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NEWS

Media Advisory

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Colorado State Forest Service to Break Ground on New La Junta District Office at Otero Junior College

Note to editors: The Colorado State Forest Service and Otero Junior College will host a groundbreaking ceremony at **3 p.m. on March 2** to mark the start of construction on a new CSFS district office building. The groundbreaking will take place on the OJC campus at 1904 San Juan Ave., and the public is invited to attend.

LA JUNTA, Colo. – The Colorado State Forest Service and Otero Junior College will host a groundbreaking ceremony at 3 p.m. on March 2 to mark the start of construction on the new CSFS La Junta District office building. The La Junta District serves seven counties: Crowley, Otero, Bent, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Prowers and Baca.

CSFS South Area Forester Mike Harvey and OJC President Jim Rizzuto will participate in the ceremony on Tuesday. The groundbreaking will take place on the construction site at 1904 San Juan Ave., just north of the new dormitory buildings on the OJC campus.

“The Colorado State Forest Service plays an important role in southeastern Colorado, and we as an institution look forward to partnering with them in program or service development for the people served by this facility,” said Rizzuto.

OJC graduate Connie Ryan, who works for a Pueblo contractor, served as the principal architect on the planning for the new CSFS building.

The district outgrew its previous office space at the La Junta National Guard armory, said La Junta District Forester Donna Davis. Her district temporarily is leasing space on Santa Fe Avenue in downtown La Junta until the new building is complete.

OJC leased the half-acre of undeveloped land to the CSFS for 35 years under an Interagency Lease Agreement between the Colorado Community College System and Colorado State University, the parent organization of the CSFS. A private contractor chosen through a bidding process will commence construction on March 3, and construction is expected to be completed by September.

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“President Rizzuto and the OJC staff have offered the Colorado State Forest Service such a supportive and warm welcome to their campus,” said Jeff Jahnke, state forester and director of the CSFS. “This location and the campus partnership will greatly support the CSFS mission for the seven-county district, and should enhance the college’s already outstanding presence in southeastern Colorado.”

The CSFS assists rural landowners in southeast Colorado by providing outreach and technical assistance. In spring 2009, the agency helped landowners near Ordway reforest by planting trees in areas affected by the 2008 Ordway/Crowley County wildfire. And for over a decade, the CSFS has been instrumental in the removal of invasive tamarisk along the Arkansas River and its tributaries.

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