

CONTACT:

Scott Adkins
760.773.2504; rsadkins@collegeofthedesert.edu

College of the Desert Marks Major Construction Milestone for Palm Springs Campus, Advancing Vision for Workforce Innovation and Student Success

Palm Springs, CA — March 18, 2026 — College of the Desert (COD) today announced a significant construction milestone in the development of its new Palm Springs Campus, marking a pivotal step toward delivering a transformative educational and workforce training hub for the Coachella Valley.

The milestone represents the completion of the campus's structural framework—an important transition point as the project moves into interior construction and program buildout in preparation for its planned opening in Fall 2027.

"This moment is about far more than steel and structure, it's about building opportunity," said Val Martinez Garcia, Superintendent/President of College of the Desert. "The Palm Springs Campus is designed to meet the needs of today's students and tomorrow's workforce, connecting education directly to economic mobility and regional growth."

A Campus Designed for the Future of Work

At the center of the new campus is a dynamic academic environment including general and destination education, anchored by innovative, workforce-aligned programs, including:

- Digital Arts, Film, Media, and Emerging Technologies (AI/VR/XR)
- Healthcare and Simulation-Based Training
- Architecture and Sustainable Design
- Hospitality and Culinary

These programs are designed in direct collaboration with industry partners to ensure students gain real-world, in-demand skills aligned with high-growth sectors across the region.

The campus will also feature a multi-use event center, community gathering spaces, and integrated student support services—positioning the site as both an educational institution and a community asset.

Driving Economic Impact Across the Coachella Valley

Once complete, the Palm Springs Campus is expected to serve thousands of students annually and play a critical role in addressing workforce shortages in key industries including healthcare, hospitality, media, and technology.

“This campus represents a new model for how community colleges can serve as engines of economic development,” said Ronald Oden, Desert Community College District Board Chair. “We are aligning education with opportunity—ensuring that students are prepared not just for jobs, but for careers that sustain families and strengthen our regional economy.”

Sustainability and Innovation at Scale

Designed with a focus on long-term environmental performance, the campus is targeting LEED Gold certification, incorporating renewable energy systems and sustainable building practices that reduce operational costs and environmental impact.

From Construction Milestone to Community Impact

While the structural milestone marks visible progress, college leaders emphasize that the true significance lies in what comes next.

“The next phase is where this campus truly comes to life, through programs, partnerships, and people,” said Dr. Scott Adkins, Interim Director of Bond Projects and Facilities Planning. “We are building not just a campus, but a platform for innovation, collaboration, and community transformation.”

Looking Ahead: Opening Fall 2027

As construction continues, College of the Desert will expand engagement with community, industry, and philanthropic partners to help shape the campus’s programs and ensure long-term success.

###

About College of the Desert

College of the Desert serves more than 20,000 students across five campuses in Palm Desert, Indio, Mecca/Thermal, Desert Hot Springs, and Palm Springs. Founded in 1958 and opened in 1962, College of the Desert is governed by the Desert Community College District Board of Trustees. Through the pLEDGE program, the college offers eligible students two years of tuition-free education, removing financial barriers and expanding access to higher education in the community. College of the Desert provides the Coachella Valley with affordable degrees, certificates, and transfer pathways, offering in-demand programs that prepare workforce leaders and strengthen the local economy.