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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 5, 2015

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Safety Summit to enhance community partnerships in an emergency

PENDLETON, Ore. – Blue Mountain Community College will host a regional Safety Summit on Jan. 21 to bring together schools, emergency personnel, health services, city and county governments, and other community organizations to identify resources and create partnerships to assist one another should a crisis incident ever occur. The Safety Summit will take place at the Pendleton Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

BMCC decided to pull together the Safety Summit after campus discussions following the tragic shooting at Umpqua Community College in October.

“That tragedy hit very close to home for us since UCC is another Oregon community college and many of our staff have colleagues who work there,” said BMCC President Cam Preus. “We’ve learned from that incident that there is a big reliance on the community to step forward to provide assistance and resources, so BMCC wants to make sure we have those partnerships in place ahead of time throughout our district.”

BMCC quickly determined other area schools and organizations could benefit from sharing resources and formalizing partnerships; thus the Safety Summit. The Summit will serve Umatilla, Morrow and Baker counties – BMCC’s service district region.

The Summit will kick off with keynote speaker Mary Schoenfeldt of Schoenfeldt & Associates/Safer Schools in Marysville, Wash. Schoenfeldt has worked in emergency management/crisis response with a specialty in school systems for more than 20 years. Her background combines law enforcement, emergency management, education and disaster mental health. She is also the author of several books on crisis response. Her keynote presentation will focus on the benefits and importance of community partnerships in crisis situations.

In addition to Schoenfeldt, Umatilla County Emergency Manager Jack Remillard and Oregon State Police Sgt. Mark Banks will discuss the community response in the wake of the fatal 2013 tour bus crash on Interstate 84.

The remainder of the Summit will see participants break out into group regions – Pendleton-area, Hermiston-area, Milton-Freewater-area, Baker County area and Morrow County area. These groups will identify resources among each of their organizations, as well as begin to draft formal partnership agreements to aid in safety response planning efforts.

(more)

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BMCC has invited all public K-12 school districts in Umatilla, Morrow and Baker counties, as well as the InterMountain Education Service District, law enforcement, emergency personnel, city and county governments, hospitals and health districts, bus companies, convention center directors, county fair directors, the American Red Cross, Head Start, the CTUIR, prison personnel and the National Guard.

BMCC suggests each organization send a participant in order to expand the network of resources and partnerships throughout the region. Organizations that represent multiple locations should plan to bring a team.

Interested organizations need to RSVP by Jan. 15 to Shannon Franklin in the BMCC President's Office, sfranklin@bluecc.edu or 541-278-5951. The Safety Summit is free and includes lunch for participants.

Questions regarding the summit can be directed to BMCC Vice President of Public Relations Casey White-Zollman (cwhitezollman@bluecc.edu or 541-278-5839) or Associate Vice President of Human Resources Tammie Parker (tparker@bluecc.edu or 541-278-5850).

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