



DEL MAR COLLEGE

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DMC Board of Regents selects SpawGlass to renovate Del Mar College Workforce Development Center-Aransas County in Rockport

U.S. Economic Development Administration grant, local private donations and Del Mar College Foundation covering funding to transform former primary school, college to begin offering classes and workforce training opportunities soon

During their regular meeting on April 8, the Del Mar College (DMC) Board of Regents unanimously approved general contractor SpawGlass to renovate the Del Mar College Workforce Development Center-Aransas County after reviewing Competitive Sealed Proposals. The college owns half of the former Little Bay Primary School located on Highway 35 North in Rockport, which will become centric to training and other educational opportunities for Aransas County and surrounding communities' residents to meet workforce needs in the area once renovation is completed.

"We're very excited that our Board of Regents has selected a contractor for the renovation of the Del Mar College Workforce Development Center-Aransas County because the college can now move forward with facility renovation, and classes can start in the near future," said Lenora Keas, DMC Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. "We're also excited to work with the Rockport community and local school district to offer dual credit courses and college-related and workforce training."

While addressing the Board, John Jackson, Past President and current Board Secretary of the Aransas County Partnership Economic Development Corporation, added, "This has been a long five-year journey to get to this point, and it's a very significant threshold that we're crossing today. I want to thank you and the Del Mar College Foundation on behalf of everyone in Aransas County."

Completion of the \$2.5 million-plus project is anticipated by Spring 2026. The project initially began as a collaboration among DMC, Aransas County, the Aransas County Partnership Economic Development Corporation and the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) in 2021. Additionally, local private fundraising by Aransas County business leaders has also served a critical role to support project funding that will move the area's economy forward with a well-trained workforce.

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The center will include classrooms, labs and additional space to house high-demand marketable skills training that builds a sustainable workforce in the Aransas County area. Training strategically targets occupations identified by the Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend that meet Aransas County's local and regional needs, including:

- Health Sciences
- Public Safety/Fire/EMS
- Building/Construction Trades
- Light Industrial/Manufacturing
- Small Business & Entrepreneurship
- Computer-Aided Design/Drafting
- Communications & Broadcasting
- General Education, Continuing Education and certification programs

“Students will have the opportunity to take many classes in the evening, giving them the same flexibility as those who attend courses on one of the college's campuses” noted Davis Merrell, Dean of Industry and Public Service. “We will have adjunct and other well-qualified instructors delivering the same education and workforce training that Del Mar College is known to provide.”

DMC will offer courses not only through its academic programs but also by Continuing Education and Corporate Services, providing residents the opportunity to earn Marketable Skills Awards that can articulate into academic credits leading to Level I and II Certificates, Associate in Arts and Associate in Applied Science degrees and even toward the pursuit of DMC bachelor's degrees—the Bachelor of Applied Science in Organizational Management and Leadership and the Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

Once operational, the center will provide ongoing training and college-level courses for approximately 400 to 800 students per year. Classes and training will be available to everyone – young adults seeking a career, adults who want to up-skill and re-skill for essential jobs and those who simply want to re-enter the workforce.

Keas added, “The Del Mar College Workforce Development Center-Aransas County is an example of what can be achieved when partners work together for the benefit of the community.”

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