

August, 2025

New Student-Driven Mural is Completed on Campus



Our campus has received a colorful gift with the recent completion of a vibrant new mural on campus, a collaborative student and community effort spearheaded by PC Fine Arts students and our new Painting and Drawing Instructor, Angel Lesnikowski.

This impressive project, which began as a student idea and transformed into a significant campuswide endeavor, highlights the artistic talent and collaborative spirit within our students.

The project began when students from the art club expressed a desire to create a mural. After the students secured approval to use a dedicated space with the support of Art Instructor Jackie Buttice and Dean of Instruction Michelle Miller-Galaz, the idea quickly gained momentum. Buttice further assisted the art club students in presenting their proposal to the campus community, which was well-received and secured funding, allowing the project to "blossom and turn into this wonderful, community-driven project".

Angel Lesnikowski, an adjunct faculty member in painting and drawing at Porterville College and at Clovis Community College, played a pivotal role in bringing the mural to life. With her extensive experience in collaborative murals, including projects involving community and multiple artists, Lesnikowski was well-equipped to guide the endeavor. She also designed the mural, choosing an octopus as the central theme.

Leslie Alvarado, a third-year PC student who recently graduated, was instrumental in initiating the idea and theme for the mural. Alvarado explained the

significance of the octopus design, noting the school's pirate theme and how the octopus symbolizes the ability to "do more than one thing". Alvarado believes this concept reflects what the art department teaches students: versatility beyond a single artistic medium.

Beyond its artistic merit, the mural also fostered a stronger sense of community among students. Alvarado shared that the art department helped her build friendships and connections, leading to the collaborative environment that made the mural possible.

This new mural stands as a testament to the creativity, dedication, and collaborative spirit of the Porterville College Fine Arts students and the supportive campus community. It will be officially unveiled to campus at a ceremony this September.



From High School to High Skills: The PC Jumpstart Program's Impact

The warm sun shone brightly on the Porterville College campus as the Summer 2025 Session of the PC Jumpstart program began. This marked another year for the innovative four-week, project-based internship program, designed to give current high school juniors a significant head start on their futures.

The Jump Start program's roots trace back four years to a pilot program created through a collaborative effort between College of the Sequoias (COS), West Hills College Lemoore, and Porterville College. Its core mission is to provide students with hands-on experiences in high-demand careers within the region, allowing them to earn valuable certifications or even licensure depending on their chosen field.

This year's program offered an exciting array of courses: the savory skills of **"Fundamentals of Culinary Arts,"** the cutting-edge technology of **"Drone Piloting,"** and the vital preparations of **"Pre-First Responder Training."**

Throughout the four weeks, students delved deep into their selected areas, gaining practical knowledge and real-world skills.

As the program drew to a close, a sense of accomplishment filled the air. PC Interim President Primavera Monarrez visited the Culinary, Business,



and Pre-First Responder closing sessions, witnessing firsthand the culmination of the students' hard work.

She shared her enthusiasm, stating, "It was truly incredible to witness the students' excitement and pride as they completed their summer experience. I was able to congratulate them personally and see their enthusiasm for learning firsthand".

The Summer Jumpstart Program once again proved to be a powerful example of how hands-on learning can inspire young people and equip them for success. The program's success is a testament to the dedication of the Porterville College faculty and staff who made this transformative experience possible, ensuring that these students left not only inspired but also more prepared for their futures.

Reach Air Ambulance Visits Porterville College Jumpstart Program



Students participating in the Porterville College Jumpstart program recently received a unique and exciting visit from **Reach Air Ambulance**. The organization flew to campus to provide students with an up-close look at careers in the air ambulance field.

The visit offered an invaluable opportunity for students in the First Responder program to learn about the diverse and impactful careers available in air medical transport. They heard firsthand about the roles and responsibilities within the field, gaining insight into potential future paths.

In addition, students from the Jumpstart program's Drone Academy were also on hand. They engaged with the helicopter pilot, discussing important topics such as FAA regulations, drone piloting, and related careers within the healthcare industry. This interaction provided a practical link between drone technology and real-world applications in emergency services.

For more information on the Jumpstart program at Porterville College, visit portervillecollege.edu.

PC and Other Partners Tour Local Zeronox Facility



Porterville College celebrated its ongoing partnership with **Zeronox, Inc.** with an exclusive tour of the company's Porterville facilities. The event, attended by representatives from the Kern Community College District (Kern CCD), the California Renewable Energy Laboratory (CREL), and the 21st Century Energy Center Team, offered a firsthand look at the cutting-edge innovation driving Zeronox's electric vehicle (EV) technology.

The tour highlighted the continued significance of the collaboration between Porterville College and Zeronox, Inc. The partnership was a key factor in the launch of the **PC's Electric Vehicle Program** in the fall of 2024. This program provides students with essential education and hands-on training in clean transportation, preparing them for high-demand careers in the growing EV industry.

