

http://www.pe.com/localnews/perris/stories/PE_News_Local_D_smead15.3b4bc05.html

MEAD VALLEY: Library, community center project build pride

10:00 PM PDT on Sunday, August 14, 2011

By GENE GHIOTTO
Staff Writer gghiotto@pe.com

Work has started on the Mead Valley Library, one of two area projects that supporters say will bring an array of services to the unincorporated community.

"We're excited about the library and the new community center," said Margaret Pacheco, chairwoman of the Mead Valley Municipal Advisory Council.

"This is much-needed for our children for developing their minds," Pacheco said of the library. "They won't have to travel out of the area."



BUILDING BOOM

Cesar Navarrete, director of the Mead Valley Community Center, said construction of a new community center will start later this year and be completed in 2013. It is one of two major projects planned for the area.



The Mead Valley Library, seen in this artist's rendering, is being built at Clark and Oakwood streets, near Columbia Elementary School.



5/11/11/15

Grading has started on the library site, which is at Clark and Oakwood streets and about a block from Columbia Elementary School on Rider Street.

When completed, the 20,000-square-foot library will feature reading rooms, a public meeting room, an outdoor amphitheater, study areas, a self-checkout area and drought-tolerant landscaping to conserve water and save energy.

It is being built with [Riverside](#) County redevelopment funds and will cost about \$13 million, county officials said.

"Anything that can go in there will only benefit the students and the children of Mead Valley," said Daniel Whitfield, risk management director for the Val Verde Unified School District, which serves Mead Valley.

"We're excited about a library being down the street from Columbia Elementary," Whitfield added.

[Riverside](#) County Supervisor Bob Buster, whose district includes Mead Valley, said he worked over the years to help improve facilities, including libraries, in the district.

He recalled construction of the county libraries in Wildomar, which recently celebrated its 10-year anniversary, and the Woodcrest area and how they have been widely used in both communities.

Since then, he said, "We've been trying to make and plan libraries in communities that have a high need for them."

A few blocks from the library site, work is expected begin later this year to replace the aging Mead Valley Community Center, which is made up of several older permanent structures and portable buildings.

The center, which serves about 3,500 Mead Valley residents a month, offers a variety of services that include exercise classes, pediatric wellness, soccer, crafts classes and counseling.

Cesar Navarrete, the center director, said work to rebuild the community center is expected to begin in December and be completed in early 2013.

The center, on Rider down from the school, is operated by Family Services Association through a contract with Riverside County.

When completed, the new center will be about 21,000 square feet and will sit as the centerpiece of a 45,000-square-foot campus. About \$21.6 million in Riverside County redevelopment funds are being used for the project.

When the rebuilt center opens, Navarrete said, it will provide Family Services the location and opportunity to seek funding to provide more services to Mead Valley.

"We can provide more services because ... we'll have a larger space," Navarrete said.

For Pacheco, construction of the library and the rebuilding of the community center points to the community showing signs of growth while bringing a sense of pride to residents.

"We're very excited about this," said Pacheco, a 10-year resident of Mead Valley. "The community is getting its act together."