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# University Center Construction Begins



Site preparation has begun for the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center, which will house degree programs from an assortment of public and private universities.

After years of dreaming and careful planning, the College of the Canyons University Center is on its way to becoming reality.

Work began in October on erecting the 110,000-square-foot facility that will enable partner colleges and universities to offer advanced degrees on the College of the Canyons campus.

“This is a tremendous accomplishment for College of the Canyons, and underscores our continued efforts to find new and innovative ways to provide access to education and enable our students to pursue their goals,” said Dr. Dianne Van Hook, Superintendent-President of College of the Canyons.

The University Center represents an innovative concept brought to life. Inspired by the changing nature of education, it is designed to meet the needs of students in the Santa Clarita Valley and improve access to advanced degrees.

College of the Canyons boasts the highest transfer rate of any community college in Los Angeles County. Many students who wish to continue their

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# The Bottom Line

NEWS & VIEWS FROM COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS WINTER 2007

## President's REPORT



**Dr. Dianne Van Hook**

There is something amazing happening on campus right now that is easy to miss, but its importance cannot be underestimated.

After years of dreaming, planning, working, and fundraising, construction of our University Center is under way. Behind the construction fences, tractors and earth movers are shaping the site and preparing for the 110,000-square-foot structure that will be located at the south end of our property.

This dream began long ago – 19 years ago, to be exact – when I first approached California State University, Northridge about offering upper-divi-

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Opening celebration guests examine a scale model of the permanent campus. More photos on Page 9.

# New Campus Celebrated

Hundreds of community members joined college personnel Oct. 6 to celebrate the opening of the new Canyon Country Campus. The event, similar to an open house but on a grander scale, served to introduce the new full-service campus, which opened for classes on Aug. 27, to an eager eastside community.

The second campus marks a historic first for the college, which recognized the needs of

Canyon Country residents nearly a decade ago by offering classes at Canyon High School. The response was strong, and the demand grew steadily, leading to the development of the ACCESS Center at the Canyon Country Library and now a brand-new 70-acre campus.

Located on Sierra Highway, about 1.7 miles north of Soledad Canyon Road, the campus sits

**See CELEBRATION on Page 8**



# Plan Includes Amphitheater

Like the Valencia campus, College of the Canyons' new Canyon Country Campus will have an amphitheater that will serve as a student and community gathering place.

The Canyon Country version, however, will benefit from some lessons learned at the Valencia Campus. Rather than a bowl format with tiered concrete

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## Van Hook

FROM PAGE 1

sion classes at COC. The topic was addressed off and on over the years, but it was in April 1999, after a presentation to The Newhall Land and Farming Co.'s management team on where the college was headed and what was in our plans, that the concept of a university center took off.

Mr. Tom Lee, the chairman and CEO of The Newhall Land and Farming Co. at the time, jumped on the idea. Before I knew it, a month later we were off to Metropolitan Community College in Harris, Texas, to look at a university center.

Convinced that was a model we could use to establish a bigger and better university center in Santa Clarita, Tom and I began laying the foundation to move forward. Meetings with area business leaders and surveys of area residents and students confirmed what we expected.

The university center was the perfect solution to the lack of upper-division, graduate school and continuing education access being available to the emerging population and increasing business base in the Santa Clarita Valley.

The goal was to create a new educational facility based on partnerships that would bring training for the workforce, our transfer students and partners together to bridge the divide between higher education and workforce training – under one roof.

We set about our plan to assemble the resources to build our dream. College of the Canyons invited universities to bring their faculty and targeted academic programs to the Santa Clarita Valley. Our partnerships with these education providers would allow area residents to earn their bachelor's and master's degrees locally.

In January 2002 we opened the Interim University Center in 7,000 square feet of modular buildings on our campus to test the concept. It has been an immense success, with seven partners offering 28 undergraduate and graduate programs. The center has seen nearly 13,000 enrollments, with more than 700 students earning bachelor's, master's and doctoral

degrees – right here on the College of the Canyons campus!

At the same time, we embarked on an ambitious capital campaign to bring together the resources necessary to build a permanent facility. We proceeded on many fronts, including a community fund-raising initiative that was strongly supported by the College of the Canyons Foundation Board of Directors, and led by two highly regarded, respected, accomplished, community-minded CEOs: Lou Garasi, president of Gruber Systems, and Tom Lee, whose contagious enthusiasm for the project never waned. I also asked Congress-

*'The University Center happened through teamwork, tenacity and creative partnerships. We built it because everyone involved believed in the dream...'*

– DR. DIANNE G. VAN HOOK

man Buck McKeon to serve as an honorary chair. And, as always, when it comes to supporting education and College of the Canyons, he willingly agreed.

