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New digital landmark dots Sacramento State's skyline

A digital communication sign being built at Sacramento State near Highway 50 will inform the public about campus events, boost the University's visibility and raise revenue while also providing a means to alert motorists about highway conditions and law-enforcement emergencies.

The sleek, modern 85-foot tall structure will prominently feature the Sacramento State name and logo and will become a landmark for the campus. Near the top of the sign will be a state-of-the-art 48-foot wide message board for commercial advertisements and university messages.

The sign will be owned, operated and maintained by Clear Channel Outdoors, a subsidiary of Clear Channel Communications, through a 25-year lease agreement negotiated through the University's non-profit business operations function, University Enterprises Inc. The sign will display up to eight messages every 64 seconds, and Sacramento State will program one of those messages.

"This is a major avenue for the University to promote its educational, social and community programs at no cost to the school," says Matt Altier, executive director of UEI. "It would cost thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars to have these messages in a high-traffic location like Highway 50."

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In addition to free advertising, the University will receive \$750,000 from Clear Channel when the sign is completed and will receive a portion of the revenue from advertisements over the course of the contract. University President Alexander Gonzalez has earmarked \$300,000 of the initial payment for grants for faculty to travel to academic conferences and to conduct research.

The sign, which will be built on a small stretch of University land on the south side of campus near the recycling center, will stand about 55 feet above the elevated portion of the highway where it crosses Folsom Boulevard. The sign will also be used as part of the California Amber Alert Program and will be accessible to the California Highway Patrol, Caltrans and the FBI during major accidents and law-enforcement emergencies.

“I think this is a great idea,” says CHP public affairs Officer Steve Merchant. “Anytime we have an avenue to publicize current events, whether it’s tragedies or safety reminders, is definitely a great thing.”

Construction of the sign is expected to begin by late April and be completed by early fall. The message board uses the latest in LED technology to eliminate glare and light leakage sometimes associated with older types of electronic signs. “This sign features automatic brightness controls that continuously adjust for varying ambient day, night and weather conditions so that it is visible but not overbearing,” says Altier.

More information on the University sign is available from Altier at (916) 278-7001, Clear Channel Outdoor at (916) 492-1303, Merchant at (916) 464-1464, Caltrans Deputy Director for External Affairs Mark DeSio at (916) 654-5782 or at <http://www.enterprises.csus.edu/sign/>. For media assistance, contact Sacramento State’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

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