safety concerns.

These functional and spatial limitations threatened the long-term functionality and integrity of Diné College's library system; its accreditation status, which is crucial to its continued function as a postsecondary institution of higher education; and the college's initiative to apply for 4-year baccalaureate degree-granting status through its accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission. Accreditation is the primary means by which Diné College ensures academic quality to students and the public and for students to gain access to federal funds such as student grants and loans and other federal support. These limitations included a lack of adequate shelving and storage for library stacks and archives, poor security for special collections and sensitive documents, poor wiring for administrative offices and library computer stations, lack of adequate space for user-friendly study areas for students, and lack of private offices for library personnel.

"The old library was contained within 2,700 square feet and did not meet current academic requirements, nor did it have the



Exterior of Diné College Shiprock Public-Access Library.

local area network capacity to support bachelor's programs that Diné College wanted to introduce," said Cliff Johns, director of capital projects and construction. "These factors, along with the physical inadequacies, were a compelling reason for the planning and development of a new library at the Shiprock South Campus. Jaynes Corporation began construction on the new facility on August 17, 2009."

Design by Committee

The library was designed through a collaboration of architects, a library consultant, faculty and students, and user groups familiar with cultural and Tribal designs. The design is based on the following goals:

- **Welcoming spirit:** an edifice that puts visitors at ease and beckons them to explore the resources within to find success.
- **Cultural relevance:** a physical enclosure that reflects and expresses Diné culture.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** a structure able to accommodate the changes of time and technology.
- **Stability and constancy:** a facility with timeless architecture and a solid structure.
- **Openness and transparency:** a place to learn and grow intellectually, socially, culturally, and personally.
- **Conversational Character:** a building that speaks with the dialect of its surroundings with questions and answers unique to the Diné world.



Diné College Shiprock Public-Access Library interior.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of University Partnerships
451 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20410-3000

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The new facility is built from new masonry, steel, and metal framing. It incorporates public and collegiate use of the spaces such as a lecture hall, student computer commons, and periodicals sections. These new spaces have addressed the needed requirements for public and institutional research. In addition, the library incorporates practices and standards associated with the U.S. Green Building Council to use renewable energies and minimize utility costs through environmentally friendly design. It also implements recapture of gray water to support native landscaping, which preserves natural resources through water conservation practices.

Currently, Diné College is installing furniture, computers, and equipment into the new building. Once fully operational, the Diné College Shiprock Public-Access Library will greatly improve the daily operations of the college's library system. Visitation is anticipated to increase by 35 percent per day, and the facility will

promote literacy programs aimed at improving Shiprock's literacy levels.

With new computer areas, distance-learning classrooms, and additional space for library information, the college has addressed the needed spaces to maintain its accreditation and continue to promote higher education within the community, and assist low- and moderate-income persons in obtaining workplace certificates and academic degrees to improve their earning potential.

"The new facility will also help the college achieve 4-year accreditation for more of its programs," said Johns. "At this year's graduation, the college will be conferring its first 4-year bachelor's degree for Teacher Elementary Education."

For more information on the Shiprock South Campus library, contact Cliff Johns, Director, Capital Projects and Construction at 505-368-3623 or e-mail cjohns@dinecollege.edu.

HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP) provides grants to institutions of higher education to assist them and their partners with the implementation of a broad range of community development activities, including neighborhood revitalization, housing, and economic development. This newsletter, *Diversity Works*, highlights the efforts of grantees in OUP's Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Assisting Communities, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian Institutions Assisting Communities grant programs and includes a variety of interesting projects, compelling grantee profiles, and other valuable resources for minority-serving institutions.