



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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College One Step Closer to Permanent Calaveras County Site

MODESTO, CA – Thanks to a mutually beneficial partnership with the Calaveras County Board of Education, the Yosemite Community College District is one step closer toward a permanent Columbia College site in Angels Camp. The Calaveras County site is a project identified in the District's Measure E bond which passed in November 2004.

Earlier this month the Yosemite Community College District voted to approve the site acquisition, conditioned upon Calaveras County Board of Education approval. That approval was given Monday night. The District's goal to create the foundation to expand its presence in Calaveras County made its first real progress. Columbia College currently offers classes out of renovated space at the Glory Hole Shopping Center in Angels Camp. There is little flexibility and no room for additional growth. With the construction of a new complex, the college will have an opportunity to slowly grow its offerings over time and respond to the educational needs of the Calaveras County area.

YCCD Trustee Pat Dean, who resides in Sonora stated "I'm really glad that we're beginning. The people deserve it. It was 2003-04 when we first looked into Calaveras as an expansion site. It's been a long time coming to this point. There are many of our young people who will be able to take advantage of Columbia College's Calaveras facilities."

The Calaveras Educational complex will enable Columbia College to bring instructional programs closer to its core population in the county. Additional space, beyond what has been provided at Glory Hole Shopping Center, is needed to offer a fuller complement of general education courses and certificate programs. The initial plans for the Angels Camp property are to construct classrooms, offices and labs. Calaveras County residents represent roughly 20% of the enrollment at Columbia College.

YCCD Chancellor Roe Darnell states, "This is part of our effort to provide long term and permanent educational opportunities for students in Calaveras County and Angels Camp area. We look forward to a long, cooperative relationship with the County Superintendent of Schools. We know that this will help us respond to a need and recognize the importance of providing higher education in the county."

In Fall 2008, over 600 Columbia College students (including full and part-time) resided in Murphys, San Andreas, Angels Camp, Copperopolis, Arnold, Valley Springs and Altaville. The District hopes to tap into that market, by providing classes closer to home for Calaveras County residents, as State funding becomes available. Like many institutions, the District is also affected by the current economy. Although enrollment has been 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, means tougher times ahead. However, the District will move forward with its plan to serve Calaveras County. The initial offerings will most likely mirror those that are currently being offered, until such time in the future when the economy turns around and more funds are available to operate and expand the Angels Camp presence.

According to Columbia College President Joan Smith, "We are very excited and thrilled that the deal is coming to fruition. We looking forward to offering courses in Calaveras County for a very long time as we continue to build on our great working relationship with Superintendent John Brophy and Calaveras County Schools."

Calaveras County School Board Superintendent, John Brophy, agrees, "the County Office of Education Board and Superintendent are pleased to cooperate with Columbia College so that services for students in Calaveras County can increase in the future. This culminates a 10-year process when we first talked to the college about it. We (County Schools) gave the college some office space and classroom space initially before moving out to the Glory Hole shopping center. So it has really gone from discussion stage to reality."

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