

CH2M HILL grant benefits WSU Tri-Cities IT, programs

CH2M HILL Hanford Group recently received an update from Washington State University Tri-Cities on how the company's grants are being used to benefit university and student programs in information technology, small-business support and outreach to underrepresented populations.

CH2M HILL is supporting WSU Tri-Cities programs with a six-year, \$2 million grant it pledged in 2001.

The endowment continues to support the university's computer program. Funding enabled the university to increase the size of its computer-science faculty size by 50 percent and offer a broader array of course work.

"Students are benefiting not only from the increased breadth in our faculty capacity, but also from the enhanced infrastructure," said LoAnn Ayers, WSU Tri-Cities director of Development. "Both faculty and students are enjoying the capabilities of the newly equipped computer laboratories."

The endowment also continues to support the WSU Business Local Institute of Networking, Knowledge and Support, also known as LINKS. Each year, numerous LINKS interns are placed in Tri-City businesses and non-profit and government organizations. The program also helps nurture entrepreneurs and supports existing business owners.

Ayers said clients of the LINKS procurement center were successful in getting more than \$7.5 million in contracts during the year, resulting in the creation of dozens of new jobs. Ayers added that CH2M HILL's support also enabled students to complete internships with more than 30 local businesses, helping the students gain valuable résumé experience and providing their clients with useful tools ranging from Web sites to inventory databases.

Continued support for the Mathematics, Engineering and Science Achievement, or MESA, program will help area students who are underrepresented in the fields of mathematics, engineering, and science to achieve their potential and pursue careers in those fields.

"CH2M HILL Hanford Group sets a high standard for corporate involvement in the community," said Ayers in a recent letter to Ed Aromi, CH2M HILL Hanford Group president and general manager. "Your personal commitment and that of your company make a huge impact on the university's ability to expand and enhance academic programs that are just not possible through state support alone."

"CH2M HILL is honored to be able to contribute to the community as a citizen of the Tri-Cities," said Aromi. "And we are pleased to be able to partner with WSU Tri-Cities to promote technology-based education and economic diversification in the area." ■