

Land buy may bring UCF to Lake

□ Lake-Sumter trustees approved purchasing property in hopes UCF will join the planned campus there.

By Dave Weber

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

Four Corners residents may soon get a four-year college nearby.

Trustees of Lake-Sumter Community College have approved buying land in south Lake County that could bring a branch of the University of Central Florida to the area.

With help from South Lake Hospital, the community college is acquiring 112 acres for a south Lake center of the community college.

Trustees hope that UCF could eventually become part of the campus off State Road 50 near Clermont.

Construction of the community college campus is scheduled to begin in January.

The \$3 million center is expected to open a year later with programs focusing on business, health care and the hospitality industry, officials said.

College trustees hired Nick Jones, a Clermont architect, to draw plans for the initial 225,000-

square-foot structure and to oversee construction. Jones already has done preliminary planning.

Plans for the UCF branch remain sketchy, said Ken Stack, L-SCC vice president.

Some state university officials see branch campuses as a way to provide more university seats to meet demand, Stack said, but they have not yet approved the UCF branch.

L-SCC President Robert Westrick and UCF President John Hitt have discussed adding a UCF branch to the proposed community college campus, and the two presidents last winter signed a pact to work toward winning state approval for the branch.

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