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Success in plain sight

CCC FOUNDATION,
 IN GROWTH MODE, RAISES
 PROFILE WITH MOVE TO NEW
 HEADQUARTERS

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For nearly 30 years, the Central Community Foundation has been working to grow the funds to support students and help communities fill their need for skilled workers.

Executive Director Dean Moors believes that will only continue into the future with the foundation's new and more visible home on North U.S. Highway 281 in Hastings.

Moors believes at least part of the success of the foundation during his tenure in the last decade has really been about educating individuals, communities, businesses and alumni about the importance of the college system and the help the foundation can provide.

"The No. 1 issue in Hastings and every community in the state of Nebraska is a skilled workforce," Moors said recently. "The mission of CCC is

to fill those gaps and to train and educate and provide the programs to bring jobs back into the communities."

Currently, about 90 percent of all CCC graduates stay within the college's 25 county area and nearly all 100 percent stay in Nebraska.

The foundation works in two key ways to continue to meet that college mission of educating students to fill the jobs in area communities.

The first is through the support of programming and capital needs on the college's three campuses and four learning centers.

Several years ago, there was a growing need for more skilled and technical labor in the Kearney area in the area of advanced manufacturing, so CCC decided to invest \$23 million into a new facility and programming to meet that need.

"It would take a long period of time to fund it out of normal revenue, so they said, 'Dean, would you and foundation take on task of raising \$10 mil-

lion?' " he said.

The foundation never had conducted a capital campaign up to that point, so Moors set a two-year goal to raise the funds.

"We did it in 12-15 months, so about a year ahead of time, which allowed them to open a year early," Moors said.

That allowed for Kearney High School students be able to take classes as well as the students enrolled at CCC.

Moors said the success of the capital campaign came down to the excitement of the community for the project and the jobs it would provide through vocational training. He said the credit also goes to the college and its mission of providing the education for those technical jobs.

The financial support for the project was heavy not only in the Tri-City area, but also across the region and the state.

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"The Peter Kiewit Foundation, they're out of Omaha, but they thought it was an incredible project and they gave a significant donation," Moors said. "Creating those relationships is important."

Then, in 2017 the college slated major improvements and expansions to the advanced manufacturing design technology and welding programs on the Hastings cam-

pus as the No. 1 capital priority project.

It was a \$10.3 million project, and again the college turned to the foundation this time for \$5 million.

Support from the Hastings Area Manufacturing Association and the Peter Kiewit Foundation, coupled with support from businesses and individuals from the area and across the state, allowed for groundbreaking on the project to come six months

ahead of the original schedule.

"One of the roles of the foundation is we have to meet some of the long-term capital needs and program support. These projects that are critical for communities," Moors said.

The key to making that happen is being visible in the community and telling people why an investment in the community college is important.

The foundation's new building has helped with that

increase in visibility.

"We've had more traffic in the first six months than we've had in the last six years," Moors said. "I know that this will be paid for 10 times over through gifts not only short-run but long-term."

The other important job of the foundation is to provide funds to students in the form of scholarships.

Ten years ago when Moors came to the foundation, it

awarded \$10,000-15,000 in scholarships across the three campuses and four learning centers. That amount increased to \$750,000 in 2018.

Those dollars come from estates, retirees, individuals, couples, families and businesses that all either have a connection to or see a value in the services CCC provides.

The key, Moors said, is to educate people so they can see the value in and understand why they should invest in Central Community College. That is part of the goal of the alumni director at the foundation who reaches out to the 40,000 alumni.

"More and more alumni are getting educated and they're getting excited about the college that made a difference for them and we're seeing some of that coming back to the college in the form of a donation," Moors said. "And it doesn't have to be money. It can be time you can serve on a com-

mittee."

And Moors said it doesn't matter how much you give. If a person agrees to contribute \$1 per month, that's a total of \$12 per year. If Moors finds 43 people to do that, he has the money for one \$500 scholarship. And that, he said, can make a major difference for a student.

When it comes to student scholarships, Moors said, his job is to connect the dots between the students who need financial aid and the right tool or scholarship for them.

The foundation's annual report includes a list of about 200 scholarships with different requirements to fit students and their needs.

Moors said he works hard to help every student and wants to see the amount of scholarships awarded each year grow and grow.

"I don't want any student not to come to school because

they can't afford it, so let's connect the dots," he said.

That's why in 2018, the foundation switched to a year-round scholarship program, meaning that scholarships are awarded each year in March, June and September. A student can enroll any time of year and still be able to qualify for a scholarship.

The foundation's endowments total more than \$9 million and are pushing toward that \$10 million mark. Moors said the best part is those endowments are in perpetuity, meaning the money will be there to fund those scholarships forever as long as the funds are properly managed.

The foundation has been working in the last 10 years to increase their support in the planned-giving area. They said many alumni and supporters didn't realize they could give to the foundation for the future in their wills.

About \$250,000 of the scholarships awarded each year come from the Warren and Velda Wilson Foundation, with the other two-thirds of the \$750,000 total coming through the foundation's endowment and other scholarship dollars.

"And the foundation will continue to grow," Moors said. "I'm pretty confident we'll be at \$1 million in the next three to five years."

Moors said the thing that always intrigued him the most about his job and gives him the greatest pride is being able to make the connections to help create those employable workers in each community.

"It was the best decision I've ever made," he said of joining the foundation. "It's pretty incredible to see the students get those scholarships and help programs at the college that impact students."



AMY ROH/Tribune

Dean Moors, executive director of the Central Community College Foundation, is pictured in his office Thursday.