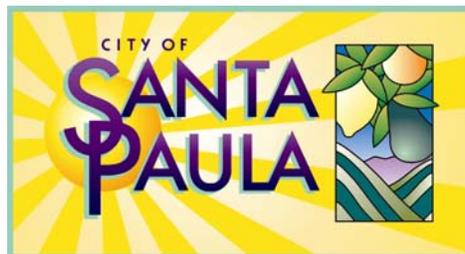


BROKEN PROMISE

**The Story of Measure S and the
Failure to Construct the New Santa Clara Valley
Advanced Technology Education Center
(aka Santa Paula Ventura College East Campus Center)**

2001-2006



April 2006

The City of Santa Paula, through two different requests under the California Public Records Act and other public documents it has obtained, has compiled the story of what we think really happened after the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) went to the voters of Ventura County and received their support of a \$356 million bond "Measure S" in March 2002. Included in the list of projects for the bond was a new "Santa Clara Valley Advanced Technology Education Center." While no specific dollar amount for this project is listed on the bond initiative, the College District internally budgeted \$24.61 million for the project.

Now over four years later, the project has not been constructed and the VCCCD Board of Trustees is considering defunding the project and using the funds for other purposes.

How and why is this happening?

The City and the voters of Ventura County may never really know for sure. However, based on the documents in this report (which are cited here by their Attachment number), here are our best guesses.

1. **Political Will of the District Changed**

When Measure S was first discussed, the Board and District staff held up the construction of a new facility in the Santa Clara Valley as a top priority (Attachment 4). After Measure S passed, the District worked diligently to move the project forward (Attachments 10A, 10D, 10E, 13, 13A). However when Ventura College President Larry Calderon left to take a similar job in Florida in early 2004, the interest of the District in the project clearly changed. That position was reinforced when Trustee Bob Gonzales left the Board in late 2004. There is no record of any pro-active actions by the District to move the project forward since 2004. All activity to do so has rested with the City of Santa Paula and the Santa Paula community.

2. **No Land/How Much Land Really Needed?**

Measure S provided no land for a new facility in the Santa Clara Valley. While Calderon had lined up a potential donor for six acres of land just after Measure S was approved (Attachment 10B), that fell through (Attachment 10C) in late 2002. The District attempted to identify other parcels at a community meeting in April, 2003 (Attachment 10F). The parcels reviewed ranged in size from under an acre to 405 acres. A December, 2002 email from JCM (the District's project management consultant) to Calderon talked about the various acreages that could be used (Attachment 10). However, the District has never held another meeting in the three years since to look for alternate sites nor is there any information in the record regarding additional work to identify land. The City of Santa Paula started

negotiating with the Limoneira Company for land for the facility absent any action from the District. The District officially changed its position for needing less than 10 acres to needing 40 acres or more at a November 13, 2004 public meeting in Santa Paula. However the explanation for needing this much acreage is contradicted in the December, 2002 email from JCM (Attachment 10).

3. Vision of the Facility Changed (or Did It?)

The vision and plan for the facility were articulated several times through 2001 as the bond program was developed and then into 2002 and 2003 (Attachments 1, 2, 2A, 4, 5, 10A, 10D, 10E). Shortly after the bond passed, it seems to have become clear to the District that any new facility would need to have "Center" status. The District made the first application for such status in December, 2003 (Attachments 16 and 17). In this application letter, the District expected to submit the next step of the application process a "Letter of Intent" by mid calendar year 2004. That Letter has not yet been submitted. Not much has been discussed about the "vision" of the facility until April, 2006 when the current Ventura College President, Robin Calote, called on the community to work with her on an "educational masterplan" for the new facility (Attachment 39). It is unclear why the vision and masterplans developed between 2001 and 2003 are now insufficient for use.

