Bellingham college’s $4.5 million fisheries building completed

BY KE BILLINGHAM

BELLINGHAM — A grand opening celebration Saturday, Nov. 10, will mark the completion of the new $4.5 million Perry Center for Fisheries and Aquaculture Sciences and the public and private donors who helped Bellingham Technical College realize its vision of a fisheries building.

Patrick McIver, president of Bellingham Technical College, called the public-private support the “fueling part” of the project.

“It’s pretty exciting ownership in the building,” McIver said.

The Saturday event is by invitation only. A public open house will be held later.

The old, worn-out fisheries building at Maritime Heritage Park was built in 1997 to serve as a weight-lifting plant.

The walls and roof joined. The heating and electrical systems were outdated, and classroom chairs with wheels tended to roll to the other side of the room.

In more, with the completion of the new two-story building at Maritime Heritage Park.

The 5,000-square-foot building was built to last 50 years and to a LEED silver standard to make it more energy-efficient.

Revamped 15-months of construction of the building was the building.

BTC has run the fish hatchery at the mouth of Whatcom Creek at Maritime Heritage Park since 1970, after the former wastewater treatment plant was converted.

Officials said that where they took over the hatchery, there were no natural salmon runs in the creek.

Today, it has multiple healthy runs of salmon species, according to BTC.

The program and its students also operate the fish hatchery at Kitsap Falls Park.

BTC’s employees are also fish hatchery specialists, culture for salmon and steelhead, and as scientific advisors for habitat restoration.

The programs students are to improve and maintain salmon populations, and program on salmon by each year, as well as raise nearly 2 million steelhead and salmon that are released into area creeks and rivers.

The new building was paid for with public and private dollars, including $2 million from the state and $1 million from the Whatcom County Economic Development Investment program.

Sources were state and federal, and studentfaculty.

A private donation also came from Chuck Bergman, chairman of the North Dakota-based Trident Seafoods, which has a processing plant in Bellingham.

BTC and state funding for the hatchery and asked that the center be named for Fred and Virginia Perry.

Fred Perry, Bellingham resident, had been the owner of St. John Seafoods in Bellingham, and the two have worked together for many years.

To kickoff, the project honors an essential piece of the Pacific Northwest, its fisheries and aquaculture.

“Those above young people, and those not so young, to work in an industry that they’re really committed to,” she added.

During the building’s construction, BTC also reviewed its curriculum, allowing students, after two years, to transfer to Western Washington University’s marine college.

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