

Sweetwater School District Campuses Unveil New Facilities

CONSTRUCTION: Library, Classrooms Among Buildings Funded By Proposition O

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Sweetwater Union High School District is celebrating a major milestone this summer with the completion of three new construction and modernization projects in time for the 2011-12 academic year.

The combined \$70 million efforts at Hilltop High School, National City Middle School and Sweetwater High School are part of Proposition O, the \$644 million school bond construction program currently addressing the urgent needs of the 32 campuses in SUHSD.

A combined 130,000 square feet of new classrooms, student services buildings and other facilities including a library and a multipurpose theater are ready for the student bodies of the three schools. Hilltop High and National City Middle recently held ribbon-cutting ceremonies and Sweetwater High will unveil its \$50 million building on Aug. 6.

“This is a monumental summer for Sweetwater and Prop O as these magnificent buildings come to life for students of the South Bay,” said SUHSD Board of Trustees President John McCann. “This bond measure has been a success from the start, consistently providing students with safe 21st century learning environments. Our level of excitement is at an all-time high and we haven’t even reached the halfway point of the program.”

Hilltop High School’s \$13 million project includes a new 20,700-square-foot two-story classroom building, a 6,400-square-foot one-story industrial and technology arts facility equipped with a woodshop and a state-of-the-art photography lab, as well as four new science classroom buildings. All classrooms have wireless technology and interactive white boards, while the science classrooms have university-grade laboratories.

Although school was not in session, nearly 150 students, parents, faculty and staff joined Principal Ernesto Zamudio and SUHSD board members in celebrating the unveiling July 12. Guests included Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox and San Diego County Board of Education Trustee Jerry Rindone, both alumni of Hilltop High.

Modern Setting for Students “Every child in this district deserves the opportunity to walk into a 21st century classroom,” said Edward M. Brand, SUHSD acting superintendent.

On July 13, National City Middle School unveiled a new \$7 million, 15,000-square-foot, two-story building, which includes science classrooms equipped with interactive white boards, a new food-service facility, and a shaded lunch shelter to accommodate the entire student body.

More than 150 members of the National City community joined SUHSD board members, Superintendent Brand and National City Middle School Principal Arturo Montaña to celebrate the unveiling of the new campus.

Special guests included National City Mayor Ron Morrison, members of the National City City Council, Trustee Jerry Rindone and National City Fire Marshall Robert Hernandez.

On Aug. 6, Sweetwater High School, National City's only high school that was built in 1922, will unveil a new 87,000-square-foot, three-story building equipped with more than 30 classrooms, a counseling and health center, as well as a new student services office. This new building will also house a new library and a 200-seat multipurpose theater.

LEED-Certified Projects

All three projects were designed to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold-certified by the U.S. Green Building Council. Coupled with other Proposition O modernization projects, the program is designed to be the largest 100 percent LEED-certified school district construction program in California.

Proposition O is a \$644 million classroom safety and repair measure addressing the critical and urgent needs of the 32 campuses in the Sweetwater Union High School District. Proposition O will fund the repairs and improvements needed to ensure that the district's 43,000 middle and high school students and 27,000 adult learners are in a safe, healthy and quality learning environment.

— Emily Pippin