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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charles C. Matthews Foundation donates \$1 million toward Gateway Center and workforce programs

In recognition of the Charles C. Matthews Foundation's \$1 million donation and longstanding support of Panola College, the Panola College Board of Trustees voted at its August 31 meeting to name the College's new Gateway Center the Matthews Foundation Gateway Center.

The latest gift continues the Matthews Foundation's longstanding commitment to Panola College and its students. In 2018, the Foundation established the College's only endowed scholarship dedicated specifically to students in workforce programs, which has since supported more than 300 students. Over the years, the Foundation has also established additional endowed scholarships, funded equipment for College programs, and made significant contributions to the Charles C. Matthews Foundation Student Center and Matthews Foundation Energy Building.

"The Charles C. Matthews Foundation has played an important role in advancing opportunities for Panola College students for many years," said Dr. Jessica Pace, Panola College president. "Their continued investment has helped us strengthen programs, expand our facilities, and better serve the educational and workforce needs of our region. Naming the Gateway Center in their honor is a fitting recognition of the lasting impact they continue to make at Panola College."

Current trustees of the Charles C. Matthews Foundation are Richard Ballenger, David Bush, Jim Payne, Vern Reeder, and Robert Underwood.

"The Board is proud to recognize the Charles C. Matthews Foundation for its extraordinary commitment to Panola College and the students we serve," said Kevin Smith, Board of Trustees Chair. "The Matthews Foundation Gateway Center will stand as a lasting reminder of that generosity and the opportunities it continues to create for our students and community."

The Matthews Foundation Gateway Center will be a 25,000-square-foot, two-story facility located on the west side of campus near Bird Drive. The building will serve as a hub for workforce and continuing education, cosmetology, social and behavioral sciences, and additional academic programming.

Designed to expand access to high demand short-term credentials and workforce training, the facility will house programs including Certified Nurse Aide, EKG Technician, Patient Care Technician, Dental Assisting, and Phlebotomy Technician. Flexible classrooms and laboratory spaces will allow the College to respond to evolving regional workforce needs.

The facility will also feature dedicated cosmetology instructional spaces designed to reflect professional industry environments, including a salon laboratory, modern esthetician room, classroom space, and nail technician training room.

Construction of the Matthews Foundation Gateway Center is underway, with classes expected to begin in the new facility in Fall 2027.