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Schools agree to operate joint community college

The presidents of Lake-Sumter Community College and the University of Central Florida have agreed in principle to jointly operate a community college in south Lake County.

The community college will be built on a 127-acre plot of land in Clermont, adjacent to the South Lake Hospital, says Kenneth J. Stack, L-SCC's vice president of administrative services. He says ground will be broken on the \$3 million, 25,189-square-foot branch of the community college early next year. It should open to students in January 1999.

UCF has asked Florida's Board of Regents to approve its plan to bring degree programs to outlying areas. Pending state approval, UCF plans to build a 25,000-square-foot building that would open about a year later on that same property and would be expandable to 50,000 square feet with the addition of a second floor. Undergraduate, and possibly graduate, degrees in health care, computer-related and hospitality manage-

ment fields are being discussed, he says.

The 127-acre parcel is being acquired from Maury L. Carter and Associates, Orlando, for \$1.2 million, says Stack. Carter has donated 40 of the acres, and both South Lake Hospital and the community college will buy separate 43.5-acre blocks of land. The college will buy back the land from the hospital in the future, he says. The land deal is expected to close in September.

South Lake Hospital was interested in having the new college built next to it, Stack says, because the proximity would benefit students enrolled in health care programs and also would provide convenience for hospital staff training and continuing education. The hospital is jointly operated by Orlando Regional Healthcare System and South Lake Memorial Hospital.

Separately, the Lake County Library System also is considering whether to build a branch on the 127-acre plot, Stack says.

— Tom Brinkmoeller