

# Whitney Benefits awards vocational education grants

■ Grants total \$400,000

**By Pat Blair**

*Senior Staff reporter*

Whitney Benefits awarded two vocational education grants totaling \$200,000 each over the next three years to the Sheridan Community Education Foundation to benefit Sheridan County's three school districts.

The grants — one for a hospitality program and the other for a Certified Nursing Assistant program — were announced this week.

Whitney board Chairman Tom Kinnison said the grants will provide \$80,000 for each program the first year, \$60,000 each the second and \$60,000 each the third year.

The first payment will be made in 2003, he added.

Tom Sachse, Sheridan Community Education Foundation board member, said the grants are in response to a needs assessment conducted over the past year and a half by a consultant on behalf of Sheridan's Whitney Benefits.

The hospitality program — Prostart II — will build on students' interests in hotel and restaurant services, according to Whitney Benefits.

The Certified Nursing Assistant program trains students as health providers, in a sequence of new courses.

"Those courses provide pretty much the ground-floor criteria for health occupations," Sachse said.

Students in all four Sheridan County high schools will be eligible to participate in the new courses. Both programs are scheduled to begin in fall 2003.

Whitney Education Committee Chairman Tim

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Tarver said of the grants, "This is a model for collaboration among districts, with Sheridan College involvement as well. Whitney Benefits is pleased to encourage and support our students as they prepare for new jobs in the 21st century."