

CREATE Foundation Announces 'Center for Professional Futures'

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Toyota Endowment to Provide Main Funding

PONTOTOC, Miss. (April 22, 2010) — CREATE Foundation and the Toyota Education Endowment Fund Advisory Committee announced plans for an innovative addition to the public school system in the PUL Alliance counties. The Center for Professional Futures will be an education facility that will expose students in the eight school districts in Pontotoc, Union, and Lee counties to professional careers through high performance teaching and a modern learning environment.

The Center will be located in the Wellspring project area at the confluence of the three PUL Alliance counties. Students may apply to the Center to take advanced offerings in a variety of professional career academies upon completion of some introductory courses at their home high school. Academies will include Computer Graphics & Animation, Pre-engineering, Architecture, Legal Studies, Advanced Manufacturing, and Health Science Technology. Specific academies to be offered will be finalized following further study and will be flexible as the market and interest dictates. The Center will combine hands-on, real world learning spaces and equipment with innovative learning through 21st century education approaches.

“This Center will provide tremendous opportunities to help keep students engaged in learning,” said Mississippi First Lady, Marsha Barbour. “It will be a great example of collaboration among school districts and counties and could become a model for other regions in Mississippi.”

Funding to construct the \$35 million facility will be sought from the federal government and various foundations throughout the country. State and local capital funding will also be explored. The Toyota endowment fund will generate ongoing annual funds to operate the Center, thus ensuring long term financial sustainability of the project. This announcement is the culmination of almost two years of study and research by the Toyota Education Endowment Fund Advisory Committee (TEEFAC).

“One of the goals of TEEFAC has been to provide a long term opportunity for all students of the eight districts and provide an enhancement to the public education system in the PUL region,” said Reggie Collums, Pontotoc County Chancery Clerk and a member of TEEFAC. “The district superintendents have been actively involved with the TEEFAC research, and most accompanied TEEFAC on a visit to Frisco, Tex., to visit a center that is the model for this Center for Professional Careers,” he said.

Today marks the official start of the project. It is estimated that construction of the Center will take two years once capital funding is secured and could open as early as fall 2013. The Center will be fully integrated into the regional education system and will be governed by a board of directors that is linked to the three counties and eight districts. The committee has studied and benchmarked over a dozen similar concept facilities across the U.S.

Toyota announced the \$50 million donation, \$5 million a year for 10 years, when it announced the Blue Spring project. The first installment will be paid to the CREATE Foundation in May. CREATE formed the Toyota Education Endowment Fund Advisory Committee to recommend projects for funding to the CREATE Board of Directors. The six member committee consists of one member appointed by each PUL county, one by

CREATE, one by Toyota, and the Mississippi State School Superintendent.

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