The support for our efforts was amazing. Of the faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees members at College of the Canyons at the time, 99.6 percent made a personal contribution. Local busi-

ness and community leaders stepped forward with large pledges and gifts. Congressman McKeon helped us acquire \$2.3 million in federal funding for the effort. The Wm. S. Hart Union High School District, whose Academy of the Canyons will live in the bottom floor of the West Wing, also partnered with us.

We included the University Center in the list of projects eligible to be funded through Measure C, the \$82.1 million bond measure passed by voters in 2001. But the real break came when language in the statewide education facilities bond was modified to allow funding of collaborative projects – joint-use facilities. Initially, we were approved for \$9 million in state funding. But that wasn't enough. So we persisted at the state level, and in spring 2006 the amount increased to \$21 million. Taken together, these various funding streams provided the resources needed to turn a dream into reality.

The University Center happened through teamwork, tenacity and creative partnerships. We built it because everyone involved believed in the dream, especially the college's Board of Trustees, who opted to support the project and took an active role in our awareness and fund-raising efforts.

Moreover, the University Center represents what this great country is all about: opportunity, a chance to take risks, an ability to dream, inspiration to work hard and, through grass-roots support, the chance to change the face of things. It is also a symbol of what persistence, dedication and never giving up can achieve. It's about opportunities and a commitment to do what's right for the right reasons, even if it's never been done and it isn't easy.

It's about what we at College of the Canyons are all about every day – "can do," optimistic, innovative and committed to making a difference one day at a time and creating the future we want to live in.

As exciting as it is to see the University Center under construction, the best is yet to come. It will open in 2009 – and it will be impossible to miss!

*Dr. Dianne Van Hook is superintendent-president of College of the Canyons.*

# College Names New Softball Coach

## • Wissmath a Big Believer in Community Colleges

New College of the Canyons head softball coach John Wissmath knows about community college athletics after spending his first two years at Shasta College in northern California, which he considers to be the launching point for his career. It was one of the best decisions he ever made, he said.

"If it wasn't for the track coach at Shasta College, I would have never gone to college," Wissmath said. "Gary Lewis, who is now the president at Shasta, came up to me after high school and told me that he believed I had a future in track and field. Without him and Shasta College, I wouldn't be where I am today."

The Bieber, Calif., native may have gotten his start in track and field, but his heart was always with softball. As he succeeded on the track – which later led him to Chico State where he earned two-time All-America accolades in the decathlon and to the Olympic Trials for the javelin – he always knew that he wanted to become a softball coach.

"I've been playing men's fast pitch softball since I was in high school, and I knew from then on that I wanted to be a softball coach," Wissmath said.

He learned the game he so dearly loved from his father who taught him to pitch

underhand during his high school years. Following a successful college career on the track and in the classroom, he knew it was time to start pursuing his career as a coach.

He received his first break at his alma mater, Chico State, where he spent two years as the pitching and recruiting coach. But it was his one-year stint as an assistant track and field coach and a year helping the softball team at Butte College in Oroville, Calif., that he finally got his chance to do what he knew he wanted to do since his father taught him to pitch – he became the head softball coach at Butte College.

The 12-year leader amassed more than 250 wins, and in his last six seasons led the Roadrunners to six straight post-season appearances. But the father of two wanted more – he wanted to be a full-time coach.

After a chance meeting with former Cougar head softball coach Ray Whitten who had recently retired from his position as head softball coach at COC for the past 21 years and encouraged him to apply for the job, Wissmath was moving to Southern California to become the head coach of the College of the Canyons softball team.

Now that he's been at Canyons for a few months, he said he has enjoyed meet-

*'I started at a community college, and I want my student athletes to know they can succeed too.'*



JOHN WISSMATH

ing the COC community and felt welcomed as he adjusts to his new surroundings. The new coach has been kept busy with recruiting, running his private business in Oroville and completing his master's at Chico State.

"My main goal is to have my student athletes move on and finish their education," Wissmath said. "If I didn't keep up on my academics, I wouldn't be here right now. I started at a community college, and I want my student athletes to know they can succeed too."

side of campus. Combined, the central plants serve all of the college's current buildings and facilities, with enough reserve capacity for the entire build-out of the campus.

Additionally, both the north and south central plants have been equipped with cogeneration capabilities, allowing the college to produce its own electrical power via natural gas-fired generators, which use the waste heat from the exhaust to produce both hot and cold water for normal central plant functions.

"This allows us to dramatically cut our power costs," Schrage said. "We're not only saving large amounts of natural resources in our production, we're also reducing the demand on the public energy grid by saving the loss of resources in the

manufacture of power previously needed for our campus."

