



September 18, 2012

Southland Park Presents First \$100,000 Check of \$1 Million Pledge to Mid-South Community College

Southland Park Gaming and Racing, in collaboration with its parent company Delaware North Companies, presented Mid-South Community College with a \$100,000 check on Monday (Sept. 17), the first of 10 annual payments toward a million-dollar pledge announced in June.



Troy Keeping presents Dr. Glen Fenter with a \$100,000 check for hospitality and food service training

The money will fund creation of a hospitality and food service training program that will provide a myriad of benefits for the region.

“This is another major step forward for our institution, and we are certainly very appreciative of everything Delaware North and Southland Park have done to ensure a brighter future for our region,” said Dr. Glen

Fenter, MSCC President. “This contribution will help our students tremendously and will have a significantly positive impact on the economy of Crittenden County.”

“As a community college, our job is to grow and expand our community, and that can’t happen without great partnerships. Southland continues to be one of our closest

allies, and I can't imagine that there are many companies in Arkansas that have been more supportive of their community college than Southland has been of us.”

Troy L. Keeping, Southland Park Regional General Manager, President, and General Manager, said the effort to create a program that will help Southland and other area businesses has been in the works for more than 12 months.

“About a year ago, we began kicking the tires on a hospitality program that would train workers to help Southland to continue to thrive and grow,” he recalled. “After talking with Jeremy Jacobs, our chairman, at our annual meeting, I met with Dr. Fenter and said, ‘This is what we need. Can you provide it?’ When he said yes, we began moving forward.”

“As our business grows and evolves, our need for trained employees continues to increase. We are excited to partner with Mid-South Community College to create a program that will provide a deep pool of qualified hospitality workers who will strengthen the tourism and entertainment efforts of Crittenden County. We believe this partnership will serve as an economic catalyst and a workforce development initiative that can support businesses throughout the region.”

Initially, MSCC plans to offer a Certificate of Proficiency in Food Science, Product Development, and Expansion (pending state approval) and will work toward establishing an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Hospitality Management. The College is in the process of searching for a faculty member to lead the Jeremy M. Jacobs Hospitality Program.

“This latest pledge from Southland puts us in a position to create a hospitality program that we have wanted to add to our degree options for several years,” Dr. Fenter said. “We ultimately intend to expand into an associate of applied science degree that will certainly put our students in a great position to access jobs locally as well as regionally.”

The training will allow both new and experienced food entrepreneurs access to the theoretical and technical knowledge needed to sustain or create successful culinary businesses in the region. This type of sector-specific workforce training creates additional jobs and increases income.

With Southland's latest commitment to the College, its overall gifts and pledges exceed \$2.4 million. This is the second million-dollar pledge to MSCC since 2001. In

recognition of the first seven-figure contribution, the College named one of its classroom buildings the “Southland Greyhound Science Center.”

Southland has also provided significant funding for endowed scholarships as well as a \$250,000 commitment to Greyhound athletic efforts at the College. The gaming establishment has also made a substantial contribution to MSCC’s Emergency Medical Technician program.

In addition to its local efforts, Southland is a great contributor to the State of Arkansas. Keeping said the gaming establishment expects to generate \$20 million for the state during the current calendar year. A part of that, 2.5 percent, is then returned to Crittenden County.

With the generous pledge from Southland, MSCC will continue and expand its participation in the “Delta Cuisine: A Southern Kitchen Incubator” project which is expected to open for business in spring 2013.

“The funding from Southland creates a golden opportunity for us to take this incubator collaboration to the next level and will allow us to bring additional expertise to the hospitality, entrepreneurship, and curricular equation,” Dr. Fenter said.

The \$1.8 million Delta Cuisine project is the result of the combined efforts of the Arkansas Delta Rural Heritage Development Initiative, the City of West Memphis, the Delta Regional Authority, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, State Representative Keith Ingram, and MSCC.

For information about hospitality or other instructional/training programs at MSCC, visit the college at 2000 West Broadway in West Memphis, call (870) 733-6728, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu, or see the website at www.midsouthcc.edu.