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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR INFORMATION

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Cal Poly Announces Expansion of Continuing Education Efforts in Tulare Area

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly Continuing Education kicked off the first phase of the university's Rita Bee Hill Higher Education Center in Tulare and the start date for an E-Commerce Training Initiative at the World Ag Expo this week in Tulare.

The first phase of the Cal Poly Rita Bee Hill Higher Education Center is a community needs assessment, intended to determine the current and future education and workforce development needs of Tulare County, explained Dennis "Skip" Parks, Dean of Cal Poly Continuing Education.

"The information gathered during this phase will help Cal Poly respond with appropriate educational programs," Parks noted. "It is fitting that we make this announcement here at the World Ag Expo, where Rita was so loved."

Hill, Class of 1971, was an active member of the alumni association and a Tulare community leader known for her energy, her service and her humor.

The study is being funded through a partnership of the Tulare Local Development Company, the Greater Tulare Foundation, the City of Visalia and Cal Poly Continuing Education. It will begin immediately and take six to eight months to complete. The next two phases will be the program development phase followed by program implementation. Fund-raising efforts continue in order to make a Tulare higher education center a reality.

"The Cal Poly - Rita Bee Hill Higher Education Center represents the growing partnership between Cal Poly and the Visalia and Tulare communities," said Paul Zingg, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs with Cal Poly. "As we work together to identify the needs of these communities, we will develop programs that will serve the citizens of Tulare County and strengthen Cal Poly's presence. It is a goal that truly honors the memory of Rita Hill."

The E-Commerce Training Initiative was funded by grants from the Departments of Labor and Agriculture to the International Agri-Center. It involves free workshops in Tulare County, open to any Valley resident; a help desk; a reference library; and a website offering additional marketing, training and e-commerce information.

The workshops will teach the basics of electronic commerce, how to research services online, how to explore

websites, how to develop an internet business plan, how to develop a website and how to promote a website. The project will begin immediately and end June 30. Workshops will be held in April, May and June at Heritage Complex at the International Agri-Center. A Cal Poly Continuing Education project director and administrative coordinator will be on-site at the Agri-Center.

"We see the e-commerce project as a first step in providing on-going technology training and other educational opportunities to small and medium- sized businesses," said Dean Parks. "Our growing partnership with International Agri-Center will provide a sound foundation upon which to launch continuing education initiatives."

For information on Cal Poly Continuing Education, call (866) CAL-POLY (225-7659).

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