The projects have been so successful that the college has received electric and gas utility rebates in the neighborhood of \$1 million, via an energy-saving program initiated by the California Community College System that was recently recognized by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, Schrage said.

"College of the Canyons is very proud to be one of the largest beneficiaries of the statewide program, and to be recognized where it counts, in the pocketbook, by Southern California Gas and Southern California Edison for our success in creating projects that will save and continue to save our natural resources and environment," Schrage said.

## Sustainable

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struct a more significant central plant facility for the college.

Though originally met with opposition from the state, and sited by the Department of Finance as having no visible benefit, Van Hook eventually secured funding for a second COC central plant project – which was the first of its kind in the California Community College System.

With the college's continued growth came a remodeling of the campus' original central plant, the construction and subsequent remodeling and expansion of the south campus central plant, and the addition of a third such facility on the north



The Bottom Line is published by the College of the Canyons Public Information Office to inform the community of news and events of interest in the Santa Clarita Community College District.

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## University Center

FROM BACK PAGE

educations beyond the associate's degree level are unable to do so, however. A variety of barriers stand in their way, but the time and expense associated with commuting to a four-year college or university outside of the Santa Clarita Valley are among the most significant inhibitors.

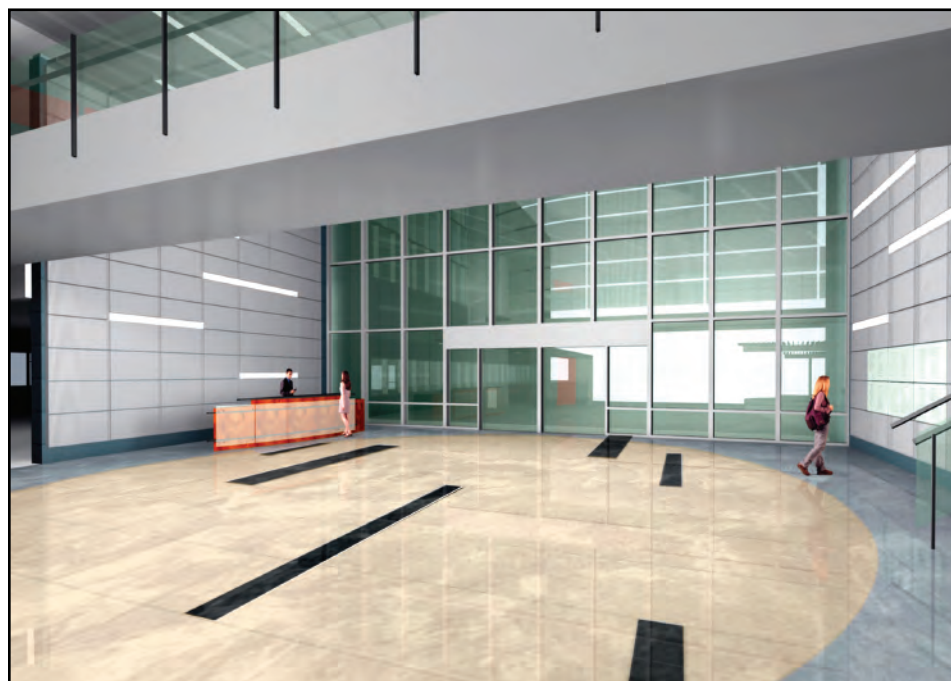
"If students can't get to the colleges, then we should bring the colleges to the students," Van Hook said. By bringing top-notch, in-demand programs from respected partners to the College of the Canyons campus, the University Center removes barriers and makes it possible for students to earn bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as a variety of teaching and administrative credentials, without leaving the valley.

The concept of the University Center was championed by Van Hook. In honor of her innovative spirit and commitment to the project, College of the Canyons' Board of Trustees voted in May to name the facility the Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook University Center.

Continued development of the community's economic potential is tied to the cultivation of an educated workforce. The University Center is a key component in doing so. When it opens in 2009, it will have the capacity to house at least 10 partnering colleges and universities offering 70 degree and credential programs.

Funding for the University Center's construction and equipment comes from private donors, state and federal resources, and local bond measures.

Van Hook worked extensively as the state level to persuade officials to fund such an innovative concept. The private fundraising effort was led by two of Santa Clarita's foremost business leaders, Lou Garasi, CEO of Gruber Systems, and Tom Lee, retired CEO of Newhall Land. U.S. Congressman Howard "Buck" McKeon served as the honorary chair for the



The permanent University Center, as depicted in these artist renderings, includes a spacious central lobby (above). The multi-level building (left) will rise along the southern edge of the college's property, just east of Interstate 5. Located on the property's highest elevation, the building will have sweeping views of the Santa Clarita Valley.

fundraising campaign.