4. Budget Problems

It became clear in late 2004 (Attachment 22A) that the District would not have enough money to complete all its Measure S projects. Reasons for this vary and again, the voters of Ventura County may never know all the reasons why. One project that seemed to be in particular difficulty was the construction of a regional fire, sheriff and police education and training academy. (Attachment 21 and 35). While the record shows this was the first project initiated after the bond passed in October, 2002 (Attachment 9), three and a half years later it is still not complete. Interestingly, Calote's April email indicates that along with the proposed defunding of the East Campus facility that \$8 million would be transferred to public safety training facility. This is troublesome because of the general understanding that funds for projects could not be transferred between Colleges, with the public safety facility being allocated a separate line item in the bond (Attachment 6 and 26). This however became a non-issue in late 2005 when the District's Bond Counsel opined that it was now acceptable to move funds in this way (Attachment 38) just at the time the District began considering the need to transfer funds. However even with the reprogramming of funds detailed in Attachment 39, there remains \$12 million unallocated for Ventura College projects. In Calote's email there is no explanation why the entire East Campus facility budget is being defunded.

5. Need 500 FTES to Build Facility

When Measure S was proposed and campaigned for, there was no stipulation of enrollment needs to actually construct the new East Campus facility. The first discussion of needing 500 FTES (or Full Time Equivalent Students) in our review came in a December, 2002 email from JCM to Calderon (Attachment 10). However, JCM talks of exceptions to this 500 FTES rule “if it can be demonstrated that the center is meeting a very special need, that the current facilities are hopelessly inadequate to meet the need, if future growth is clearly in evidence that will bring the center to at least 500 FTES threshold, or if there are economic efficiencies involved such as the donation of a parcel of land or a financial contribution of the district.”

6. So How Many Students Are There?

Attachment 10D indicates Fall 2002 enrollment as 1,385 students or 261 FTES. Attachment 36 has Fall 2005 enrollment as 734 students, with no FTES listed. That is a drop of 651 students or 53% in three years. 52 classes were offered at the center in Fall 2002 and only 33 classes in Fall 2005. Clearly it is difficult to attract students to the center when only about 60% of the classes are offered in 2005 that were offered in 2002.

So as the Ventura County Community College District Board of Trustees considers the issue of defunding the new Santa Clara Valley Advanced Technology Education Center, all that the City of Santa Paula is left with is the record: the discussions leading up to the March, 2002 election and the discussions since.

Attachment 6 is a letter to the voters of Ventura County from former VCCCD Chancellor Philip Westin, written a week after the Measure S election. In part he said: “The Board of Trustees.....are committed to ensuring that the projects listed on the bond are completed expeditiously and frugally. This is not only a requirement of law, it is a moral obligation we take seriously in light of the vote of confidence that you, the voters, have given us.”

This commitment has not been fulfilled. The promises made to the voters of Ventura County and to the voters of Santa Paula pertaining to a new educational facility in the Santa Clara Valley have been broken. The real losers here are the young men and women who if they do not have a robust facility nearby, may not go to college anywhere.

The remainder of this report is a chronology of events and pertinent documents from the development of the bond measure to present.

A Chronology: Measure “S” and the Funding/Defunding of the Santa Paula Center

2001

On December 1, 2000 and January 26, 2001, upper level management of the Ventura County Community College District (“VCCCD”) conducted a “Futures Forum”. The intent was to set strategic directions for the district and the campuses, in the possible pursuit of a bond measure. (Attachment 1) On February 22, 2001, Larry Calderon gave a brief update on a possible expansion of the East Campus. (The campus had just been expanded two years before to its currently square footage.) (Attachment 2) From August 22-26, 2001, VCCCD had a professional opinion poll taken to determine the level of support for various proposed projects. (Attachment 2A) The construction of the new East Campus Center got a so-so response; most projects were more clearly viewed either positively or negatively, including the construction of the Conejo Center that had only a 34% positive response. On December 4, 2001, the VCCCD Trustees held a special meeting to place Measure S on the March, 2002 Ventura County ballot.

2002

In early versions of the list of projects, the East Campus had varying dollar amounts associated with it, from \$11M to \$34M. In Exhibit B to Measure S, only the three campuses and the Countywide Projects for Public Safety Instruction (i.e., the fire and sheriff’s academy), had dollar amounts associated with them. (Attachments 3 & 5) This is further underscored in Bond Update #1, dated January 27, 2002, which features the East Campus center and the Regional Fire, Sheriff and Police Training Center. (Attachment 4). This document also refers to the development of a new Ventura College East Campus Center “The potential for continued growth in this location (Santa Clara Valley) places construction of a new facility at the top of the list for the governing board.”

