

# A CULINARY COMMUNITY

LCC's Center for Meeting and Learning really cooks. ■ Story By Lance Sparks ■ Photos By Todd Cooper

In 1995, the generous and visionary voters of Lane County passed a \$42.8 million bond measure designed to bring Lane Community College into the twenty-first century. In the eight years since, the learning village that is LCC has raised many fine new buildings — Welding Technology, with state-of-the-art equipment; greatly expanded Science Building, with new labs and classrooms; the homey and welcoming Child Care Village; the elegant Students First (Building 1) housing Student Services; plus critically important other additions and remodels of existing buildings.

One of the most intriguing and promising of the new structures, and one of the last completed, is Building 19, christened the Center for Meeting and Learning, intended to provide offices, classrooms, kitchen facilities and meeting spaces for LCC's thriving Culinary Arts and Hospitality programs. The new structure sits near to and parallel with Students First, on the west side of the campus, very near the main entrance. In appearance, the exterior is plain and unadorned, gray cement with touches of warm brick and



Culinary Arts students  
Joe Alves, Neal Stuck,  
and Mike Levinson.

Building 19: Center for Meeting and Learning.



painted cedar siding on the facade, the whole quite consistent with the rest of the campus architecture, simple, clean, cost-effective and functional. The nearby grounds are still largely raw topsoil and a few young trees; over the next few months LCC's talented gardeners will transform

the landscape with fresh plantings of flowers and shrubs.

Inside the verdant beauty of the grounds and the forested hills of the west campus are clearly visible through the huge glass windows that front the building and illuminate the lobby and reception

area. Here, too, the space is functional, clean and spare: good carpet in neutral colors, cream paint on the walls, modernistic but comfortable seats and benches. The bare walls scream for art, but "I have a plan for that," says Peg Allison, chair of the whole division and director of Conference and Culinary Services. She is energetic yet calm, articulate yet soft-spoken, but boundlessly enthusiastic about the potentials for her building, her programs, students and staff and the activities they will promote and serve.

In fact, Peg Allison and the College have many plans for the Center, plus the reasonable confidence that those plans can be quickly realized, because the Center is so well planned and equipped to meet the College's and the larger community's needs for a special space that can serve many purposes: training and educating a growing number of people who intend to make professions in the fields of culinary arts and hospitality; providing spaces, large and small, where organizations can meet and confer, or conduct workforce training with access to the latest in communication technology; offering business-

es and community groups food services and support on a welcoming campus environment that encourages a sense of partnership in our common goals of improving the quality of life and work in all of Lane County.

The real keys to the Center's potentials lie in its people — 70 to 75 trained students in Culinary Arts, an equal number in Hospitality programs, plus highly skilled and experienced professionals who are the teachers and trainers — and in the quality of the tools the staff has been provided through the generosity of many individuals and local businesses, "who raised over \$300,000 to finish the preparation kitchen." For example, Tom and Kathy Wiper and Curtis Restaurant Supply contributed hugely to create the Wiper Culinary Arts Classrooms, a space where teachers can lecture, step over to a demonstration area, show techniques to students, then let the students move to six stations to practice their lessons. Each station is equipped with a top-of-the-line six-burner Wolf range, covered by a gleaming stainless-steel hood, supplemented by stainless-steel tables, rolling racks, Hobart