Situated at the south end of campus in a prominent location affording views of the Santa Clarita Valley, the building will also host the college's Economic Development

Department and Advanced Technology Business Incubator, along with the William S. Hart Union High School District's Academy of the Canyons middle college high school.

## Awards

FROM PAGE 3

tion of her leadership in professional development programs at College of the Canyons and throughout the state.

Throughout her 19 years of service to the Santa Clarita Community College District, and her 35-plus years in higher education, Van Hook has played a major role in helping to create and implement profes-

sional development programs that have served as models for other colleges.

"Professional development is not a program – it is not a one-time thing – it is, rather, a long-term commitment to innovation, to change, to people, to programs and builds on a belief in possibilities, dreams, the power of teamwork, and the potential of our greatest human resource – the people in our profession," Van Hook said.

Under Van Hook's leadership, COC has added professional development to the

college's mission statement, instituted a full-time staff development director position, and provided funding for the college's professional development program.

Leslie Carr, the college's professional development director, accepted the Institutional Merit Award, recognizing College of the Canyons for its excellence in the delivery and impact of professional development programs, and for its longtime and continued promotion of such programs on surrounding community college campuses.

# Prop 92 Aims to Reduce Enrollment Fees

A ballot measure instituting fundamental changes in community college funding will be placed before voters during the Feb. 5, 2008 election.

Proposition 92, known as the Community College Initiative, has several components that will change community college funding statewide. It will reduce fees without raising taxes or affecting K-12 public school funding.

The measure establishes in the state constitution a system of independent public community college districts and a Board of Governors; requires minimum levels of state funding that grows along with the community college student population, sets fees at \$15 per unit and limits

## VOTER UPDATE

future fee increases to no more than the cost of living.

"This initiative is designed to make community college education in our community and in the state even more affordable by cutting enrollment fees at a time when many students are struggling economically, and it will stabilize funding for community colleges," said Dr. Dianne Van Hook, superintendent-president of College of the Canyons and the Santa Clarita Community College District. "It gives every Californian a chance to go to college or access workforce training – without rais-

ing taxes or hurting our public schools."

The California Community College system offers affordable and accessible academic and vocational education for both recent high school graduates and Californians returning to school. More Californians attend community college than attend California State University or University of California campuses. Community colleges strive to advance California's economic growth by continuously improving the state's workforce and providing a gateway to a better life for millions of Californians.

Additional factual information is available in the college's Public Information Office.



From left, Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook; Leslie Carr, director of professional development, and Diane Fiero, assistant superintendent-president/vice president of human resources, pose with the staff development awards.

## TOP TRAINERS

### College, President Awarded for Staff Development

Having established itself throughout the state as leaders in staff development, the College of the Canyons professional development program and Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne Van Hook were honored in October for their efforts to advance employee enrichment.

During awards ceremonies held at the National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational Development (NCS-POD) annual international conference in Buffalo/Niagara, New York, Van Hook was presented with the annual College President/Chancellor's Award in recog-

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## College Launches Speech/Language Pathology Classes

Anyone interested in pursuing a career in the speech/language pathology industry now has the opportunity to do so at College of the Canyons, thanks to a pair of recently introduced courses in the fast growing field.

Serving as a preview for the college's soon to be approved Speech/Language Pathology Assistant (SLPA) program, the course SLPA 102: Language Development Across the Lifespan was first offered to students in the spring 2007 semester.

Focusing on the normal verbal and non-verbal communication across the human lifespan, SLPA 102 is designed to give students an understanding of how the various areas of language contribute to the total communication process in a multicultural society.

"They're trying to understand the basics of language so they can better deal with what's abnormal," said Sue Albert, dean of allied health at the college. "It's a nice survey class that will get your foot in the door helping people with speech language disorders."

Offered for the first time during the fall 2007 semester, SLPA 101: Introduction to Speech/Language Pathology provides students with a strong foundation of knowledge pertaining to the field – which can then be used to form new ideas, draw inferences and think critically about human communication and its disorders. The

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# An Entrepreneur's Dream Comes True

• College's Small Business Development Center Aids Small Business Owners

When Mimi Yacobucci opens the doors of her women's clothing boutique, "Miriam," in the Valencia Town Center, she hopes it will make the community, her family and her friends at the College of the Canyons Small Business Development Center (SBDC) proud.

"I look forward to opening my business," said Yacobucci. "Opening my own store has been a lifelong dream of mine and my success will be attributed to the support of the Small Business Development Center."

