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YCCD One Step Closer to MJC Patterson Site

MODESTO, CA – Thanks to a generous donation of land by Jon Maring, Tamara Maring, Lee Del Don and Debra Del Don, the Yosemite Community College District is one step closer to moving Modesto Junior College's Patterson classes to a stand-alone 10 acre site adjacent to the southern boundary of the City of Patterson. The MJC Patterson site is a project identified in the District's Measure E bond which passed in November 2004.

The District's budget for the MJC Patterson site is just over $5 million. The initial plans are to construct two classrooms buildings with four classes in each building and an administrative/student services building, which would house faculty offices, registration, student services and a computer lab. If all goes as planned, the site should be ready to open its doors by the end of 2009 or the beginning of 2010.

In order to leverage the bond funds, the District welcomed land offers from the local communities it planned to establish or expand educational outreach sites. Those communities were Calaveras County, Turlock, Oakdale and the West Side. Thus far, the quickest to respond has been the West Side, in particular the Patterson and Newman areas. After analyzing several proposals, the one that provided the best fit for the District was the 10 acre site donated by the Maring and Del Don families, which is adjacent to the City of Patterson Sports Park.

The goal of the District has been to create the foundation to expand its presence in Patterson. MJC currently offers classes out of portable classrooms at the Patterson High campus in the evenings. There is little flexibility and no room for additional growth. With the construction of an MJC Patterson complex, the college will have an opportunity to slowly grow its offerings over time and respond to the educational needs of the West Side communities.

In Fall 2008, over 770 MJC students (including full and part-time) resided in Patterson or Newman. Most of these people attended classes in Modesto. The District hopes to tap into that market, by providing classes closer to home for West Side residents, as State funding becomes available. Like many institutions, the District is also affected by the current economy. Although enrollment is growing as a result of individuals being laid off and needing retraining, the District's budget is not any better off and the outlook, given the State budget, is not rosy. The District will move forward with its plan to serve the West Side, but the initial

offerings will most likely mirror those that are currently being offered at the high school, until such time in the future when the economy turns around and more funds are available to operate and expand the West Side presence.

Chancellor Roe Darnell states, "With this move to build separate facilities in Patterson for an MJC site, by the generous donation of the Maring's and Del Don's, the District is building capacity for the future. When things do eventually turn around, the MJC Patterson site will be ready to capture that prosperity and there is no telling how far it can go in meeting the West Side's technical education, transfer coursework and basic higher educational needs."

YCCD Board of Trustees Chair, Anne DeMartini, whose trustee area includes the West Side stated "We are grateful to the Maring's and Del Don's for their gift of land for our MJC West Side educational site. We can now use our Measure E funds for construction purposes rather than land. The MJC community is eagerly looking forward to opening this West Side facility. The gift of land has been so beneficial to this effort."

A Patterson Educational Site Advisory Committee is currently being established. The Advisory Committee will be advised of project progress, asked to envision the site in 5-10 years and discuss overall needs. More information regarding the Advisory Committee will be forthcoming.

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