

## East Valley Campus – Mecca/Thermal & Indio

College of the Desert (COD) is establishing the East Valley Campus as part of its outreach into the underserved eastern Coachella Valley region. Phase I campus opened in Mecca/Thermal at 61-120 Buchanan Avenue in 2009, and future development will take place in accordance with the campus master plan. A Phase II facility will be constructed in downtown Indio that is slated to open in 2013.

Funding for the East Valley Campus comes from Measure B, a \$346.5 million bond issue passed by a huge margin by Valley voters in 2004 to prepare College of the Desert for future growth by renovating and expanding the Palm Desert campus and by creating new campuses in the east and west regions of the Coachella Valley.

### East Valley Campus Phase I Mecca/Thermal

The Phase I Mecca/Thermal campus is located on a site that encompasses almost 100 acres and is surrounded by land currently under agricultural production. The site is well-suited for programs that need large laboratories and land. The property was donated to the College by a developer who envisioned a 560-acre development – *Panorama—a College Town* – for which a Specific

Plan was developed. The project was halted when the economy experienced a downturn.

The current 10,000 sq. ft. Mecca/Thermal facility was designed as an attractive ‘modular village’ consisting of several prefabricated modular units joined together to create classrooms, administrative offices, student services, security, maintenance, and storage. Ample parking and shaded walkways complement the campus grounds. A raised sewer leech field septic system will be installed to meet the present service needs of the site. The campus can be reached by public transportation via SunBus Line 91 that runs from Indio to the site.

Programs offered at the campus are Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, a selection of college credit courses, and general interest courses. The campus started with a student enrollment of 246 and, to date, enrollment has increased to 499.