During the visit, attendees witnessed the development of Zeronox's impressive EVs and even had the unforgettable opportunity to get behind the wheel of one of their vehicles. This experience underscored the practical, real-world application of the skills students are learning in the Porterville College program.

A special thank you was extended to Zeronox, Inc. CEO Robert Cruess, Director of Business Development Jose Daugherty, and the entire Zeronox team for their hospitality, vision, and commitment to empowering the next generation of EV professionals.

Together, Porterville College and Zeronox, Inc. are creating powerful pathways for innovation, education, and sustainability to thrive in the Central Valley and beyond.



From PC to Power Grids: Student Jair Ramirez's Life-Changing Research Experience



Porterville College student **Jair Ramirez** recently completed a 10-week intensive research project focused on sustainable energy, an experience he describes as "life-changing." As the sole PC student selected for the program, Jair joined a cohort of seven Bakersfield College students in a partnership with the University of California, Riverside (UCR) to research and develop a microgrid project. The project integrates a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and a microgrid controller with an existing photovoltaic system at the Weill Institute parking lot.

Jair was part of the team tasked with optimizing the microgrid for cost savings and environmental benefits. This role allowed him to apply his classroom knowledge

to a real-world scenario, a privilege he believes is crucial for community college students. "I am glad that I had an opportunity to be part of a project where I was able to merge knowledge from class to a real-life scenario," he said. The project's goal of reducing electricity costs and greenhouse gas emissions resonated deeply with him, reinforcing his desire to make a difference in his community.

Working with UCR faculty and graduate students provided Jair with a glimpse into his future career as an engineer. "Working among professionals who have a great work ethic...was extraordinary," he stated, noting that the experience gave him a clear understanding of the type of research he can expect to conduct. He was particularly surprised by the complexity of implementing a BESS onto an existing photovoltaic system, which requires extensive research into sensors, safety systems, and programming.

This research experience has significantly influenced Jair's future plans. While he initially felt apprehensive about conducting research, he now aims to pursue a Ph.D. in engineering and participate in similar research projects. He believes this internship will be instrumental in helping him transfer to a four-year university and secure future opportunities. "I want to be involved in more internships like this, where I can use my knowledge, be creative, and make a difference in my community," Jair concluded.

Porterville College and Tule River Tribe Celebrate Landmark Education Partnership



Porterville College and the Tule River Tribal Council recently celebrated their transformative educational partnership at a community dinner during the **Native Futures College and Career Expo**. This collaboration, years in the making, aims to bring higher education directly to the Tule River Reservation, addressing barriers for Native students.

The evening, which began with a traditional blessing, highlighted how a 2022 conversation about improving access blossomed into a full-scale initiative. By September 2024, Porterville College began offering on-

site courses at the reservation, including communication, arts, and hospitality. The partnership will also utilize the Tribe's Landing 13 building in Porterville for a new hospitality program, offering courses like restaurant and bar management.

The initiative includes comprehensive support for tribal students, such as financial aid workshops and mentorship. Dr. Fernando Sorano helped craft transfer-level curriculum to prepare students for four-year institutions.

As Director of Student Success Programs, Reagan Dozier emphasized, "This program isn't just about education, it's about empowerment."

The collaboration already shows tangible benefits in workforce development, aiming to build employment pipelines in vital fields like healthcare and education. The event also honored key figures who championed the partnership, including education advocates Mercy James and Jervis McDarment (with scholarships in their names) and Kellie Carrillo, recognized for her instrumental role in guiding the program's early stages.

The celebration, supported by numerous sponsors, underscored a powerful model for closing equity gaps and empowering the Tule River Tribe's future leaders.

Porterville College Completes Parking Lot Resurfacing, All Lots Now Open

Porterville College is pleased to announce the successful completion of resurfacing work in the Administrative and Athletics parking lots, with all campus parking areas now fully open and available for use. This project marks another significant step in the college's ongoing commitment to improving campus infrastructure and traffic flow.

The resurfacing work, which began on July 7th, involved a temporary closure of the Administrative and Athletics lots for approximately three weeks to accommodate the necessary construction and equipment. During this period, students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to utilize the Jamison Stadium parking lot and the ample parking available off of S. Plano Street at the rear of the campus. The college extended its appreciation for the community's understanding and cooperation during these temporary inconveniences.

The resurfaced lots officially began reopening in phases. On Saturday, July 26th, the entire lot was opened for SWAP Meet parking. By Monday, July 28th, the west side of the parking lot (near the AC-Building) was accessible, with the east side (near the Gym and FIT Buildings) remaining closed for final completion work. The entire lot was fully open for regular use starting on Tuesday, July 29th.

This parking lot resurfacing is part of broader road improvements underway at Porterville College, which also include the recently completed construction of the new South College Avenue and enhanced traffic patterns across the campus. These essential improvements aim to provide a safer and more efficient experience for everyone at Porterville College.

