



KEVIN JOHNSON/SENTINEL

SANTA CRUZ — Golf carts await golfers at Pasatiempo Golf Club on a sunny Monday afternoon.

PRIVATE DONATIONS

Cabrillo College Foundation raises \$5.5 million

By **KIRSTEN FAIRCHILDS**
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APTOS — The 2009-10 fiscal year proved to be record-setting for the Cabrillo College Foundation.

The foundation raised \$5.5 million, more than it ever has in a single year. And not only did the total rank as No. 1 among all of the 112 community college foundations in California, the Cabrillo College Foundation also attracted the greatest number of total donors: 4,714.

Melinda Silverstein, foundation executive director, said the \$5.5 million raised tripled the amount raised in 2008-09. Silverstein has seen an average increase in donations of 11 percent a year over the 14 years she has led the foundation.

"Santa Cruz County is a very, very generous community," Silverstein said. "People here understand that donating and supporting their local community college is really helping the community overall."

Established in 1962, the foundation is a nonprofit dedicated

to supporting Cabrillo College and its students by raising private donations.

"We have 35 volunteer board members and another 100-plus serve on committees," Silverstein said. "About a third of the funds that are raised come from businesses, a third come from individuals and a third come from private foundations."

The median gift in 2009-10 was \$50. More than \$300,000 was earmarked for scholarship funds, which will be awarded to more than 800 students.

Rachel Spencer, a Cabrillo College Foundation board member, said she wasn't surprised to learn that the foundation had raised the most money in the state.

"People love Cabrillo College," said Spencer, who is also founder of the Women's Educational Success Program. Her program is an endowment fund that provides low-income female Cabrillo students with emergency cash grants of between \$100-\$500.

"People love Cabrillo because they've either studied

here or their kids have gone to Cabrillo or their kids are going to go to Cabrillo," Spencer said. "Now, more than ever, community colleges are fulfilling the need for higher education, and people recognize that."

In 2010, the foundation received \$3.6 million from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The foundation's total endowment tops \$13 million, which a recent survey by the Network of California Community Colleges ranked as the sixth largest statewide.

"The Cabrillo College Foundation was already a strong foundation when I arrived here in 2004," said Brian King, president and superintendent of Cabrillo College. "We've been so fortunate for the work that Melinda Silverstein, the board and all of the staff has done as well as the amount of community support we've received, even when the economy was struggling."

"It just says so much about our community and the way that Santa Cruz County has

AT A GLANCE

CABRILLO COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

WHAT: A nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Cabrillo College and its students by raising private donations. The foundation raised a record-setting \$5.5 million in the 2009-10 fiscal year. Out of the 112 community college foundations in the state, the \$5.5 million ranked No. 1.

WHERE: 6500 Soquel Drive, Aptos.

HOURS: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

HOW TO DONATE: 479-6338; www.cabrillo.edu/associations/foundation

always supported Cabrillo," King said. "We've had such generous community support, and I think it's a tremendous reflection on our faculty and our staff that their work is acknowledged and appreciated."