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CLACKAMAS COMMUNITY COLLEGE *Smart.* 19600 Molalla Avenue Oregon City, Oregon

CAREER & EDUCATION

Education for the Career of Choice

Culinary classes support small business startup

BY DEBORAH WESSELL

Most community college students don't launch their careers until after graduation. But Terri McGee got right down to business, opening Sweet Bubba Ray's take-out and catering business in November before earning her Certificate in Culinary Arts at Mt. Hood Community College the following month.

McGee first considered MHCC for the convenient location, then found culinary classes to enhance her cooking skills and coursework in small business management to turn her dreams into practical reality.

Court Carrier, the school's Hospitality and Tourism director, describes the program that started in 1986 with eight students and has grown to 115 today.

"We added Culinary Arts to the curriculum about five years ago," said Court Carrier, the school's



Terri McGee gets cooking on her career before she graduates with a Certificate in Culinary Arts from Mt. Hood Community College.

Hospitality and Tourism director. "Portland is a foodie town beyond belief now and this gives students a cost-effective education in the field."

Carrier can't say enough about McGee. "She's a dedicated, standout student with a real passion for her work. I supervised her internship at Beaverton Bakery. She knew exactly what she wanted, and I applaud her for putting her learning into practice."

McGee gives a great deal of credit to her Texan mother. "I started cooking young, in the kitchen with my mom. I lived in Texas for eight years. When I looked at the Portland market, I saw barbecue here and there, but not much down-home southern-style food."

When Sweet Bubba Ray's first opened at 5222 N.E. Sacramento in a commercial kitchen in Portland's Hollywood District, McGee offered both catering and take-out (just one or two days a week). But it's really "sit-down food," as she puts it, and she doesn't have the capital or the high traffic location to start a res-

taurant. So for now, she's catering for groups and serving lunches to the nearby workers who phone in their orders.

McGee's specialties are very down-home. Customer favorites include catfish filets fried in a light coating, collard greens and kale and in particular her sweet potato pie. But the phrase "easy as pie" hardly describes the catering business.

"It's a lot of hard work, especially starting out," McGee admits. "I've really been burning the midnight oil. Great ideas aren't enough. You've got to put the work in, being on your feet all day, learning to be a jack of all trades. But it's fun, and I enjoy it."

What does the future hold for Sweet Bubba Ray's? Given the down economy, McGee's near-term plan is just to stay afloat.

"But I'm very optimistic," she said. "Southern food is comfort food, and we all need a little comfort right now."

For more information about MHCC's Hospitality and Tourism program, visit mhcc.edu.

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OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

Healthcare

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in Portland's Old Town Chinatown. This move positions the college to better address the increasing interest in its degree programs, while simultaneously enabling the college to provide health care in a neighborhood currently undergoing an exciting renaissance.

The new campus, designed in accordance with the Chinese principles of feng shui and synergistically positioned in Old Town

Chinatown, will provide the college with an academic, clinical and research facility designed from the ground floor up.

The space will nearly double the college's square footage to better serve the needs of students and patients, bring the school's academic, clinical and research facilities together under one roof, and support the expansion of clinic services, public programs and community wellness activities.

To learn more about the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, visit ocom.edu.