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Desert Community College District Purchases Former Palm Springs Mall Site for New Campus

PALM SPRINGS, CA — The Desert Community College District (DCCD) Board of Trustees announced today the purchase of the former Palm Springs Mall, freeing the development of the permanent Palm Springs Campus to move forward.

“Long ago, the District made a promise to West Valley residents to provide a campus closer to where students live and work,” stated DCCD Board President Becky Broughton. “We are excited today to move the permanent Palm Springs Campus one step closer to reality.”

In May 2016, the College approved a final environmental impact report and master plan for the site, which is at the corner of Farrell Drive and Tahquitz Canyon Way. The final price for the approximately 29-acre property was \$22 million.

As part of the acquisition, the College was also able to purchase adjacent leased land, securing the entire site for development and enabling the College to move forward absent use restrictions and pursuant to the original vision for the property. Plans for our permanent campus include about 330,000 square feet.

“This location for the Palm Springs Campus will help us continue to meet the educational demands of tomorrow’s students and produce the highly skilled work force that is the engine of our economy,” said COD Superintendent/President Dr. Joel L. Kinnamon. “The unique partnership opportunities available to us in Palm Springs align perfectly with the four educational/workforce pillars planned there.”

The College is working with local partners to develop education and training centers in existing and emerging industry sectors, including:

- Digital Media and Film
- Hospitality and Culinary Arts
- Healthcare
- Sustainable Technologies

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“All four of these industry sectors are extremely integral to the regional desert economy,” Dr. Kinnamon said. “We know education and training are the keys to a job, career and a better life for our students and a skilled workforce for local business.”

In January 2018, at the State of the College, the College announced a partnership with DIGICOM and its CEO David Vogel, former president of Walt Disney Studios, to create a Center for Digital Media Education as a cornerstone of the permanent Palm Springs Campus.

Education and career training programs are already underway led by the College in partnership with the hospitality, healthcare and energy industries. Internships are offered in partnership with the Palm Springs International Film Festival, hospitals and local wind and solar companies. COD students operate a radio station, KCOD, out of a studio in Palm Desert. The new campus will expand partnership and program opportunities in these and many other sectors.

The new campus location in the center of Palm Springs offers significant advantages, including proximity to existing infrastructure, access to public transportation, and adjacency to Palm Springs High School, public recreational facilities, including multiple athletic fields and an Olympic-sized pool, the Palm Springs Public Library and the Camelot Theatres.

The next step is to complete a structural analysis of the existing buildings in order to finalize plans for submittal to the state for review. While a specific timetable has not yet been set for those next steps, the College will honor all existing leases and work with tenants currently in place.

In the meantime, the temporary Palm Springs Campus, opened in late January 2018, will remain in operation until the permanent campus is able to accommodate students. The existing lease agreement with the Palm Springs Unified School District is for a term of three years.

“The cooperation and support we have received from education, business and community leaders has been overwhelming,” said DCCD Trustee Dr. Fred Jandt. “We are especially thankful to the Palm Springs community, City Council and staff that have worked with us side by side on this project.”

For more information, visit www.collegeofthedesert.edu.

About College of the Desert:

Established in 1958, College of the Desert (COD), located in Palm Desert, is an accredited community college serving eastern Riverside County, California. The College leads the region in providing quality, higher education, technical training and lifelong learning opportunities, in response to the dynamic needs of our diverse community. The College serves more than 15,000 each year and is the number one source of transfer students to California State University, San Bernardino’s Palm Desert Campus. For more information, visit www.collegeofthedesert.edu.

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