Launched in January 2006, the SBDC at College of the Canyons helps prospective and existing small business owners in northern Los Angeles County, like Yacobucci, to start, retain or expand their businesses.

"Mimi is a client who took advantage of the myriad of SBDC services, which includes workshops, the MasterMinds program, one-on-one counseling, loan packaging and networking opportunities, and she is now ready to make her dream happen," said Paul De La Cerda, director of the SBDC at College of the Canyons.

The SBDC also helps new business owners with what is often considered the most daunting aspect of starting a new business: creating a business plan.

SBDC mentor Nina Grooms-Lee describes developing a business plan as a "time consuming and very emotional jour-

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Paul De La Cerda (right), director of the SBDC at the college, joins Mimi Yacobucci (left) and SBDC mentor Nina Grooms-Lee in front of Yacobucci's soon-to-open retail store.

## Hundreds Attend Business Conference

Designed to provide expert advice and information for entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Los Angeles County and the surrounding areas, the 2007 Dream and Discover Entrepreneurs Conference hosted by College of the Canyons attracted more than 200 business-minded community members and was hailed as a tremendous success.

Organized by the College of the Canyons' Economic Development Divi-

sion - which includes the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Center for Applied Competitive Technologies, Employee Training Institute and the i3 Advanced Technology Incubator - the second annual event featured an energized and eclectic audience of attendees.

"Throughout the conference there was so much energy in the audience, with people looking for motivation and

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# Technology Incubator Nurtures Start-ups

In a math class, a professor would say that i3 is equal to -i but the i3 of the Advanced Technology Incubator at College of the Canyons is equal to three things: innovate, invest and incubate.

Started in 2005 in collaboration with the Los Angeles Business Technology Center, an established technology incubator in Altadena, the i3 Advanced Technology Incubator was launched with the recognition of the growth potential of the Santa Clarita Valley.

The incubator brings together entrepreneurs, investors, mentors, student interns and third-party service providers in the local area to spur economic development in the Santa Clarita Valley and is the only one to be located on a community college campus in the state of California.

"The incubator is located on the campus of College of the Canyons to provide the unique benefits and unprecedented oppor-

tunity of marrying education with entrepreneurship," said Doug Howe, interim director of the incubator. "This provides selected entrepreneurs with access to entrepreneurial curricula through the college, access to student interns and exposure to business, engineering and biotech faculty in addition to the traditional services of an incubator."

These services include "introductions to investors, a mentoring program staffed with local business professionals, connections to local service providers and eventually a state-of-the-art facility to nurture and grow start-up and early stage companies that will eventually graduate into the local community and contribute to job creation and overall economic development," he said.

Similar to an incubator for a premature newborn baby, the incubator nurtures "start-up and early stage companies in an envi-

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OCTOBER 6, 2007

# Canyon Country Campus Opening Celebration



Clockwise from left, Computer Support Services Director Jim Temple leads guests on a tour of the new campus; a young visitor gazes at a scale model of the campus as it will look when built out; guests arrive at Quad 1; a boy peers into the lens of a telescope specially equipped to safely view the sun; members of the Pearce Family Bluegrass Band of Canyon Country perform for guests; a member of the L.A. County Sheriff's Department mounted posse on patrol; and "Leona Cox," portrayed by Connie Tripp, explains her role in the history of Canyon Country.

## Ceremony Marks Opening of Campus

Providing an early look at the Santa Clarita Valley's newest college campus, the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the College of the Canyons Canyon Country Campus officially opened the roughly \$34 million facility and was attended by an assortment of local legislators, educators and community leaders who took part in the historic event.

The Aug. 28 event also provided college officials an opportunity to reflect on how the opening of a second campus will allow College of the Canyons to better serve the surrounding community.

"This Canyon Country Campus and our drive to develop it is an obvious demonstration of this college's commitment to the community," said COC Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne Van Hook. "It's a testament to the ingenuity, passion, dedication and can-do spirit that marks everything we undertake at College of the Canyons."

Located on Sierra Highway, less than two miles north of Soledad Canyon Road, the CCC is terraced into the rolling hills of the 70-acre site, which provides a sweeping view of the surrounding terrain.

Having opened with 24,000 square feet of instructional space – including two science labs, two computer labs, a library, a book store, food services, a PE building, an early childhood education facility and 24 classrooms complete with wireless Internet connectivity – the campus is already serving more than 3,000 students while offering more than 300 classes in its inaugural semester alone.

"But more than just a collection of



College staff members and community dignitaries join Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne G. Van Hook (second from right) during the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

classrooms and labs, this new Canyon Country Campus is a place where student dreams, community vision and the college's commitment have joined to create a very special place for student learning and community development," said Dena Maloney, founding dean, before speaking to the college's dedication in fostering continued student achievement at both campuses.

