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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Former Wellington mayor proposes PBCC campus for Village

(Wellington, Fla. – April 2, 2008) –Former Wellington mayor Kathy Foster is leading an effort to get the Village Council to give Palm Beach Community College about 65 acres at Pierson Road to build a campus there.

Foster submitted a formal request to the Village Council earlier today to present the proposal at the council meeting at 7 p.m. April 22. Foster said the partnership would be a win-win for PBCC and the residents of Wellington and western communities. The Village Council has been debating for the last few years about how best to use the tract known as K-Park. While some contend the parcel should be used for a park, others have argued that it could better serve as a college site.

Foster's new push comes at an ideal time for PBCC, which was given the green light by the state Department of Education in 2006 to pursue plans for a fifth campus. The College already has locations in Palm Beach Gardens, Boca Raton, Belle Glade and Lake Worth. However, a study commissioned by the College in 2005 revealed that with Palm Beach County's population expected to continue to soar over the next 25 to 30 years, a fifth campus is needed. The study looked closely at current drive times to PBCC's existing campuses and where the growth is expected to occur in the county. Much of the growth will be in the Wellington, Royal Palm Beach and Acreage areas. By 2030, the county's population is expected to jump by 600,000 people —from 1.3 million to about 1.9 million.

“The opportunity to have a college campus in the Village of Wellington is a dream many residents have had for many years. The partnership with Palm Beach Community College would provide cultural and education opportunities for our residents from kindergarten through lifelong learning programs,” said Foster, who was Wellington's first mayor and a founding member in 1983 of the Palms West Chamber of Commerce. “It would truly be the crown jewel in the quality of life of an already wonderful community.”

(more)

College leaders, who are seeking funding from the state legislature to build the campus, said that if the Council approves the measure, the College could break ground for the first building on the site within nine months of receiving title to the land.

“This would be an ideal PBCC campus location for the residents of Wellington,” said PBCC President Dennis Gallon. “It would allow us to improve educational access for that area and, at the same time, offer new facilities for community use.”

Palm Beach Community College, Florida’s first public community college, is celebrating its 75th anniversary throughout 2008. The largest institution of higher education in Palm Beach County, PBCC serves more than 45,000 students annually through its associate degrees, professional certificates, career and customized training and lifelong learning. The College offers more than 100 programs of study at locations in Lake Worth, Boca Raton, Palm Beach Gardens and Belle Glade.

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