



RCCC, Philip Morris relationship continues

By Justin Vick
jvick@independenttribune.com
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Rowan-Cabarrus Community College has received a \$150,000 grant from Altria Group, the parent company of Philip Morris USA.

The grant comes one year after Philip Morris announced it was phasing out its Concord operations to consolidate U.S. operations at its Richmond, Va., plant by 2010.

RCCC spokesperson Jeff Lowrance said the college is appreciative of the corporation's generosity to Cabarrus and Rowan counties as it goes through what could be a difficult transition.

"I don't think we're surprised (by the continued support)," Lowrance said. "Philip Morris has been a good partner of the college ever since they came to the area."

Philip Morris has been RCCC's biggest corporate supporter since locating its cigarette manufacturing plant in Concord in 1981.

Since then, RCCC has provided customized training for Philip Morris employees, and the corporation has donated more than half a million dollars to the college.

Altria Group officials could not be immediately reached for comment Tuesday, but a statement from an executive issued by the college on Monday said Altria continues to support initiatives that contribute to the economic vitality of the area and the education of its citizens.

Altria Group's contribution is a two-year grant, \$75,000 of which will be given to the RCCC Foundation in 2009.

The grant will help cover expenses of the R3 Center's free outreach programs to unemployed and under-employed adults in Cabarrus and Rowan counties.

RCCC receives funding from the state legislature for programs involving the North Carolina Research Campus. Part of that funding has been spent on establishing and operating the R3 Center, Lowrance said.

The college established the career development center in 2007. Since then, the center has sought out Philip Morris employees and their families to help them re-enter the work force as jobs leave Concord.

- Contact Justin Vick: 704-789-9138