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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BMCC hires former NWAC Coach of the Year as new women's, men's soccer coach

PENDLETON, Ore. – Blue Mountain Community College has hired Art Mota as its head coach to helm both the new women's and men's soccer teams. Mota has been the head women's soccer coach at Chemeketa Community College in Salem, where he was named the Northwest Athletic Conference (NWAC) South Division Coach of the Year in 2014. He will launch the Timberwolves' women's soccer program this fall, followed by men's soccer in the fall of 2017.

"I am very excited about this opportunity," Mota said. "It doesn't happen often when you get to start a college program and lay the foundation for the future. My top priority will be to recruit student athletes who are determined in earning a degree and moving on to a university. I am just as competitive as any other coach, but academics will always be first and foremost."

Mota, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, has also served as head coach at Linn-Benton Community College. In addition, he was the head coach of the Capital Timbers Under-18 girls team, as well as assistant women's coach at Willamette University in Salem. He has also spent time as a coach at the high school level, including men's and women's soccer clubs. He's also been a personal trainer and soccer referee.

Mota will hit the ground running to recruit female players for the inaugural women's team. With numerous soccer programs in the region, both at club and high school levels, Mota likely won't have to look far to find talent to fill a roster.

"This first season will be very challenging," Mota said. "The NWAC is a strong conference in soccer, and what incoming players have to prepare for is the speed of play and physical/mental demands of the college game. Student athletes coming to BMCC will quickly find out that expectations are high, fitness and fundamentals will be emphasized, respect towards officials and opposing teams at all times, and conduct yourself in a manner that positively represents BMCC."

The soccer program received a boost with grant awards from the Wildhorse Foundation and the Pendleton Foundation Trust to help fund start-up costs of soccer at BMCC. The Pendleton Foundation Trust awarded the program \$14,000, while the Wildhorse Foundation granted \$5,000 for equipment. In addition, Pendleton Bottling Company, which runs the local Pepsi distribution, will donate funds to purchase and install a scoreboard on the soccer field.

(more)

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The field is undergoing excavation and renovation to bring it up to compliance with NWAC standards, and will be closed to the public until July. It is the only regulation-size soccer field in the city.

The BMCC Board of Education approved adding soccer to the College's roster of varsity athletics in September 2015. Currently, there are soccer programs at 26 of the NWAC's 36 collegiate teams. In rare form, the NWAC's Executive Director, Marco Azurdia, wrote an enthusiastic letter of support for soccer at BMCC to the Board of Education, citing the positive athletic, cultural, academic, and financial impact adding the sport could have for the College.

Women's and men's soccer will join women's and men's basketball and rodeo, as well as volleyball, baseball and softball at BMCC. Student athletes, collectively, at BMCC achieved a higher average GPA than the averaged general full-time student at BMCC, and 91% of sophomores successfully transferred to a four-year institution. In October 2015, BMCC was presented with the prestigious NWAC President's Cup, which honors strong academic performance by a college's student athletes.

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