



OXNARD COLLEGE

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Oxnard College's Camarillo-Based Fire Academy Opens New Facility
The Ed French Apparatus Bay honors the Academy's Founder

Oxnard, Calif. (Sept. 28, 2023) — The Oxnard College Fire Academy unveiled its latest multi-use facility on Wednesday; the structure, an apparatus bay, is dedicated to the Academy's founder, Ed French. Construction began on the \$6.4 million state-of-the-art facility in 2019. It provides a learning space for students and cadets to gain hands-on experience with tools and fire science apparatus, helping develop and hone their firefighting skills. The facility also houses the program's equipment and fleet of firefighting vehicles.

"We are excited to expand our facilities at Oxnard College's esteemed Fire Academy based in Camarillo," shared Dr. Oscar Cobian, interim president of Oxnard College. "Our new apparatus bay provides much-needed space for

Ventura County's next generation of firefighting recruits to develop their skills and house the program's expansive inventory of cutting-edge equipment."

Ed French, for whom the facility is named, established the Academy in 1997. With few resources available at the time, Mr. French worked quickly to assemble a team, develop partnerships with local firefighting and public safety agencies and launch the program. Since the academy's opening, the program has produced well over 2,200 firefighting graduates across 60 battalions who have gone on to serve in fire and public safety careers here in Ventura County and throughout the United States. The academy is located near the Camarillo Airport and sits alongside the Ventura County Fire Department's Training Center.

"We are honored to recognize the Oxnard College Fire Academy's founding faculty member, Mr. Ed French, with this addition to our campus," shared Dr. Steve Hall, dean of public safety programs at Oxnard College. "Mr. French started this program with just a few old trailers but through his determination and the team he assembled, our Academy has grown to include programming in firefighting, wildland firefighting, EMT, lifeguarding, and more. It's a beautiful and impactful legacy Mr. French has made here in our community."

Wednesday's event included a hundred college employees, community partners, family members of Mr. French's, cadets and alumni from the Fire Academy. Certificates from Ventura County Supervisors Kelly Long and Vianey Lopez were given to Mr. French and the Academy, as well as certificates from the offices of Congresswoman Julia Brownley and State Assemblyman Steve Bennett. Firefighters from departments across the county and Southern California region were also on hand.

The Academy's graduates have long helped fill the ranks of fire departments throughout the county and nation, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021, [the Academy received the prestigious Bellwether Award](#) for establishing the state's first-ever hybrid format for firefighting instruction, making it the first academy in California to reopen during the pandemic. Other academies throughout the state quickly replicated the model, helping sustain California's much-needed pipeline of firefighting recruits during the pandemic.

The Oxnard College Fire Academy's Apparatus Bay is already in use, with employees and cadets utilizing it daily. For additional information regarding the Oxnard College Fire Academy and its latest facility, contact James Schuelke at jschuelke@vcccd.edu or 805-678-5275.

About Oxnard College

Oxnard College is one of three colleges in the Ventura County Community College District and annually serves more than 7,000 students. Founded in 1975, Oxnard College is fully accredited. It is also a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution. Oxnard College's signature programs include marine biology; culinary arts, restaurant management and hospitality management; auto technology, dental hygiene, and fire technology, among many other undergraduate study and career technical education programs. The Dream Resource Center is a valuable student and community resource. To learn more, visit oxnardcollege.edu and [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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