

ACCC to open service industry training center

By DIANE D'AMICO, Education Writer | Posted: Wednesday, June 9, 2010 |

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Atlantic Cape Community College will invest in the future of Atlantic City with a 22,500-square-foot building devoted to training workers for the gaming and hospitality industries.

The Hospitality Studies Center for Workforce Training at ACCC's Worthington Campus in Atlantic City will provide programs in culinary, gaming, housekeeping, retail and other service jobs targeting entry-level and midlevel positions for Atlantic City residents. It should be completed in 2012.

"It is focusing right on the very product we are talking about today in terms of education and training," ACCC President Peter Mora said at a forum on Atlantic City's future Friday at the Atlantic City Convention Center. The new center could train as many as 1,200 workers per year.

The college has had a campus in the city for about 25 years, and in 2008 it expanded its health careers programs there.

Harrah's Entertainment, through funds it provides to the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, is providing half of the \$10 million cost for the Hospitality Studies Center. The remaining \$5 million is being bonded by the Atlantic County freeholders as part of the college's expansion plans.

"We have said that we will match what they raise," Atlantic County Executive Dennis Levinson said.

Harrah's will get naming rights for the center.

Donald Marrantino, president of Harrah's eastern division, said at the forum that he has seen the plans for the center and is pleased. He said they expect to have a name soon.

"It's all about jobs," he said. "The more we can get going, the more we can get people working. I applaud the president (Mora) for what he has done."

Richard Perniciaro, dean of facilities, planning and research at ACCC, said the paperwork is almost complete and construction should take about 18 months.

The new building is the result of the CRDA's 2008 Atlantic City Regional Economic and Workforce Profile Project, which identified the need for vocational training for the hospitality work force.

The first floor of the center will include two teaching kitchens and a retail store, offices, classrooms and storage. The second floor includes a hotel room with storage and offices. The plan also includes a "green" roof that will house a rooftop culinary garden that will reduce energy costs and manage stormwater runoff.

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