In addition city of Santa Clarita Mayor Marsha McLean and Councilman Bob

Kellar both took part in the event, with each taking time to congratulate the college on its latest accomplishment.

"This is fantastic. It's amazing what you can do when you set your mind to it," McLean said. "What you are doing for this side of the valley is just tremendous."

"This is another building block of excellence for this community," added Kellar, "and I can not thank the college enough for continuing to be such a great partner in so many ways."

store, PE facility, early childhood education facility, food services and 24 "smart" classrooms. More than 300 classes were offered during the inaugural semester.

A variety of demonstrations, presentations, exhibits and entertainment was offered throughout the day. College departments representing dance, theatre, music and communication studies took turns entertaining guests, as did the New World Dance Company and the Pearce Family Bluegrass Band, both from Canyon Coun-

try. Visitors were offered campus tours, and younger guests were treated to actors portraying figures from Canyon Country's rich history.

Prizes were awarded throughout the day. Winners included Susan Prout, who received the grand prize of a fully paid year of classes at College of the Canyons; Kanen Ishimoto, who won a laptop computer; Jamie Kelch, a GPS device; and Secorro Ortega-Olmos, show tickets at the Performing Arts Center.

abled access, and offers a convenient alternative for people who don't bring a blanket or chairs to on which to sit.

Situated near the center of the new campus and adjacent to a large green space, the amphitheater is envisioned as a venue for performances and gatherings by students or community groups. It is

expected to be completed by early 2008.

A unique addition to the amphitheater will be commemorative recognition stones. Available for \$300, the decorative stones will be placed around the amphitheater in honor of donors to the campus. A naming opportunity for the amphitheater is available for a \$25,000 contribution.

### Celebration

FROM PAGE 1

on rolling hills in an area undergoing significant changes. Development along Sierra Highway has brought neighborhoods of single-family homes, and more construction is expected.

The new campus is composed of 28 modular buildings housing two science labs, two computer labs, a library, book

### Amphitheater

FROM PAGE 1

seating, the amphitheater in Canyon Country will be flat, with a raised stage. It will be surrounded by concentric grass and concrete rings. The concrete allows for dis-

## Sustainable Development Embraced

### • College Uses Variety of Energy-Efficient Tactics in Operations, Construction

Long before environmental concepts like sustainable development and energy conservation became the popular social movements and publicized business practices they are today, College of the Canyons had already begun employing a number of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly tactics in its operations, maintenance and construction.

Though constantly seeking ways to improve efficiency, reduce waste and serve as an environmental leader among other community colleges, COC's most beneficial eco-friendly project has come in the form of three energy co-generating central plants housed on campus.

Housing chillers, boilers and cooling towers in one location, central plants serve as a single source of both hot and chilled water, used to heat and cool air and produce a potable water supply for multiple buildings on campus.

The use of central plants differs significantly from the highly popular practice of constructing a new building to provide sufficient heating and cooling and hot water supplies to only that building.

"But that is a tremendous waste of natural resources, as the efficiency of a per-building approach is much less than a sin-



College of the Canyons uses several central plants, such as this one near the library, to provide heat, air conditioning, and both hot and cold water in an energy-efficient manner.

gle, larger, facility that can serve several buildings at one time," said Jim Schrage, COC dean of facilities. "When a campus becomes a conglomeration of 30 or 40 buildings amassing 600,000 to 700,000 square feet, the combined inefficiencies and waste of separate systems is enormous. However this has never been the

case at College of the Canyons."

In fact, life at the college began with a central plant housed on the roof of what is now Bonelli Hall. But as the campus started to expand in the early 1990's, COC Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne Van Hook began applying for funds to con-

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## Van Hooks Lauded as Leaders of Character

College of the Canyons Superintendent-President Dr. Dianne Van Hook and her husband Roger received the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Western Los Angeles Area County Council 2007 Leaders of Character Award, honoring their dedicated community leadership and exemplary character.

During ceremonies at the second annual Leaders of Character fundraising gala at the Hyatt Valencia in late October, the Van Hooks were presented with the Leaders of Character Golden Eagle statue, as did fellow recipients Carl and Jeri Goldman, owners of KHTS 1220-AM, and Jim Ventress, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of the Santa Clarita Valley.

