



**Contacts for more information:**

Dr. J.D. Garvin, PCC President  
(719) 549-3213, [john.garvin@pueblocc.edu](mailto:john.garvin@pueblocc.edu)

Shannon South, Dean of SCCC West Campus  
(970) 565-8457, [shannon.south@pueblocc.edu](mailto:shannon.south@pueblocc.edu)

Dr. Lynn Urban, Dean of SCCC East Campus  
(970) 247-2929, ext. 7216, [lynn.urban@pueblocc.edu](mailto:lynn.urban@pueblocc.edu)

Gary Franchi, Public Relations Coordinator  
(719) 549-3053, [gary.franchi@pueblocc.edu](mailto:gary.franchi@pueblocc.edu)

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## **Heritage Hall to preserve SJBTC's rich history while a new, robust SCCC era begins**

**MANCOS** – A bold and exciting new era of higher education opportunities was ushered in here today in grandiose style, while the unique and rich history of past decades of instructional excellence was recognized and honorably preserved during special dedication ceremonies that included a ribbon cutting and campus tours.

Fall semester classes officially began at the new Southwest Colorado Community College West Campus today following \$1 million in upgrades made to the former San Juan Basin Technical College building. The SCCC was created through the legislative-approved merger of the SJBTC and Pueblo Community College's Southwest Campus. The merger bill, originally carried to the Legislature by former Senator James Isgar of Hesperus, was signed into law by Governor Bill Ritter and became official July 1.

The improvements to the building, a major information technology infrastructure upgrade and the newly created SJBTC Heritage Hall were all unveiled and applauded today by local, regional and state dignitaries who gathered to pay tribute to the Tech College's history. On hand to share their memories of the SJBTC's early years were Aryol Brumley, one of the school's original founders, and Deanne Acott, wife of the late Dr. Howard N. Acott, who both helped found the school and served as its first Executive Director from 1971 to 1997.

Shannon South, the Dean of the SCCC's West Campus, spoke with admiration of William Lewis, the Tech College's second president from 1997 to 2007. She also lauded the work of Jeanine Valdez, who filled key administrative roles at the school for more than 30 years. South was the Tech College's third president from 2007 until the merger became official. Serving a similar role to her as Dean of the SCCC's East Campus in Durango is Dr. Lynn Urban.

The SCCC begins classes with an “Our College, Our Community” theme and dramatically enhanced in appearance, infrastructure and operations. Improvements include:

- Creation of a one-stop Go!Zone enrollment center
- Development of a full-service bookstore for textbooks, supplies and clothing
- An extensive food and drink area
- Painting of interior and exterior and trim
- New exterior signage
- New flooring in public access areas
- Remodeling of bathrooms to make them ADA-compliant
- New furniture in classrooms
- Major IT infrastructure upgrade with wireless capabilities throughout
- Installation of 165 new computers for classrooms and administrative offices
- Three laptop computer carts available for on-campus usage
- Classrooms with hybrid and video conference capabilities
- Telephone system with direct connectivity to all PCC campuses and wireless phones for key administrative areas
- New Nursing classroom
- New Learning Center for testing, studying, and group and aided learning
- Installation of interior and exterior surveillance camera system

With the improvements, the SCCC West Campus will have the most advanced infrastructure of any college in southern Colorado. This capability will enable the former SJBTC to be a regional leader and innovator in online learning and technology. Other improvements to the facility are planned in the near future.

Dr. Nancy McCallin, President of the Colorado Community College System, welcomed the new college to the CCCS and spoke of the value of having a comprehensive community college in the region.

Dr. J.D. Garvin, PCC President, recognized the new SCCC Advisory Board members and spoke glowingly of the positive impact that the new community college will have on the economic and workforce development in the Four Corners of Colorado region.

The SCCC’s East Campus in Durango also has been upgraded with a 3,350-square-foot expansion that includes bigger science, health and computer labs with upgraded technology; the development of a Student Services enrollment center; an enhanced video conference room; and new exterior signage.

Most important is that students in this region will now have access to much more robust higher education opportunities because of programs that were added through the merger. SCCC will give students access to an exciting wide range of programs of study and the ability to quickly turn an earned certificate into an associate degree.

SCCC offers Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, Associate of Science and Associate of General Studies degrees. Since PCC has articulation agreements with 4-year schools, there will be an ensured seamless credit transfer for those who want to continue their education by pursuing a bachelor's degree. Or, students can take technical and vocational programs and enter the workforce. They also will have access to PCC's extensive online course schedule.

SCCC will be an affordable means to higher education for the region. Students will have greater access to financial aid opportunities because of the ample number of scholarships that are available through the PCC Foundation.

More information about courses and programs is available by calling the SCCC offices toll free at 1-877-544-0744.

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*Founded in 1933, Pueblo Community College is a premier teaching institution focused on providing academic and service excellence to help its students acquire the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills needed to better their lives. An educational and technological leader, PCC fosters economic development and utilizes strong partnerships in the communities it serves through its Pueblo, Fremont and Southwest campuses.*