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Assisi Foundation Awards MSCC \$325,000 for Hospitality Project

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc., has awarded Mid-South Community College a \$325,000 grant that will be used to build a facility supporting MSCC's Jeremy M. Jacobs Hospitality Program and the Delta Cuisine Kitchen Incubator project.

"This grant from The Assisi Foundation will allow us to move one step closer to completing this exciting project," said Dr. Glen Fenter, MSCC president. "We anticipate creating a facility that will open a variety of economic development doors that will generate jobs and a brighter future for our region."



Joe Jenkins, a member of The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc., Board of Directors, presents Dr. Fenter with a check for \$325,000. Dr. Fenter said Jenkins, an MSCC Foundation Board member, provided vital assistance in helping the College secure the latest generous grant.

"We remain indebted to The Assisi Foundation for their continuing support of our efforts. Like The Assisi Foundation, Mid-South Community College is committed to improving the quality of life for our citizens, and a grant of this magnitude will provide us with more of those opportunities."

State Senator Keith Ingram of West Memphis said the project is a great example of a strategic public-private partnership.

“Jobs, jobs, jobs! This partnership will prepare individuals with the opportunity to gain meaningful employment in a fast-growing segment within our community. “

State Representative Dr. Deborah Ferguson of West Memphis said the project and facility will fill a significant need in the region.



“The Assisi Foundation Grant will help people get needed jobs – meaningful employment that pays a sustainable wage in order to support their families, loved ones, and future endeavors. I am grateful for the Assisi

Foundation’s participation in this wonderful project.”

The facility will be constructed on the MSCC North Campus adjacent to the existing Eastern Arkansas Workforce Investment Board One-Stop Workforce Center. The 10,000 square foot facility includes classrooms, a thermal bottling laboratory, bakery and food service preparation rooms, a computer laboratory, receiving/multipurpose area and freezer and dry storage areas. The total project cost of the facility is projected at slightly more than \$2.5 million spread over multiple phases.

Phase 1 construction is budgeted at \$1.1 million. In addition to the Assisi grant, funding for this project phase includes a \$400,000 grant from the Delta Regional Authority, a \$200,000 grant from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission and \$115,000 from the MSCC Capital Construction Fund. Construction should be completed by August 2014.

Delta Cuisine is a non-profit 501c (3) West Memphis organization that is partnering with MSCC to establish a kitchen incubator that addresses both the competitive and productive workforce and sustainable communities goals for the region.

The facility will also house the new Associate of Science and Associate of Applied Science degrees and related certificate hospitality/food safety/culinary arts programs at the College. MSCC established the instructional training program with the help of a \$1 million grant from Southland Park Gaming and Racing and its parent company Delaware North.

The Delta Cuisine Kitchen Incubator will assist the creation of businesses that focus on products and services in the food industry. It is estimated the incubator will provide a launch platform for approximately 15-20 businesses per year, creating up to 100 jobs annually.

Planning for the Delta Cuisine Kitchen Incubator began in 2009 with \$144,000 in development funds provided by the City of West Memphis. Since that time the partnership has expanded to include alt.Consulting, Winrock International, the Delta Center for Economic Development, and the East Arkansas Planning and Development District.

The MSCC/Delta Cuisine partnership will train entrepreneurs in the fields of food science, safety and nutrition, as well as small business development and expansion, including marketing and accounting. John Auker is serving as project manager for the Delta Cuisine incubator facility.

“This facility will allow food and farm entrepreneurs in our region access to a licensed and inspected facility in which food production and processing can occur, plus we will provide business training to increase the business feasibility,” Auker said.

Paul Luker, President of the Board of Directors for Delta Cuisine, said the project will have a major impact on the region.

“While the kitchen facility will be located in West Memphis, it will have the ability to serve the entire Arkansas Delta and Memphis regions as a microenterprise and economic development strategy. The facility will provide energetic entrepreneurs with a place to start food businesses and create new jobs.”

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc., serves nonprofit organizations that work to improve Memphis and the Mid-South. Its primary areas of focus include health and human services, education and lifelong learning, social justice and ethics, and cultural enrichment and the arts. Its Board of Directors convenes quarterly to review applications and determine funding approvals.

As a champion of lifelong learning, The Assisi Foundation works to strengthen its community’s educational well-being through programs that develop tools for life and focus on the awareness and importance of accepting social responsibilities. The Foundation funds nonprofits that build the organizational capacity of provider agencies,

provide professional development, promote collaboration, and leverage local, state, and federal resources.

Since its formation in 1994 from the sale of St. Francis Hospital, The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc. has awarded more than \$150 million to nonprofit organizations serving people located primarily in the Greater Memphis area.

“The mission of The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc. is simply, philanthropy; we are committed to service for the public good,” said Jan Young, Assisi Foundation Executive Director. “Inspired by the legacy of St. Francis of Assisi and influenced by our history of health care, we are mindful of the challenge to judiciously allocate our finite resources, and our vision is to be the best in class.”

The Assisi Foundation has been a major contributor to MSCC on multiple occasions. Since 1997, the philanthropic organization has awarded the college more than \$1.4 million for economic development/incubator initiatives, aviation technology enhancements, nursing education, early childhood enrichment, lifelong learning/reading programs, and public safety training.

For information about the kitchen incubator/hospitality project at MSCC, call (870) 733-6722, email admissions@midsouthcc.edu; visit the campus at 2000 West Broadway, or see the website at www.midsouthcc.edu.