PSTC in Lompoc brings new revenue opportunities

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Have you noticed new faces having lunch, staying in your hotel, or shopping at the grocery store? It just might be a law enforcement officer in training or a firefighter continuing her education.

The Public Safety Training Complex (PSTC) at Allan Hancock Community College’s Lompoc Valley Center is complete! And classes started a few weeks ago.

PSTC up and running

This state-of-the-art facility serves as the premier training location for fire and wildland fire, law enforcement, emergency medical services, and environmental technology for students enrolled in the college’s Public Safety programs.

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There are 15 emergency medical service courses lasting one to two weeks and as long as 17 weeks this semester with more than 300 students currently enrolled. The Fire Technology program has three courses ranging in eight to 18 weeks with 60 students. Environmental Technology’s six courses are one- to four-week sessions throughout the semester with a current enrollment of 80 and a potential of 150 students when the class registrations close later this semester. The law enforcement program is offering 15 classes. Most of these are one to five weeks but the longest is 21 weeks. Current enrollment is 84 students and could end the spring with well more than 300 enrolled in the one- to two-week classes.

Oil, gas industry to bring 3,000 students

Private industries such as clean and alternative energy and the oil and gas industry are also utilizing the PSTC as a training facility.

The Petroleum Education Council recently signed a contract and trained seven instructors for basic oil safety training courses to be taught at PSTC with an estimated 3,000 attendees in the first year.

The complex is designed to accommodate training related to homeland security, disaster preparedness, and emergency response as well as specialized training for local, regional, national and international agencies. Contracts are in discussion for additional courses to be offered in these areas. For details on the campus visit hancockcollege.edu/academic_departments/public_safety/public-safety-complex.php

So what does all this mean for Lompoc and our economic development? Public Safety students purchasing gas at our stations, having lunch in our restaurants, and shopping in local stores. Some of these trainees come from outside the tri-county area and are staying in our hotels, using our dry cleaners, getting a haircut at our stylists and barbers, and exploring our beautiful surroundings while hiking, surfing or golfing. Almost half of the Public Safety students are here as part of their employer’s required training while the other half is paying for the training themselves in hopes of gaining employment.

805 bike race to use PSTC track

In addition to classes offered by the campus and private industries, use of the facility by the public has begun. The Firestone Walker 805 Criterium Weekend has added a third day of racing with Friday night’s, May 9, race to be held on the PSTC’s emergency vehicle operator course (EVOC) track. The race will be in Buellton on Saturday and return to Lompoc on Mother’s Day.

Sunday’s race is the venue for the 2014 Southern California Elite Criterium Championships bringing the highest-level amateur criterium racing in Southern California to Lompoc. The cash prizes for the Elite Pro Men and Women categories are also some of the largest with a rare match for both the men and women drawing some of the nation’s best cyclists.

A three-day race weekend is a major incentive for the riders, their crews, and fans to stay in Lompoc hotels. It will also result in additional Lompoc restaurant business on Friday and Saturday.

Their time here is a postcard home to others. How we treat each other and our passion for our town will be what these visitors remember.

So let’s treat everyone like they are visiting Lompoc and make sure visitors and residents alike talk about their great experiences here: shopping, dining, playing and living in our amazing little corner of California.

Building the Future Today is a new column by the Lompoc Economic Development Committee. The column will run on the first and third Sundays of each month. To contact the committee, email orijenel@gmail.com.