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LOCAL - LIFESTYLE

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CABRILLO COLLEGE

Cabrillo seeks partner to share SV space

Move aims to cut costs as budget cuts loom

By **KIMBERLY WHITE**

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SCOTTS VALLEY — Bracing itself for budget cuts that will almost certainly result in even fewer class offerings, Cabrillo College is looking for partners to share space — and the cost of its lease — at its Scotts Valley satellite campus.

The community college pays

\$132,000 per year to lease the 7,350-square-foot site on Whispering Pines Drive, where students have been taking classes since fall 2007. That lease is up in December 2012.

Six months ago, the college and city leaders began discussing a lease agreement that would move the campus to a larger site at the planned Town Center. But on Monday, the Board of Govern-

nors — already under the shadow of an ax in Sacramento that would cut at least \$400 million from the state's community college system — decided to back out of those talks.

Mayor Dene Bustichi and Councilman Randy Johnson were involved in those talks as members of the city's economic development subcommittee, and expressed surprise at the news. It's especially disheartening, they say, in light of a bond

measure voters passed in 2004 with the goal of raising funds to upgrade Cabrillo's facilities. Scotts Valley — and by extension, the entire San Lorenzo Valley — has gotten a raw deal, they say, since a portion of those residents' property taxes are going to pay for facility improvements in Watsonville and Aptos.

"The taxpayers voted to tax themselves in anticipation that

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Cabrillo College was going to have a presence in Scotts Valley," he said. "That's part of their mandate for this tax, and I think in that regard, it's disappointing because they've had a brief presence in Scotts Valley."

But King disagreed, calling the site on Whispering Pines Drive a "significant investment" in Scotts Valley. Cabrillo has a long-term commitment to the city, and school administrators do eventually want to move into a more permanent facility. But with imminent budget cuts, he said, now is not the time to move.

Cabrillo entered into talks with the city with the best of intentions, and in a more normal fiscal climate, the college would likely have signed the lease agreement, he said. But those talks started last fall, and school officials couldn't have foreseen the expansive budget cuts now on the horizon.

Cuts at Cabrillo could range from \$4.8 million to \$10.7 million, although budget talks for the 2011-12 school year are moving forward based on a \$7.2 million figure. The general operating budget at Cabrillo for 2010-2011 is \$59 million.

In addition to its main campus in Aptos and the Scotts Valley branch, Cabrillo also has satellite campuses in Santa Cruz and Watsonville.

From a broad perspective, society benefits from those satellite campuses, since students don't have to travel so far to take their classes and don't contribute as much to pollution and congestion on the roadways, Bustichi said.

But beyond that, Scotts Valley, Watsonville and other cities benefit, since that's where students spend their money.

"Economically, having a campus in Scotts Valley, where you have an influx of students coming in and out on a daily basis, supports business," Bustichi said.

In spring 2010, 326 students enrolled at the Scotts Valley campus, but that number fell 13 percent to 283 this spring, according to King's figures.