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NEWS

Media Advisory

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Colorado State Forest Service to Host Open House at New La Junta Office

Note to editors: The Colorado State Forest Service and Otero Junior College will host a ceremonial tree planting at **1 p.m. on June 16** to celebrate the official opening of the new CSFS La Junta District office building. The office is located on the OJC campus at 1904 San Juan Ave. The public is invited to attend an open house from 2 to 5 p.m. and again on June 17 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

LA JUNTA, Colo. – The Colorado State Forest Service and Otero Junior College will host a ceremonial tree planting at 1 p.m. June 16 to celebrate the new CSFS La Junta District office building on campus. An open house will follow from 2 to 5 p.m. The La Junta District serves Crowley, Otero, Bent, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Prowers and Baca counties.

Colorado State Forester Jeff Jahnke, OJC President Jim Rizzuto and OJC Vice President of Administrative Services Gary Ashida will be among those in attendance for the event at 1904 San Juan Ave. OJC leased the half-acre of undeveloped land to the CSFS for 35 years under an Interagency Lease Agreement between the Colorado Community College System and Colorado State University, the parent organization of the CSFS.

At the ceremony, an American Liberty elm will be planted in memory of Tom Borden, the late state forester who first envisioned an Eastern Plains La Junta District during a February visit in 1981.

“We at OJC congratulate the Colorado State Forest Service on the completion of their building here on campus,” said Rizzuto. “We look forward to many years of partnership with the Colorado State Forest Service and the important role it plays as a resource for the area and the students on campus.”

“This new facility sends a message of vitality, growth and sustainability, and coupled with the campus atmosphere provides the perfect opportunity to interact with students, citizens and our various publics and partners,” said Jahnke. “We are confident that the presence of the CSFS is an asset not only to Otero Community College, but to the La Junta and southeastern Colorado communities as well.”

The CSFS assists rural landowners in southeast Colorado by providing outreach and technical assistance, including wildfire preparedness and training. For example, in the past two years, the La Junta District has facilitated efforts to establish Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Bent, Baca, Prowers and Cheyenne counties, and provided wildland firefighter and single-engine air tanker training to area

firefighters. The district also works with other agencies to remove invasive tamarisk in the region's riparian areas. In addition, the CSFS continues to help landowners and the community of Ordway with reforestation efforts by planting trees in areas affected by the 2008 Ordway/Crowley County wildfire.

The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at CSU and provides staffing to the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. More information about the CSFS and the La Junta District is available at www.ColoradoForests.CO.

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