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MCC hopes new Performing Arts Center will aid students, revive Fiesta District

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Published: Wednesday, April 9, 2014

Updated: Wednesday, April 9, 2014 13:04

Mesa Community College has 5,000 students enrolled in their music and performance programs each year. That makes it the largest community college program in the country, performing over 100 shows a year. Now they are looking to revamp not only their Performing Arts Center, but also aid in the revitalization of Mesa's Fiesta District.

MCC has a dedication to the arts, according to a press release, and its mission is to "improve the quality of life in the community we serve."

The new PAC is their testament to that mission. The new center will be used for summer programs and performances and will be leased to outside groups when not in use, says Rodney Holmes, dean of art, humanities and social science at MCC.

Music performance is the all-encompassing title for the many different sub-categories that lay beneath it. MCC students can get, for example, a piano teaching certificate, a degree in studio recording and music business or music and theatre. All of these programs have different performances and shows that until this upcoming year have had to be held in the MCC's Theatre Outback, an arts center on campus, or other venues.

Due to cost and availability, many performances that would typically find a home at MCC are on the road, Holmes says. The new PAC will decrease the demands on the Theatre Outback, which will now only house the theatre department, and will save MCC and its students time and money by reducing travel costs, he says.

The new PAC is set to open in August. The expansive building equipped with facilities for



Courtesy of MCC

The MCC Performing Arts Center is set to open in August.

both performance and learning was designed by Jones Studio of Phoenix. The PAC will have a 462 seat theatre, as well as a choral room, band room and a lobby area set up for quartet performances.

The new PAC is part of a 2004 awarded to the Maricopa County Community College District. \$951 million will be dispersed amongst the 10 community colleges in the district.

\$90 million of that bond has gone to the new PAC and technological improvements around the MCC campus. The school purchased the Fiesta District Harkins 5 theatre to renovate and add onto.

“The community is excited, students are excited, faculty is excited. We are all excited about the new PAC,” says Holmes.

The bond also went to creating a new art gallery that opened this spring. The art gallery will be used for student and faculty art work, as well as college and national art shows. The public gallery will provide yet another attraction to the Mesa area.