On March 10, 2002, after Measure S passed, then Chancellor Westin sent an open letter to the voters of Ventura County thanking them for their support, and including the following statement: “The Board of Trustees, the faculty, classified staff and managers are committed to ensuring that the projects listed on the bond are completed expeditiously and frugally. This is not only a requirement of law, it is a moral obligation we take seriously in light of the vote of confidence that you, the voters, have given us.” (Attachment 6) At the March 26, 2002 meeting of the VCCCD Board, the Chancellor talked about the duties of the Citizen’s Oversight Committee and distributed the document *Technical Information Regarding Measure “S”*. (Attachment 7) The members of the Citizen’s Oversight Committee were appointed at the June 24, 2002 VCCCD Board meeting. (Attachment 8)

The Board Construction Subcommittee (including Trustee Bob Gonzales) met on October 8, 2002, and was told that the interviews for an architectural firm for Fire/Sheriff's Academy Complex were scheduled for October 16, 2002. (Attachment 9). This is the first project with any record of going to the Construction Subcommittee.

On December 12, 2002, Rod Rose sent an e-mail to Larry (presumably Larry Calderon), detailing the process for establishing the Santa Paula Center as a state-recognized "educational center". Mr. Rose points out that: "In the past, enrollment projections have been the most important consideration, and that requires a minimum of 500 FTEs in either the Fall term or an annual average, whichever is greater (usually the Fall term). There have, however, been exceptions to this rule in the past if it can be demonstrated that the center is meeting a very special need, that the current facilities are hopelessly inadequate to meet that need, if future growth is clearly in evidence that will bring the center to at least the 500 FTEs threshold, or if there are economic efficiencies involved such as the donation of a parcel of land or a financial contribution by the district." (Attachment 10)

Also on December 12, 2002, Ventura College President Larry Calderon held a "Ventura East Campus Planning Meeting" (Minutes are Attachment 10A) which outlined the beginning of the specific planning process for the new East Campus.

On December 14, 2002, Calderon sent a letter to Robert L. Hulseman, President of Solo Cup Company questioning why the Company was not moving faster on the donation of land to VCCCD for the new East Campus. These discussions with Solo Cup apparently started in May, 2002 (Attachment 10B). Solo Cup responded to Calderon's letter on December 19, 2002 indicating that they were no longer interested in working with VCCCD on the donation of property. (Attachment 10C)

2003

On January 24, 2003, Santa Paula City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz has first conversation with then Limoneira President Pierre Tada about interest in developing their land in the City's East Area One General Plan Expansion Area and including ten acres for the Ventura College East Campus.

On February 19, 2003, a "Project Task Force Meeting – East Campus" was held including senior VCCC officials and representatives of the JCM Group. The minutes of this meeting (Attachment 10D) detail the amount of funding available from the bond (\$26,610,000) and a detailed overview of the types of facilities planned for the campus.

In April, 2003, Ventura College produced an "Educational Master Plan" that clearly articulates the current offerings at the East Campus facility and its future plans (Attachment 10E).

On April 4, 2003, Calderon held an "East Campus Site Acquisition Committee Meeting" in Santa Paula with community leaders to begin identifying new sites for the new East Campus facility (Attachment 10F).

At the June 17, 2003 VCCCD Board meeting, there was mention that Trustees Heitmann and Hernandez had agreed to meet and develop a protocol regarding the establishment of centers. President Hernandez also gave a brief report on his meeting with the Santa Paula City Council ad hoc committee regarding the Santa Paula Center on May 23, 2003. (Attachment 11) At the July 21, 2003 Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting, the Santa Paula Center is described as an off-campus center that would get operation and maintenance funding from the State. It is also mentioned that the residents of Santa Paula are very supportive of this center. (Attachment 12)

At the October 15, 2003 VCCCD Board meeting, a contract with STRATUS is approved to provide planning and advisory services for the East Campus Educational Center. (Attachment 13 & 13A) At the October 20, 2003 Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting, the contract with STRATUS is mention, and Handel Evans explains the requirements to build the stand-alone Santa Paula Center, and states that the approval process will be lengthy, 3 or 4 years at a minimum. (Attachment 14)

At the request of Ventura College President Larry Calderon, Martin Hernandez of Supervisor Kathy Long's Office and Mary Ann Krause of the Santa Paula City Council attended the November 18, 2003 VCCCD Board meeting to express support for the East Campus Center. (Attachment 15) At the December 9, 2003 VCCCD Board meeting, the Trustees issued a letter to the State to serve as preliminary notice for the establishment of the East Campus Educational Center. (Attachments 16 and 17)

2004

On January 20, 2004, the City of Santa Paula and the Limoneira Company enter into a Letter of Cooperation to move forward with master planning of East Area One with providing property for a new Ventura College East Campus as a priority.

