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GTE gives \$125,000 for SMC videoconferencing center

SANTA MONICA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 5, 1996--

State-of-art facility to be housed at entertainment, tech

academy

In a move to expand its specialized workforce training and regional approach to education, Santa Monica College announced a \$125,000 grant from GTE California to create a videoconferencing center.

The center -- which is expected to provide interactive televised training to businesses as well as traditional college courses -- will be housed in SMC's new Academy of Entertainment and Technology, which will open in fall 1997.

The funds, which are given through the GTE Foundation, will be provided in three installments over three years, beginning with \$45,000. The company plans to present a check to the SMC board of trustees at its meeting on Monday, Dec. 9.

"We're excited that a partnership with GTE is giving us the opportunity to expand the scope of our service," said SMC President Dr. Piedad F. Robertson. "The videoconferencing center will allow us to teach classes on a broader basis, and provide specialized training to area businesses at their sites."

"We're delighted to be a technology partner with Santa Monica College," said Jorge Jackson, vice president of public affairs for GTE California. "By using GTE's technology, we're helping deliver educational resources to Santa Monica students and educators in an innovative way.

"Specifically, this videoconferencing center will be a great enabler and equalizer for connecting students in numerous locations with subject experts, instructors and curriculum in other locations."

Marvin Martinez, SMC dean of business and industry programs, said the videoconferencing center will allow the college flexibility in providing distance learning to businesses, to students at other higher education institutions, and even to students at home. In particular, the videoconferencing center can help the college meet the enormous need for trained

employees for the rapidly growing entertainment industry, he said.

SMC will launch next fall its Academy of Entertainment and Technology, a unique program to prepare employees for jobs in the entertainment industry, particularly new technologies. The college is currently working with a wide range of film and special effects studios to design a curriculum that meets the needs of the industry.

"We will be able to acquire state-of-the-art equipment to deliver our services, not only locally, but regionally, and even statewide," Martinez said. "It even gives us the opportunity to expand the scope of our services throughout the world."

"The GTE donation will allow Santa Monica College to improve its instructional and student services, and help us serve students we might not otherwise be able to," said SMC Academic Senate President Alan Buckley, who is heading up the college's distance learning planning.

"In addition, this donation is an example of the sort of public and private partnerships that will become more and more important for higher education in California. The faculty at Santa Monica College are grateful for the support of private industry for public education in California, and look forward to a long and beneficial partnership with GTE."

GTE California, a wholly owned subsidiary of GTE Corp. of Stamford, Conn., provides a variety of local and regional voice, video and data services to more than 4 million customers in nearly 500 communities in California and parts of Nevada and Arizona. It has served Santa Monica and the Westside of Los Angeles for 75 years.

SMC is a public, two-year community college that was founded in 1929.

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