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Mesa State Making Progress on New Saunders Field House

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[Construction](#) crews put in another day of hard work, as school officials continued to watch their vision become reality. Mesa State President Tim Foster says it was important to give the school's health sciences program a major boost and make the college more attractive to students. His answer -- the new Saunders Field House project.

"It just really amps up what we do," said Foster. "You have dedicated classroom space designed specifically for those academic disciplines."

The \$46 million project will have 16 new classrooms for the school's nursing, kinesiology, and other health related departments. Foster says in addition to giving the programs the most up to date technologies, the building also allows them to share resources.

"The ability to share, make our resources go further is just a good experience for everybody," said Foster.

Last year, the state voted to invest more than \$19 million dollars from energy royalties into the project. As he watched crews lift part of the roof over what will be the facility's new swimming pool, Senate Minority Leader Josh Penry says he's glad they did.

"We used these revenues last year in a way that's going to benefit the Western Slope over the long term," said Penry. "So absolutely I believe it's a smart use of dollars."

With an increasing demand for nurses and other health professionals in the community, he says he's pleased to see the college using the project to answer that call.

"When you're taking energy dollars and [investing](#) them in academic programs that will generate professionals for other professions, what you've done is help diversify your economy," said Penry.

Officials say the new classroom and office space is on schedule to open in August, just before the new school year begins. The rest of the building which includes a new rec center, swimming pool, and a human performance lab funded by Rockies owner Charlie Monfort is slated to open in late November, early December.

"We're really excited about that," said Foster. "It enables us to serve students, get some of the mess out of the way and really allow them to see the benefits of this [new construction](#)."

Mesa State officials say the project also keeps them on par with schools like CU Boulder and Colorado State as they compete for students.