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**SFCC Ready to Break Ground on Health and Sciences Building**

**Santa Fe, NM, Jan. 5, 2009** — For nearly two decades, a depot of “temporary” portable buildings on the north side of the Santa Fe Community College campus has hosted classes, housed various programs and provided storage. This week, those portable buildings will be hauled away to ready the site for a January 15 groundbreaking on the new SFCC Health and Sciences Building.

“It’s exciting to see our plans to educate nurses, respiratory therapists, medical and dental assistants and other healthcare workers come to fruition,” said SFCC President Sheila Ortego. “This is the largest building project on campus in a decade, and is our first LEED-certified green building. We are very proud and thankful to the voters in Santa Fe, who approved bond funding to make this project a reality.”

The nearly 50,000 square foot facility will become the centerpiece of the college’s School of Health and Sciences, which offers programs in nursing, respiratory therapy, dental health and assisting emergency medical training and biology.

The Health and Sciences Building will consist of laboratories, classrooms and offices dedicated to training students for careers in health and sciences professions. The building will also house a dental clinic operated by Santa Fe’s La Familia Medical Center, a 20-chair clinic which provides dental health services to families and individuals in need, while also serving as a clinical training site for SFCC dental students.

Construction of a new SFCC Health and Sciences Building received the green light from Santa Fe residents in September 2007, when voters - responding to a state- and nationwide shortage of nurses and other medical professionals - approved a \$25 million general obligation bond, which earmarked funds \$17.7 million for the project.

The building will be constructed under high efficiency standards and will aim to achieve the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold standard, according to designing firm Studio Southwest Architects of Albuquerque.

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Along with a number of sustainable design features, the building will become the first LEED Gold building in the Southwest to employ a “living wall,” a 20 feet high and 17 feet wide plant wall biofilter that improves indoor air quality and improves energy efficiency. “The living wall is a model for blending art and science to deal with the real problems of indoor air quality in an attractive and sustainable way,” said Studio Southwest principal architect Shary Adams. The wall also reduces levels of contaminants, maintains temperature and humidity and saves the college energy by reducing the amount of air that needs to be cooled in the summer by more traditional means. “The project will set the standard for sustainable air handling in Santa Fe and the Southwest for years to come,” she said.

The building will expand laboratory space for SFCC’s health and sciences programs by offering three new nursing labs, two biology labs, one dental lab and a static lab for Emergency Medical Service Institute training. The building will also feature simulations labs, complete with human patient simulators and a central control viewing room.

The college’s signature main campus courtyard design will translate to the Health and Sciences Building, which will feature its own courtyard where students can study, eat lunch or take a break between classes.

“We are thrilled with the design of the new building and we are especially excited to expand our simulation laboratory, which provides a practical way for health care providers to practice and upgrade their skills,” said Ron Liss, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs. “The new teaching environment will be state-of-the-art, and our students will reap the benefits: The realistic labs allow students to practice situations that are not routinely seen in traditional hands-on settings. Not only does this help prepare nurses, emergency personnel, and special care providers with training not available in other formats, it is also a cost-effective way to provide training for groups rather than individual clinical assignments. The long-term benefit of this new facility is in addressing the critical need for more health care workers.”

Last year, SFCC expanded its nursing program to include a fast-track, 10-month option for individuals holding a bachelor’s degree in a science field. The fast-track program currently accommodates eight students. The college’s nursing program enrolls about 100 students, who, between fall 2007 and spring 2008, boasted an 87 percent passage rate on national exams.

The Health and Sciences Building is slated for completion May 2010.

### **About Santa Fe Community College**

Now celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year, Santa Fe Community College is the gateway to success for individuals and the community by providing affordable, high quality educational programs that serve the social, cultural, technological and economic needs of a diverse community. The college serves more than 14,500 students per year in its credit, noncredit and adult basic education programs. For further information, visit [www.sfccnm.edu](http://www.sfccnm.edu) or call (505) 428-1000.

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