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St. Helena gets \$8 million to build school

By SYLVIA SCHON

GREENSBURG - Legislators have approved \$8 million for a new technical college campus in St. Helena Parish.

Senate Bill 337 is headed to the governor's desk for signature, Rep. Robby Carter, D-Greensburg, said Wednesday.

The new facility will help expand the nursing program as well as programs for welding, plumbing and electrical work, he said.

Sen. Ben Nevers, D-Bogalusa, is a member of the Senate Select Committee on technical and community colleges and one of the authors of the bill.

"It's the result of many months of work," Nevers said Wednesday. "But it's been the greatest influx of dollars into this system in more than 20 years.

"I feel like it will become the hub of economic development in the northern region of the Florida Parishes," Nevers said. "It will offer tremendous opportunity for the people in the region to get the skills necessary to provide a good living wage for them and their families."

The process involved creating a fund outside the usual capital outlay fund to guarantee the money so that design and construction can proceed immediately, he said.

The bill provides \$8 million to buy eight acres and build a new technical college.

The existing building is about 50 years old, overcrowded and has limited parking.

Carter said he's been pushing for a new facility for eight years.

"I'd like to personally thank Sen. Nevers, Rep. Tom McVea and Sen. Rob Marionneaux for their help on the bill," Carter said. "The whole St. Helena Parish delegation put their clout to get this done. I think it will be a great, great addition for all of our area and I look forward to starting construction."