"The Girl Scouts played such a pivotal role in my life when I was growing up, so this award is particularly meaningful for me," said Van Hook, who, thanks to her father's job, attended 13 elementary schools by the time she was in 6th grade. "Change was a pattern for me that I got very used to, but everybody needs some grounding. For me, Brownies and Girl Scouts were that grounding. That is where could I put on my uniform, my hat, my pin, and my sash and look just like everyone else. There were no differ-

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DIANNE AND ROGER VAN HOOK

## Conference

FROM PAGE 4

new tools to become better business owners, it was amazing," said Paul De La Cerda, SBDC director and event chair. "This event is unique in that it doesn't matter if you're an employee or an employer of a business. Our conference is for people on both sides of the spectrum because the more an employee knows about what makes a business successful, the more they can contribute to that success."

The event even drew the praise of Alberto G. Alvarado, L.A. District Director of the United States Small Business Administration, who attended the conference and made a point to voice his appreciation to the college for hosting the event.

"It was an honor to have him say that," De La Cerda said. "The Santa Clarita Valley isn't central to Los Angeles, but we have a thriving economy and that's been proven by the success of events like this."

Among the many highlights of the conference – which included a full schedule of presentations and panel discussions on topics ranging from entrepreneurial success in global markets, proper business planning techniques and the many opportunities available for accessing capital during a business' startup and growth – was the closing keynote by award-winning photographer and entrepreneur Steve Uzzell.

Uzzell's presentation, "Open Roads, Open Minds," focused on the importance of maintaining an open mind and seizing opportunities to capitalize on success, while stressing that success is achieved through constant planning and preparation.

"The presentation by our keynote speaker Steve Uzzell received rave reviews from the audience, which we knew he would. People were just floored by his presentation," De La Cerda said. "You definitely didn't have to be an entrepreneur or business owner to get something out of his presentation, and that's exactly what we wanted to bring to this conference."



STEVE UZZELL

## Character

FROM PAGE 5

ences in scouting. Everyone was focused on the same thing, and that was working as a team to get to the goal and treating others with manners, respect, and concern."

The Western Los Angeles County Council (WLACC) is one of five Boy Scouts of America (BSA) councils in the county, made up of six districts and serving more than 30,000 youth.

The Leaders of Character Award gala recognizes outstanding community leadership and personal character, and raises funds to support the Bill Hart District, which serves about 2,500 youth each year.

Proceeds from last year's inaugural awards gala assisted in the establishment of the BSA Santa Clarita Service Center.

"The concept of the Leaders of Charac-

ter award goes along with everything scouting is about, and that's to build people of character," said Terry Duffy, senior district executive for the Bill Hart District.

With specific criteria for the award

***'Roger is the one person without whose influence and confidence I could not have accomplished what I have.'***

– DR. DIANNE G. VAN HOOK

including exemplary character, leadership abilities and a demonstrated effort to make the community a better place for all, Duffy

helpful," said Yacobucci. "I don't think I could have finished (the business plan) with the confidence that I did and in the timeframe. It would have taken longer."

But like many new business owners, Yacobucci had many fears about going into business. "Taking the risk was my first concern. I kept thinking, 'Can I really do this? Can I quit a stable and successful job?' Being able to put together a business plan that is effective in getting the money to fund this venture was the hardest hurdle. But Nina and the SBDC was key. Nina helped me put together a business plan that would make me feel confident."

said Van Hook's selection was also based on the college's strong academic, athletic, and visual and performing arts reputation and volunteerism throughout the valley.

"As the president-superintendent of College of the Canyons, Dr. Van Hook exemplifies all of that, making her a natural selection to be recognized as one of our honorees," Duffy said. "And because we understand that nobody gets there alone, we try and make a special point during the ceremony to recognize the recipient's spouse as well."

"Roger is the one person without whose influence and confidence I could not have accomplished what I have," Dianne Van Hook said. "Without his unwavering, never-ending support, I wouldn't be where I am today."

She also credited the college's Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and administrators, saying they deserve recognition as well.

Grooms-Lee considers Yacobucci a star client "because she was willing to be a student for her business and I think this will help make her business a success over the long term," she said.

"Nina was encouraging and supportive, but she didn't candy coat things," said Yacobucci. "She made me persevere. I'm glad that everything fell perfectly into place as soon as I contacted her," she said. "Everything seemed to flow."

Yacobucci's store "Miriam" is scheduled to open in January.

For SBDC information, call (661) 294-9375 or visit [www.canyonsecondev.org](http://www.canyonsecondev.org).

# Alumni Honor Mohney, Engbrecht

The College of the Canyons Foundation honored Lenny Mohney, College of the Canyons alumni and dean of physical education at the college, and Vicki Engbrecht, assistant superintendent of the William S. Hart Union High School District, for their contributions to the college at the Alumni & Friends Barbecue and Awards Ceremony on Sept. 29.

Held in the college's Cougar Den, the awards are given annually "to individuals and businesses that reflect distinction and a meaningful interest in College of the Canyons and its students," said Michele Edmonson, assistant director of development of the college's foundation.