The January 26, 2004 minutes of the Citizen's Oversight Committee reflect the same information, but indicate that Limoneira has offered a 400-acre site for development and that there are SOAR issues involved. (Attachment 18)

On May 26, 2004, there was a District Service Center meeting. The minutes include a chart of Ventura College Measure "S" priorities, which lists the East Campus Center as IIA, and list four other projects as candidates for elimination. (Attachment 19) This is the first mention identified of eliminating Measure S projects.

The June 24, 2004 Citizen's Oversight Committee minutes mention that Mr. Evans, Mr. Studt and Trustee Heitmann attended a meeting hosted by Limoneira regarding the potential land donation. The minutes state "Limoneira has expressed tremendous support for the Center." The minutes also indicate the potential for joint use of the center with the City Library and possibly the Santa Paula High School District. (Attachment 20)

On September 19, 2004, an e-mail regarding Oxnard College Measure "S" projects also includes the information that The Fire and Sheriff Academy EIR, Master Plan and Schematic Design documents are underway. (Attachment 21)

The September 20, 2004 Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting minutes indicate that there is strong support for the Santa Paula Center to be located on the Limoneira property. (Attachment 22) The minutes also indicate that art Hernandez has resigned from the Board Construction Subcommittee, and that Trustee Bob Gonzales will replace him for the remainder of the year.

On November 13, 2004, the City and Limoneira hold a community meeting to receive comment from the public on potential uses at East Area One. Representatives from VCCCD make a presentation at this meeting indicating that VCCC will now need forty acres for the East Campus site in order to move forward with the facility

A November 17, 2004 memo from Meznik to the College Presidents indicates that there has been unprecedented construction cost escalation, and bid alternates may have to be used to keep projects within budget. (Attachment 22A)

2005

The Chancellor's Cabinet met on February 1, 2005. Regarding the Santa Paula Center...Handel Evans confirms, "From a recruitment and educational point of view, you need this center." He also says: "Will have a major issue with City of Santa Paula." They discuss that if SOAR vote does not pass, they will do other projects. (Attachment 23)

An April 12, 2005 Report to the VCCCD Trustees called for the approval of the Measure "S" Proposed Cluster of Priorities. The report mentions that some projects that could be started with minimal CEQA review were started immediately after the bond was approved. The report also says it includes projects which are under construction or which have received funds at a level

which to abandon them would be fiscally inappropriate. (Attachment 24) The East Campus and the Fire/Sheriff Academy are still both on this list, though the chart shows that the Academy went into the design phase in August of 2004, and the East Campus design has not yet begun.

At the April 18, 2005 Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting, Chancellor Meznik reported on attending a meeting with Supt of Schools Chuck Weis and SPUHSD Supt David Gomez regarding the establishment of an educational partnership in Santa Paula. Meznik noted that such a partnership might not be in the best interests of the College District. (Attachment 25)

April 20, 2005 e-mail from Leslie Dickey to Handel Evans outlines the discussion from a heated meeting with the Sheriff's Department over the construction of the Fire/Sheriff's Academy, and just what was promised. The Sheriff's rep indicated a feeling that the project was being intentionally delayed. In addition, Lisa Dickey explained "I said we could not legally transfer any of the other Measure S money to the project even if we wanted to." (Attachment 26)

On May 10, 2005, The VCCCD Trustees received a report from the Chancellor asking their approval of the Five Year Capital Construction Plan. This report shows the costs for the Fire/Sheriff academy being allocated to the District office (\$1.25M), to Oxnard College (\$7.642M), and to Ventura College (\$15.012M). This is in sharp contrast to the previous documents that showed the money coming out of a separate countywide funding pot. (Attachment 27)

