Public Safety Training Complex Opens to Allan Hancock College Students

The new $26 million facility hosts its first semester of classes, and there are plans to hold a public open house in May.

Students began training this week at Allan Hancock College’s new Public Safety Training Complex in Lompoc. (Allan Hancock College photo)

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Allan Hancock College students are getting their first look inside the long-anticipated Public Safety Training Complex, which is hosting its opening classes this semester on the Lompoc Valley Center campus.

Students returned to all Allan Hancock’s campuses for the start of winter semester on Tuesday, with nearly 300 more (and more full-time students) enrolled than last fall.
Although most classrooms were complete, construction of Lompoc’s $26 million state-of-the-art public safety facility was still “on the cusp of being finished” this week, according to David Senior, director of fire, safety and emergency medical services.

About 40 students enrolled in the law enforcement academy — nearly a record — and 26 others signed up for the fire academy didn’t seem to mind, with all gearing up to use the soon-to-be complete facilities.

Students previously trained in a smaller Santa Maria space.

“We’ve been working in less-than-stellar facilities,” Senior said. “We’re really excited.”

The goal of the complex, paid in part by the $180 million Measure I bond measure passed in 2006, is to accommodate joint exercises for police, fire and EMTs to train together and simulate coordinated efforts.

Senior said the facility, built on 80 acres, will soon match the strength of the program and instructors, who hope to host a public open house at the complex in May.

The driving track is finished, along with main building classrooms, he said.

Remaining on the to-do list was completion of the 100-yard pistol and rifle range, fire tower, burn building and a scenario village.

Senior was happy to report that Hancock just signed a contract that will guarantee thousands of petroleum industry workers will come from miles around to complete basic safety training at the Lompoc complex.

“That’s a big deal for us,” he said.

Along with completion of construction, Senior said, the complex will look to expand its course offerings to include disaster rescue dog training.

He encouraged anyone interested in the program to stop by the complex at 1 Hancock Drive in Lompoc to take a tour or talk about setting up an education plan.