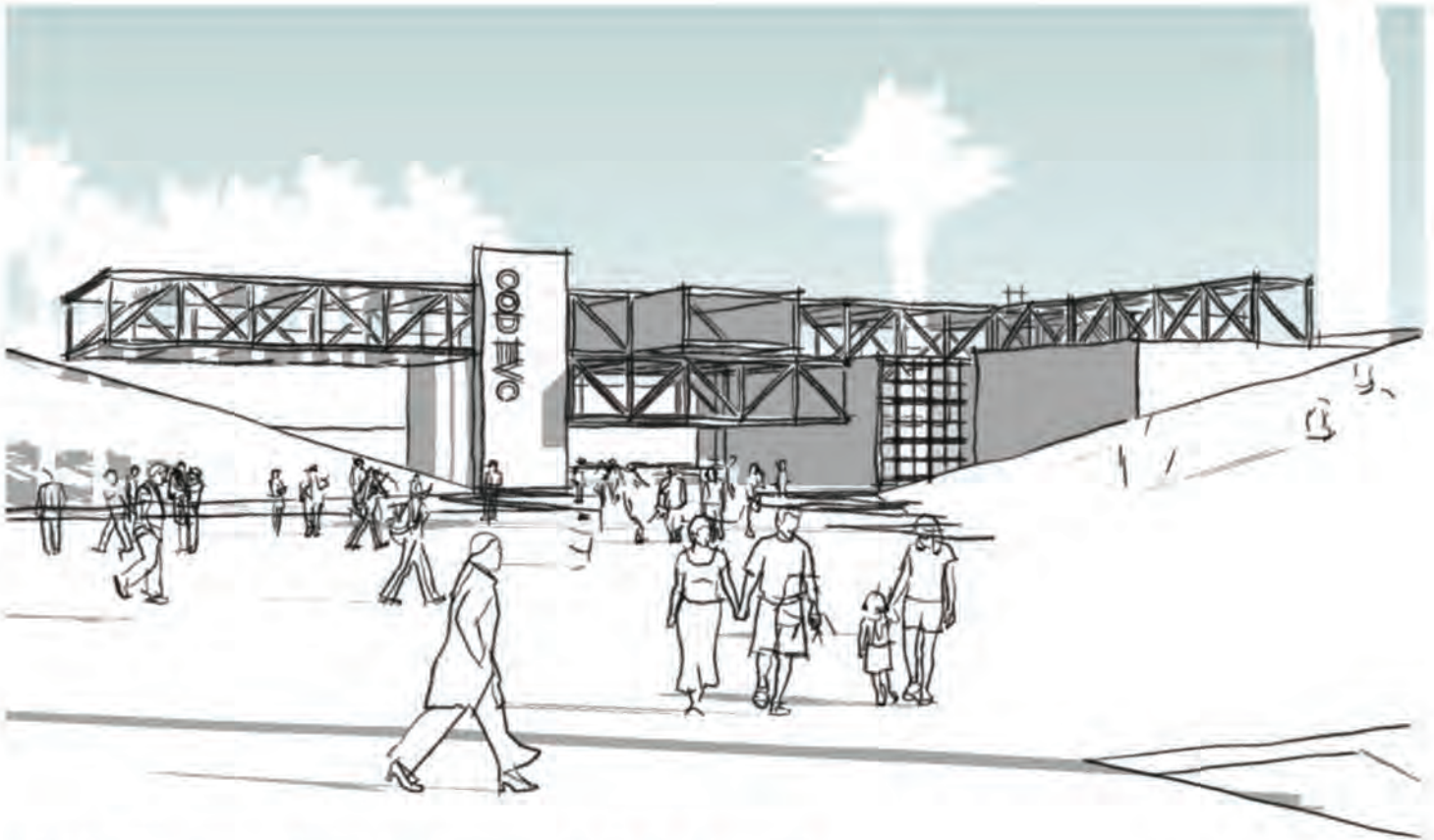


The East Valley Campus-  
Mecca/Thermal opened  
in 2009



**“The East Valley Campus, with sites in Indio and Mecca/Thermal, is part of College of the Desert’s overall strategy to further our outreach to students and to contribute to economic development in the eastern Coachella Valley.”**

Jerry Patton, President, College of the Desert



**“The Mecca/Thermal campus is expected to be at the center of population and business growth as the Coachella Valley continues to expand eastward in the next five decades.”**

Preliminary design concept  
Mecca/Thermal

Dr. Edwin Deas, Vice-President of Business Affairs  
College of the Desert

### **Mecca/Thermal - future phases**

The Mecca/Thermal campus is expected to be at the center of population and business growth as the Coachella Valley continues to expand eastward in the next five decades. In addition to the programs currently offered, COD’s 2010 Strategic Education Master Plan has tentatively identified four specialty programs for Mecca/Thermal that build on a foundation of general education and basic skills – Agricultural Technology, Early Childhood Education, Engineering Technology, and Transportation Technology. Other programs may be offered as needs emerge.

A Facilities Master Plan for the entire site is currently under development that will integrate thoughtful land

utilization and stewardship to plan and manage growth over 20-, 40-, and 60-year time horizons. The campus is envisioned to eventually house teaching and learning facilities, student services, recreational and sports facilities, and a performance hall. The unique agricultural landscape characteristics of date cultivation will feature prominently on the campus.

Future site and building designs will include pedestrian-centered plazas, interior courtyards, shaded paths, rooftop gardens, innovative landscaping, and creative water conservation features. The campus plan will integrate local desert conditions and emphasize conservation, efficiency, water and waste recovery, adaptation and regeneration, and energy generation.

## East Valley Campus Phase II Indio

Since 2001, Indio has been served through temporary classrooms at various locations and the satellite Eastern Valley Center on Monroe Avenue, the lease of which expires in 2013. Recently, College of the Desert and the City of Indio entered into an agreement to establish a permanent campus on a 2.5-acre site in the heart of old town Indio that will consolidate all of COD's educational programs, classrooms and offices. The City of Indio is providing the land as part of its downtown revitalization and economic redevelopment strategies. The building will be oriented along Oasis Street to the west, Towne Street to the east, Requa Avenue to the south, and Civic Center Drive with a small plaza to the north to create an urban campus environment. There will be room for parking in a lot along Towne Street and on surrounding streets.

