

# **Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AEP Foundation Makes a \$250,000 Commitment to Mechanical Engineering at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi**

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas – The AEP Foundation has committed \$250,000 paid over four years toward the upcoming mechanical engineering program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Officials with AEP Texas, headquartered in Corpus Christi, were on campus today (Wednesday, April 22) to announce the donation. The new Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi awaits final approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

“AEP Texas has been a longtime supporter of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and continues to help us move forward through a variety of programs,” said University President Flavius Killebrew. “We are grateful for this gift which will enhance the education we provide our students and, in time, our local economy.”

Establishing a mechanical engineering degree program will require unrestricted and endowed funds for expanded laboratory space, additional faculty, research opportunities, and scholarships, Killebrew said.

“Establishing a strong engineering program is essential to the continued growth of the Coastal Bend economy,” said Pablo Vegas, AEP Texas president and chief operating officer. “The AEP Foundation is happy to support Texas A&M-Corpus Christi in promoting the advancement of higher education for the betterment of the community and its future.”

American Electric Power (AEP), one of the nation’s largest electric utilities, delivers electricity to more than 5 million customers in 11 states. AEP ranks among the

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## **Page 2, AEP Foundation Contribution**

largest generators of electricity, owning nearly 38,000 megawatts of generating capacity in the U.S.

AEP's utility units operate as AEP Ohio, AEP Texas, Appalachian Power (in Virginia and West Virginia), AEP Appalachian Power (in Tennessee), Indiana Michigan Power, Kentucky Power, Public Service Company of Oklahoma, and Southwestern Electric Power Company (in Arkansas, Louisiana and east Texas). AEP is headquartered in Columbus, Ohio.

Created in 2005, the AEP Foundation complements AEP and its regional utilities' tradition of corporate philanthropy to support its local communities. One of the foundation's areas of focus is to improve the lives of students through education.

Several area businesses have joined the City of Corpus Christi and Port of Corpus Christi in support of having a mechanical engineering degree program at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi. The University currently offers the mechanical engineering technology degree and has labs that can be adapted for the new curriculum. Last fall a \$1 million pledge was made by the city for the program. Contributions from several corporations and individuals will be announced in upcoming weeks.

President Killebrew said that such funds are necessary to create a mechanical engineering program that meets the high expectations of both the University and the employers who seek its graduates. He added that Texas A&M-Corpus Christi has received hundreds of inquiries from prospective students seeking mechanical engineering at the campus, and many have already made preliminary application to the new degree program.

The Texas A&M University System Board of Regents approved the bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at its January meeting. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board could give final approval in April, clearing the way for the first classes to begin as early as fall 2009.

