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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cal Poly Dedicates New 'Center for Engineering Innovation'; Founder Donald E. Bently Receives College's Distinguished Service Award

San Luis Obispo -- Nevada industrialist Donald E. Bently cut the ribbon Saturday (May 17) to Cal Poly's newest center for engineering education: the Donald E. Bently Center for Engineering Innovation, which Bently established with a \$6 million gift to the university's Mechanical Engineering Department.

"The Bently Center will keep the College of Engineering on the cutting edge of engineering education well into the future by fostering and expanding 'project-based learning,'" said Dean of Engineering Peter Lee. "We are indebted to Don for his visionary gift."

In recognition of Bently's single-handed impact on Cal Poly's engineering program, the college awarded him its Distinguished Service Award at the dedication ceremony.

The center's purpose is to advance research, education and practice in mechanical engineering by funding applied research projects undertaken by faculty members, students and visiting scholars. A director's position and two faculty positions are also funded by the Bently Center endowment.

Mechanical Engineering Professor Jim Meagher has been named the first director. The department is recruiting faculty members to start next fall in the areas of rotor dynamics and alternative energy technologies.

"We have already identified more than a dozen projects for the 2003-04 academic year," Meagher said. "Clearly, the Bently Center will have a tremendous impact on our mechanical engineering program for as long as we exist. It's a wonderful legacy for Don."

Located temporarily in a laboratory in Cal Poly's Engineering Building, the center will move to an expanded suite of laboratory and office space next year. Plans include joining the center with the current Solar Turbines/Bently Nevada Vibrations and Rotor Dynamics Laboratory and the Bently Nevada Computational Facility to provide faculty and student researchers access to computer-aided design equipment as well as industrial-sized testing machines.

University Provost Paul Zingg said the university is "delighted that Don Bently came to Cal Poly five years ago and liked what he saw: faculty actively engaged with students in our labs."

After that initial visit, Bently's former company, the Bently Nevada Corp., joined in founding the Solar

Turbines/Bently Nevada Vibrations and Rotor Dynamics Laboratory, Cal Poly's first fully industry-sponsored facility. Bently also provided funds to establish the Bently Nevada Computational Facility at the university and later added to that lab by donating \$80,000 to buy 19 high-end workstations.

"I've been extremely impressed with the way the Mechanical Engineering Department has utilized the rotor dynamics technology we have provided," Bently said. "You're doing the right thing the right way and I'm very proud to be able to support these activities."

Bently, a world-renowned expert in turbo machinery, serves as chief executive officer of the Nevada-based Bently Pressurized Bearing Co.

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