Architectural firm *gkkworks* is designing the three-story, 40,000 sq. ft. Indio campus. A ground-floor breezeway will separate educational space from 10,000 sq. ft. of retail space facing Oasis Street, as requested by the City of Indio. The retail space will generate revenues that will be used for COD campus operations. The interior

of the campus will be designed to create flexible spaces that allow for reconfiguration, as needed. The first floor entrance will feature an atrium and an open concept lobby with multi-purpose space that could be used as a conference center or divided into four 44-student classrooms. The building's narrow width will provide natural daylight in the corridors and interaction spaces.

The second floor will house five classrooms with 44-student spaces in each, an active learning lab, and administrative offices. The third floor will have five classrooms with room for 44 students in each, an admin/staff lounge, student lounge, area for faculty, and two laboratories with direct access to the roof for venting of fume hoods.

Programs will include Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs, an Associate in Arts in liberal arts degree, transfer credit courses to four-year (CSU and UC) universities, and general interest courses. Educational services will comprise academic counseling, assessment testing, math and English tutoring, and an Academic Skills Center computer lab. The Indio campus will accommodate approximately 3,000 students.

Construction is expected to start in 2012, and the campus is slated to open in 2013.



Design concept of the East Valley Campus-Indio.

**“The collaboration between the City of Indio and College of the Desert will be good for revitalization of the downtown area, as well as economic redevelopment for the east Valley.”**

Dr. Edwin Deas, Vice-President of Business Affairs  
College of the Desert

## **Sustainability at East Valley Campus**

In keeping with COD’s Policy on Sustainability Stewardship, the East Valley Campus site and buildings will be designed and constructed with the environment in mind. The following features will be included to achieve, at minimum, Silver LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) rating:

- Strategies to utilize passive energy for hot and cold temperatures.
- Wall systems that minimize heat gain and loss.
- Deep overhangs on the south side to take advantage of the sun’s summer and winter angles.
- Strategies to include alternative energy sources, water conservation, and wind protection measures.
- Construction waste management.
- Drought tolerant plant landscaping.
- Pervious paving.
- Reduced water consumption through low-flow fixtures.
- Reflective cool roof material to reduce building heat gain.
- Light pollution reduction.
- Motion sensor lighting systems.
- Natural light sources, daylight harvest and air ventilation systems.
- Low emitting materials.
- Green household products and procedures.

## **Buildings and budget cuts**

People frequently ask how College of the Desert can build and expand in the midst of budget cuts. This is a legitimate concern that requires a multifaceted answer.

- In 2004, voters overwhelmingly approved a bond measure that authorized COD to sell \$346.5-million in bonds to be guaranteed by local property tax revenues. Voters agreed to fund renovation of COD buildings and infrastructure, to build necessary new facilities, and establish permanent campuses in the east and west areas of the Valley. What followed was nearly four years of planning, design, and the lengthy approval process required by California.
- By law, the bond proceeds can only be used for acquisition of land and construction, including equipment and furnishings (‘capital expenditures’). A volunteer committee of citizens oversees the spending and assures no bond money is used for salaries or operations (‘operational expenditures’ which are funded by the state).
- Penalties would accrue if COD failed to complete the bond-approved projects within a certain length of time, and the bonds would become taxable to those who purchased them.
- With the global economic downturn, there has never been a better time for a building program because we are consistently experiencing good prices on construction and services, allowing our funding to stretch further.

## **For More Information**

For more information on the proposed College of the Desert East Valley Campus, please contact:

Dr. Edwin Deas  
Vice-President of Business Affairs  
College of the Desert  
43•500 Monterey Avenue,  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

T: 760•773•2592

E: [edeas@collegeofthedesert.edu](mailto:edeas@collegeofthedesert.edu)