A June 9, 2005 e-mail from Meznik to Trustee Miller provides info to the trustee who will address Latino Town Hall that evening. Meznik says that the SPUHSD Supt is trying to acquire part of the VCCCD allocation from Limoneira for a High School. (Attachment 28)

A June 10, 2005 e-mail from Meznik (?) indicates that Larry Miller spoke at Latino Town Hall, and Miller and staff kept "us" out of the center of pointed debate. (Attachment 29)

Dr. Gabino Aguirre and Bob Borrego attended the Citizen's Oversight Committee on July 11, 2005 to urge that the funding for the East Campus Center be protected, and that collaborative partnerships be established with other sectors of education. Mr. Wesner of the Committee asked that the issue of moving bond money from one project to another be placed on the October Oversight Committee agenda. (Attachment 30)

An October 7, 2005 memo from Meznik to the VCCCD Trustees mentions a meeting with W, Bobkiewicz. Also mentions Dr. Gomez inviting VCCCD to meeting with City and High School Trustees. (Attachment 31)

A transcript of the VCCCD Trustees meeting of October 11, 2005 details statements made by the VCCCD bond counsel that Measure "S" bond proceeds can be moved from one campus to another, or to the public safety project, without violating the bond language. Trustee Huber (who was on the Citizen's Oversight Committee), states that it would not be in line with keeping the faith of the voters to do so. (Attachment 32)

The Minutes of the October 17, 2005 Citizen's Oversight Committee meeting indicate that Handel Evans indicated that the Conejo and Santa Paula centers are being reexamined. District is reevaluating its immediate need to identify a site, which would serve a long-term purpose. (Attachment 33)

On October 21, 2005, Meznek forwarded a packet of information to the VCCCD Trustees that includes the vote on Measure "S" by community, showing that Santa Paula had the second highest vote in favor of the Measure, after Oxnard. The information packet also shows that 1300 to 1400+ Santa Paula residents are students in the VCCCD system. (Attachment 34)

On November 2, 2005, the Santa Paula City Council, the Santa Paula Elementary School District Board of Education, the Santa Paula Union High School District Board of Trustees adopted a joint resolution to develop an 80 acre master plan for the "Santa Paula Education and Recreation Campus" to accommodate facilities for the three agencies and VCCCD.

The Ventura County Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee (The Sheriff, the DA and 4 chiefs of police) sent a letter dated November 26, 2005 to the VCCCD Trustees, urging that the Fire/Sheriff Academy be developed as "promised", or it will put current affiliation agreements in jeopardy. (Attachment 35)

The VCCCD Draft Market Assessment and Organizational Performance Review, December 12, 2005 includes a presentation on the Measure "S" bond funds. The Ventura College projects now are shown to include the Fire/Sheriff's Academy at \$10M, and the Santa Clara Center as "Not Scheduled". (Attachment 36)

A December 20, 2005 document, VCCCD Use of Bond Proceeds, shows that only \$995 of the \$24.6M for the East Campus Center has been expended. (Attachment 37)

2006

On January 16, 2006, Associate Chancellor Susan Johnson received a letter from David Casnocha, Bond Counsel, elaborating on responses he gave to questions at the October 11, 2005 VCCCD Trustees meeting. (Attachment 38)

On April 4, 2006, Ventura College President Robin Calote sends an email to "Ventura College Colleagues" indicating that the East Campus project will not be

funded and sets out a number of initiatives to be undertaken to reach out to students “who do not want to travel to the main campus.” (Attachment 39)

On April 10, 2006, the East Campus Facility remains on the Measure S website of VCCCD indicating budget for project is \$24.61 million (Attachment 40)

TABLE OF CONTENTS – ATTACHMENTS

<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
1	14A
2	19
2A	20
3	28
4	50
5	52
6	55
7	56
8	59
9	62
10	65
10A	68
10B	71
10C	75
10D	76
10E	83
10F	89
11	95
12	98
13	102
13A	104

<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
14	110
15	113
16	116
17	118
18	119
19	123
20	125
21	129
22	132
23	136
24	137
25	147
26	150
27	152
28	158
29	160
30	161
31	164
32	165
33	172
34	175
35	198
36	200

<u>Attachment</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
37	217
38	222
39	224
40	230