

# Knight sees bright future for college

It's ironic," said Bob Knight, president of Clark College, during his Jan. 14 State of the College address. "During tough economic times, companies cut back because their demand is down. The opposite is true for us."

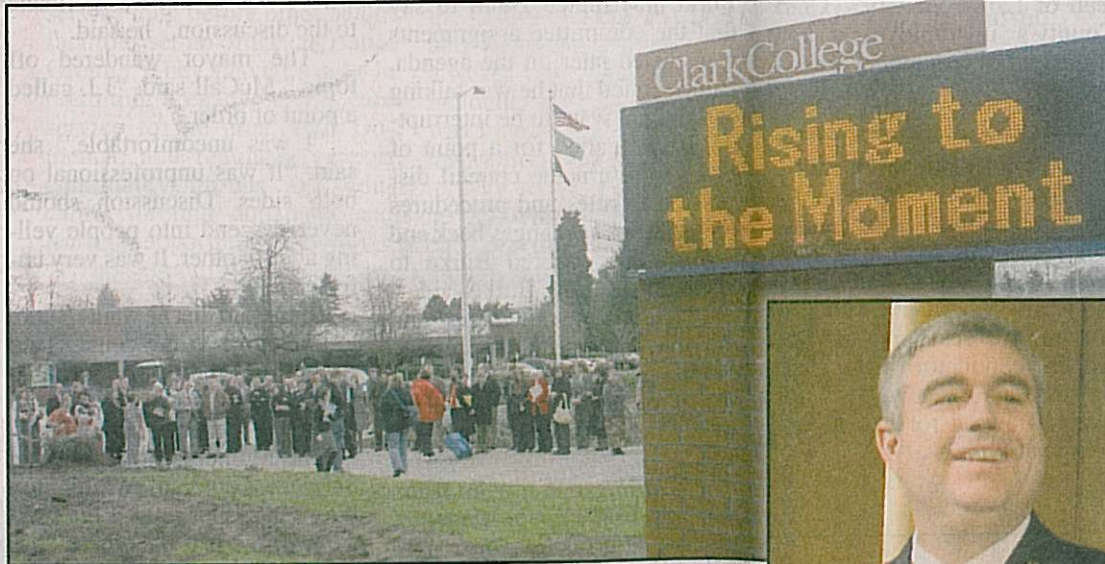
"During tough economic times, our enrollment numbers have grown dramatically--at the same time that state funding has been cut," said Knight.

Knight said that for most of the past decade, Clark College enrollment was between 11,000 and 12,000 students each quarter. Enrollment reached 13,000 students in spring 2009.

But in September 2009, enrollment expanded to 16,000 students--an all-time record at the 75-year-old institution.

The college opened its new building at the Columbia Tech Center in east Vancouver just in time.

As enrollment mushroomed last fall, said Knight, the college filled classrooms and added new sections. "We increased class sizes and the student to faculty ratio. We used one-time stimulus funds to balance the budget. We hired more part-time faculty."



**ENROLLMENT HAS SET A RECORD** at Clark College during the last term as more students seek education and training. A new building in east Vancouver opened near capacity last fall.

And the new Columbia Tech Center building opened at near capacity.

The enrollment boom coincided with budget cuts from the state, said Knight, yet the college balanced its budget.

"We did it all by trimming our budget in ways that--as much as possible--minimized the impact on our students," said Knight.

"None of us know what will happen during the next legislative session," said Knight. "But state revenues are still down and unemployment is still high. We are facing additional cuts and we're worried that fewer dollars may be available for worker retraining and work study programs--hurting the students who most need our help and



**BOB KNIGHT** support."

Knight said new buildings are in the college's future.

He said a new, \$36 million building for science, technology, engineering and math, slated to be constructed across Fort Vancouver Way from Gaiser Hall, could open by 2013 or may be delayed until 2015. "We want a building that engages our students and our region," said Knight.

"I'm proud to say that our planned facility in northern Clark County has made the list of growth projects at Washington's community and technical college and will be funded in the next decade also," said Knight. "We believe that building will be completed by the end of the decade."

The governor's initial 2010 budget proposal includes a cut of more than \$182 million in student financial aid. Knight estimates that, of that amount, Clark College's share will be about \$3.7 million in grants, work study money and scholarships.

Through December 2009, the college received nearly 15,000 financial aid applications. "That's a 63 percent increase over last year," said Knight, who

*See Clark College on page A2*

# Clark College

*Continued from page A1*

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added that the college awarded more than \$42 million in financial aid compared to about \$25 million the prior year.

In addition, the college awarded more than \$20 million in Pell grants compared to \$9 million the prior year.

“We know that our students

have many choices when it comes to their education,” said Knight. “We are proud when they choose to join our Penguin Nation.”

Knight presented Presidential Coins to faculty members who have distinguished themselves. Coins went to Karla Sylwester who received an award for teaching, learning and assessment; Dave Kosloski, debate coach, who was named 2009

Community College Outstanding Educator by the National Communication Association; Mike Godson who was honored as Educator of the Year by the North American Council of Automotive Teachers; and Don Appert, conductor of the Clark orchestra who received a fourth national award for his original compositions.