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Press Release

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STC brings together municipal leaders and law enforcement professionals for the first Regional Consortium meeting

Brainstorm session includes update of RCPSE and key phases of facility as it begins to open its doors this fall

MCALLEN, TX (Aug. 14, 2017) - South Texas College held its first business consortium meeting on Aug. 10 with city leaders, as well as law enforcement professionals to discuss the proposed development of its \$4 million Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) and \$3.2 million Covered Shooting Range as Phase II of the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence (RCPSE) gets underway.

Together with its partners, including Valley cities and law enforcement agencies, STC has developed a \$71.28 million long range master plan for building its RCPSE in three phases.

Key to that development is the EVOC that will enable sheriff's departments, police departments, fire departments, federal agencies and DPS to use the facility for a wide variety of vehicle training including driving skills practice and collision avoidance.

The luncheon on Aug. 10 was the first regional meeting of city leaders and law enforcement from at least 10 different cities in the Valley.

"Everybody agreed that this is absolutely needed, and it will be a benefit for all law enforcement officials, local, state and federal," said STC President Dr. Shirley A. Reed. "This was critical. We have the cities and the counties all involved. When we did the master plan, they identified for us what their priorities were. We incorporated it into the master plan, and when you're doing a master plan you do some dreaming and some visioning but we are now in the reality phase."

Located at 4300 S. Cage Blvd. in Pharr, the RCPSE will make STC the first border community college in the nation to establish integrative training for local, state and federal professionals in law enforcement, public safety, fire safety and Homeland Security along the US/Mexico border.

"This has been an operation between STC, the City of Pharr and PSJA ISD. We donated the land and money. Now obviously it's in our borders but at the end of the day, what we want is a regional project," said Pharr Mayor Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez, who was in attendance at the consortium meeting. "We don't want a project designed specifically for the boundaries of Pharr.

"This is not Pharr's project, it is STC's project because the college represents the entire Rio Grande Valley. This is a regional project enabling all communities to come together and contribute to educate law enforcement. It is a national project because the entire nation benefits from this."

The \$71 million master plan is slated to transform the RCPSE into a Public Safety, Law Enforcement, Fire Science and Homeland Security campus by 2030. The facility is located on a 64 acre site in Pharr with 180 additional acres available for future expansion. The master plan includes 534,385 square feet of buildings, structures and a driving track to be completed in three phases over the next decade.

“Obviously, South Texas College is a huge part of our community and the entire Rio Grande Valley. McAllen has partnered with STC since its inception,” said McAllen City Manager Roy Rodriguez, who also attended the EVOC luncheon. “Dr. Reed, STC and City Hall have been synonymous with success as far as what STC has been able to accomplish. When you have an expansion of this magnitude that could possibly touch so many lives and so many organizations, it’s important that we get everybody together and start getting opinions about how to move forward. It’s exciting to be here.”

Phase One includes a \$9.9 million investment. Set for completion this fall, it includes a training center, driving/skills pad, shooting simulation lab and a driving simulation lab.

Phase Two includes \$10.6 million investment for fire science and Homeland Security. It includes a multi-story fire training structure, two story residential training structure and confined space/search and rescue training area. This phase also includes the EVOC, a cityscape with non-lethal training capacity, and a covered shooting range with firearm training classroom.

Phase Three is a \$50.6 million investment in Integrative Homeland Security, which will add a physical plant and expansive growth with new education and student services buildings.

“My initial impression was that I feel it’s going to be a great asset to the community and to the region. We are looking at training law enforcement officers, and not just officers but firefighters as well. I think this is going to be great for our region,” said Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal, who was also in attendance at the meeting.

“We need better training. At the end of the day, it’s about having access to that training for law enforcement officers as well as fire departments,” Villarreal said. “They need continuous training, and that’s something that will only better serve the residents in our communities across the Valley. Whether it’s Rio Grande City, McAllen, Edinburg or Pharr; it’s all about having better trained public safety officers.”

For more information please visit southtexascollege.edu/regionalcenter



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