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Cal Poly Breaks Ground on New Center for Science on May 1

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly will host a ceremonial ground-breaking Saturday for a new \$132 million, state-of-the-art building for science instruction. The ground-breaking for the Center for Science, which will feature symbolic pyrotechnics and participation by students from all of the university's colleges, will begin at 2 p.m. Saturday May 1.

"This building, which has been a vision of ours for many years, is becoming a reality thanks to an excellent partnership between the State of California, private donors and industry partners," said Cal Poly President Warren Baker.

"Most important of all, of course, is what we'll do inside the building, and that's provide all of our students with a foundation in science, the central building block of our polytechnic curriculum," Baker said. "This new building is absolutely crucial to making sure that Cal Poly remains one of the nation's premier comprehensive polytechnic universities."

The six-story building, which will be the campus' second-largest academic building behind the Kennedy Library, will replace the north half of the old science and mathematics building, commonly called the Spider Building. Formal construction of the nearly 200,000-square-foot building is scheduled to begin later this year and to be ready for students in the fall of 2013.

"Fittingly for our polytechnic mission, the center will sit in the geographic heart of campus," said Phil Bailey, dean of the College of Science and Mathematics. "Every student on campus will attend classes or labs in this landmark facility, and so the center will be a university-wide hub for study, research and reflection."

The center will house state-of-the-art classrooms, student and faculty research space and offices, nestled in an environment where students can sit, talk and learn about science and one another. "The center provides space that fosters the way students learn best – in collaboration with their faculty and each other," said Bailey.

Money for construction includes \$113 million from the sale of state bonds and more than \$19 million in private funds raised by the Cal Poly Foundation Board from donors and industry partners.

The lead private gift came from Cal Poly alumnus and long-time supporter Joe Cotchett. Named one of the 100 most influential lawyers in the nation, Cotchett has been a key advocate for Cal Poly, including the establishment of the Cotchett Endowment for Excellence in Science and Mathematics Teacher Education. The Cotchett Education building on campus is named for him.

Additional lead gifts came from Cal Poly Foundation Board chairman Gary Bloom and Foundation Board members Kenneth Edwards and William Swanson.

Cutting edge research programs that will be located in the Center for Science include the Western Coatings Technology Center (WCTC) and the Environmental Biotechnology Institute (EBI).

Edwards, former CEO of Dunn-Edwards Paint, spearheaded the campaign to fund the WCTC, which is named after him to recognize his leadership and generosity. The EBI, which pursues biotech-based solutions to address environmental issues, was established through a significant donation by the Unocal Corporation, now a part of Chevron.

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