

ACC plans start to take shape in city

Plans have been progressing, since Round Rock voted itself into the Austin Community College taxing district this past May.

In September, ACC trustees got a sneak peek at what the new ACC Round Rock campus will look like when it's completed in 2010.

As Lauri Zachry reported in the *Leader*, ACC's Round Rock campus will be located on 60 acres, south of University Boulevard and adjacent to County Road 112.

Phase One of the project includes five buildings - with more than 250,000 square-feet - to accommodate 5,000 students.

These five buildings will consist of a three-story health-science center, with classrooms and laboratories; a general studies building, with a student commons and bookstore; a library; labs for automotive welding and building construction programs; and a central utility plant for housing campus maintenance, plus heating and air.

ACC is scheduled to break ground on the new campus during the first quarter of 2009 and, as we mentioned, it is scheduled to open in 2010.

ACC's Board of Trustees has scheduled a Feb. 16 public forum where completed campus plans will be unveiled for the public.

We could not be more pleased. This is such a positive step for Round Rock and all of Williamson County.

According to figures ACC has provided, more local high school graduates choose ACC than any other college. For example, in the spring of 2007, 292 Round Rock ISD high school graduates were continuing their educations at ACC. That was almost double the second-most popular school, the University of Texas.

ACC also draws the most graduates from Leander, Pflugerville, Austin, Westlake and Manor high schools.

Higher education - the key to competitiveness in a global economy - grows ever more expensive. Many young people can't afford college. And yet we as a nation can't afford the words from an old Charlie Daniels' song to be true: "A rich man goes to college and a poor man goes to work."

As we mentioned, Phase One of the ACC Round Rock campus will feature health-sciences classrooms and labs. Three of Round Rock's top employers are Round Rock Medical Center, Scott & White University Medical Center, and Seton.

When ACC opens its Round Rock campus in 2010, we will have in place a community of continuity - one where people can graduate from high school and college and then go right to work.

College costs continue to rise, faster than the inflation rate and faster than most people's wages.

Austin Community College provides quality, affordable education for young high school graduates and adults.