



NEWS RELEASE No. 002-05

**YOSEMITE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT**  
COLUMBIA COLLEGE • MODESTO JUNIOR COLLEGE

## ***NEWS Release***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### TUOLUMNE COUNTY IN LINE TO GET FIRING RANGE

MODESTO, CA – October 18, 2001 – The Yosemite Community College District (YCCD) Board of Trustees authorized district administrators at their October 15 meeting to initiate talks with the Tuolumne County Sheriff's Office for the purpose of donating salvageable portions of the recently closed Modesto Junior College (MJC) firing range.

The decision to close the existing MJC firing range was approved by a vote of 6-1, thus allowing YCCD to enter into discussions with Tuolumne County regarding the donation and relocation of salvageable materials. According to Tuolumne County Sheriff Dick Rogers, "We are very pleased that YCCD is giving us the opportunity to determine if the project (transfer of property) is feasible." The decision by the board creates a window for Tuolumne County to assess their need for, and interest in, utilizing salvageable portions of the MJC firing range for firearms training, although a site has not yet been determined.

As a result of the board decision, POST (Peace Officers Standards & Training) certified and credit classes could potentially be offered through Columbia College at a future Tuolumne County site. Columbia College is part of the Yosemite Community College District and both Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties are in the YCCD/Columbia service area. It has long been a shared goal to increase the number of law enforcement offerings to foothill communities.

"As a board, we are focused on opportunities to meet the needs of our Calaveras and Tuolumne County students by expanding course offerings at Columbia College," said Joe Mitchell, YCCD Trustee for Area 1, which covers both counties.



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Mitchell expressed that “the potential of a partnership with Sheriff Rogers is exciting. Our students, who are looking at careers in law enforcement, including Fish & Game and Forest Service, will benefit from these efforts.”

The decision to close the MJC range came as a result of plans to accommodate growth and improvements to MJC’s West Campus. By the fall of 2002 the campus population is projected to increase from approximately 3,000 students to 6,000 students, and is likely to reach 10,000 students in another three to five years. It was determined that the twenty-six year old firing range was incompatible at its current site due to extensive growth and activity in the immediate neighborhood and throughout the campus.

A joint agreement between YCCD, Stanislaus County, and the City of Modesto called for a new firing range to be built. It is currently being constructed near Patterson and will be supported and used by the Criminal Justice Training Center (CJTC). Criminal Justice firearms classes and Administration of Justice firearms classes will also be held at the new facility, which is expected to open next spring.

As Mitchell explained at the YCCD board meeting, “I am more concerned with ‘program’ rather than ‘place.’ We are not eliminating any programs, just moving them.”

The board’s decision presented the possibility of expanding the YCCD’s program by making salvageable portions of the firing range available for Tuolumne County use. Jim Riggs, Columbia College President, commented, “I look forward to working closely with local law enforcement agencies to provide POST and other criminal justice education programs.”

Lieutenant George Ruckman has been assigned as the project director for the Tuolumne County Sheriff’s Office.

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