"They must have achieved prominence in their fields, and have made significant contributions to the students and the College of the Canyons. This year's recipients possess these qualities and their contributions are valued by the entire campus community," she said.

Mohney graduated from College of the Canyons in 1974 and worked for 10 years as a part-time instructor and as assistant baseball coach to Mike Gillespie when the team won three state championship titles. With Mohney at the helm as head baseball coach in 1986, the team earned seven conference titles and went to regionals nine times. In 1997, Mohney became athletic director and lead the athletic expansion at the college. Mohney retired as head coach of the baseball team in 2000 but remained athletic director and was named dean of physical education. Mohney, who has served on many state athletic associations and committees, was inducted into the California Community College Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2004.

Mohney received a bachelor's degree in physical education

from California State University, Northridge and his master's degree in kinesiology from Azusa Pacific University.

"I'm very humbled by the award and all my family and friend's that attended," Mohney said.

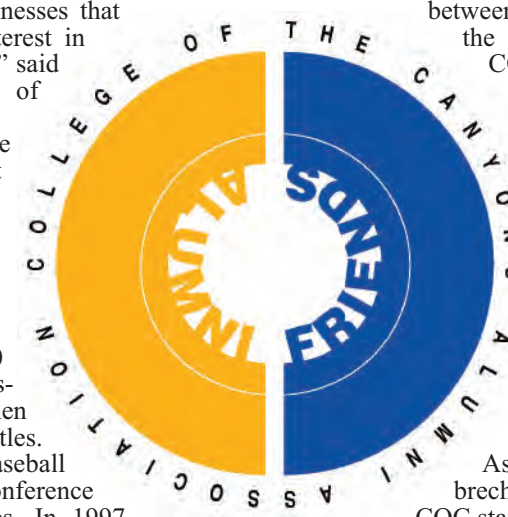
Vicki Engbrecht has been an active member of the Santa Clarita educational community and has been a long time supporter of the college. Engbrecht has helped with many partnerships between the college and the Hart District including the Santa Clarita Valley College Day move to COC, the Summer High School Enrichment program, the implementation of the Early College High School and the articulation between high school and college faculty.

Engbrecht has been a member of the Hart District for more than 30 years and was recently selected as the district's new assistant superintendent of education services. Engbrecht began her career in the Hart District as an English faculty member in 1976, and since then has been dean of students, assistant principal, principal and director of curriculum and assessment in the district.

"I'd sincerely like to thank the Alumni Association for this recognition," said Engbrecht. "It has been my pleasure to work with the COC staff on several collaborative efforts which have resulted in valuable opportunities for all of our students. I'm thankful for the strong relationship between the Hart District and the college."

The proceeds raised during the barbecue and awards ceremony will go towards the Alumni Scholarship Fund.

For more information about the college's foundation and how to make a donation, visit the college's website at [www.canyons.edu](http://www.canyons.edu) or call (661) 362-3434.



## New Courses

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course also features the discussion of various industry topics including language and jargon, professional standards, legal and ethical issues and the scope of responsibilities of both the speech language pathologist and speech/language pathology assistant.

According to Albert, the need for qual-

ified speech language pathologist assistants has grown in recent years in response to the increased number of K-12 students in need of such services.

"The need is increasing for whatever reason, and the schools have to meet that need as more and more of their students are being diagnosed," Albert said. "The Santa Clarita Valley, Simi Valley and Ventura communities are all interested in getting help so they can assist students in developing their speech skills."

"Both of these courses provide a method to look at the profession and look at the speech language pathology assistant career to see if you want to pursue it or not," she added.

Both of the lecture/seminar style classes are offered in a video teleconferencing format, making attendance at either the College of the Canyons Valencia campus or Ventura County Speech Language Pathology facility a flexible possibility for students.

## Incubator

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ronment that provides favorable conditions that encourage healthy growth to the point where these companies can then step out on their own, grow and prosper," said Howe.

The goal is for incubated companies to move into the community, add new jobs and contribute to economic development.

With construction of the University Center well under way, the incubator will be able to host companies in the new facility.

"Companies accepted as tenants will experience state-of-the-

art facilities and services," he said. "Standard services include furnished office space, reception, phones, mail, internet and networking architectures suited to their needs, access to office equipment and conference facilities, executive leadership and entrepreneurship courses and workshops. Advanced services include nanotech labs, clean rooms and digital manufacturing systems."

The incubator has received a new infusion of funding from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. It was awarded a two-year grant worth \$205,021. Funds will be available for staff, supplies, conferences and equipment.

For more information about the i3 Advanced Technology Incubator, call (661) 362-3241.