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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 14, 2006

Parking added at Cuyamaca College *Students praise action as a big timesaver*

EL CAJON – Parking hassles are the bane of many a college campus, but the addition of hundreds of parking spaces near the Cuyamaca College entrance at Fury Lane and Rancho San Diego Parkway has greatly eased the fall ritual best described as the parking lot free-for-all.

Where circling parking lots to pounce on the first available parking space used to be as much a part of the start-of-the-semester experience as buying textbooks or crashing classes, the addition of 291 parking spaces at Cuyamaca this fall and the 205 two years ago has made a big improvement, students say.

“I think it’s great they did this,” said third-year student Olivia Garcia. “I used to make a point of arriving for my classes nearly an hour early because it sometimes took a while finding a parking space, but now, I can find a spot right away. It’s been a big timesaver.”

Vince Green, a second-year student, said it makes a lot of sense for Cuyamaca to add parking, given all the construction currently taking place with the building of three major facilities.

“With the new buildings, this college is going to grow, so it’s a good thing they’ve looked ahead about parking needs,” he said. “For students like me, parking is big deal because we’re busy juggling school and work and we just don’t have the time to waste looking for parking.”

Just in time for the current semester’s start, the 291-spot expansion was completed in August, increasing to 1,847 the number of student parking spaces available to serve a student enrollment nearing 8,000. The new spaces are conveniently located across the street from the One-Stop Student Services Center, where busy offices for admissions and records, financial aid, counseling and other services operate. A secondary parking project, also completed over the summer, paved over the little-used sand volleyball court between the track and gymnasium at the northeast portion of the campus and converted it into a 52-space lot for staff and disabled parking.

“We know that as the new facilities come on line, we will be able to increase our course offerings to better meet the demand, so clearly, it makes a lot of sense to ensure adequate parking,” said Dr.

Geraldine M. Perri, college president. “We’re very pleased the new lots have helped address one of the chief concerns voiced by students.”

A trio of Cuyamaca students liked the parking expansion for an ancillary reason: A leveled area targeted for yet more parking in the coming years is, for now, serving as the hammer throw field for the track and field team.

“The new parking lot provides better access to the field,” said Mike Munden, a third-year student.

This fall’s \$1.2 million parking expansion and the \$510,000 project in 2004 were funded by district lease revenue bonds and Prop. R, the \$207 million local bond measure approved by East County voters in 2002 to help pay for facilities improvements and construction at Cuyamaca and Grossmont colleges.

“Thanks to East County voters, students are really benefiting,” said GCCCD Governing Board President Deanna Weeks. “We’re leveraging a variety of funding sources to improve their educational opportunities. Expanding parking simply makes it easier for students to get to classes and that’s what it’s all about.”

At Cuyamaca, Prop. R is helping fund the construction of a science and technology mall; a communication arts building to house disciplines including English, speech, American Sign Language, and the performing arts; and a student center – projects totaling nearly \$90 million in cost.

At Grossmont College, Prop. R is funding a new science building and a digital arts and sculpture complex.

For more information about Cuyamaca College in Rancho San Diego and Grossmont College in El Cajon, go to www.gcccd.edu. More details on construction are also available by clicking on the link, “Construction News.”