



For Immediate Release

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THE NORCLIFFE FOUNDATION AWARDS GENEROUS GRANT TO BTC'S NORTHWEST CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL, FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE SCIENCES.

Bellingham, Wash. – July 2, 2009 – Bellingham Technical College has been awarded a \$200,000 grant from the Seattle-based Norcliffe Foundation for construction of a new facility to house the College's Fisheries Technology Program.

The funds will be added to BTC's \$6 million capital campaign to build the Northwest Center for Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences. Plans call for building a Silver LEED certified workforce training and public education center that can also serve as a fisheries research lab and classroom for hundreds of visiting schoolchildren each year.

BTC is one of only four Colleges on the west coast that offers a 2 year degree in Fisheries Technology. The program manages a hatchery at the mouth of Whatcom Creek and operates out of a retrofitted sewage treatment plant located on Park property. The building is more than 60 years old and has severe structural and settlement problems making renovations or repairs impossible.

BTC's Fisheries Program has a proven track record of education innovation. In 1978 when BTC began to operate and maintain the state hatchery in Maritime Heritage Park, it had no natural fish runs. Today that same creek boasts the largest recreational chum fishery in the State. Building the Northwest Center for Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences means this State will have the hatchery managers and habitat enhancement technicians it needs to fill jobs in these high demand professions.

"We are thrilled that the Norcliffe Foundation has decided to support this project" said Mary Humphries, BTC's Executive Director of College Advancement. "The Center will serve as a model of how we can foster economic development while also encouraging best practices in resource sustainability and habitat protection."

"The Norcliffe Foundation is pleased to award significant support to the Northwest Center of Environmental, Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences. We value excellence in education, and are confident that this rebuild will lead to an enhanced experience for future students. We are delighted to be part of the revitalization of Bellingham's historic waterfront, a true jewel of the Northwest," says Mary Pigott, Norcliffe Foundation Board member.

About the Norcliffe Foundation:

The Norcliffe Foundation, a private nonprofit family foundation, is well known for their support of environmental, education, civic improvement, health, social services, religion, culture and the arts, historic preservation, and youth programs throughout Washington State.

About BTC:

The Fisheries Technology Program offers 1 year certificate and 2 year degree options with a post graduation job placement rate of 93% and a starting salary of \$38,000. For more information go to BTC's website at www.btc.ctc.edu or contact Earl Steel, BTC Fisheries Technology Instructor, (360) 752-8352 or email esteel@btc.ctc.edu.

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