

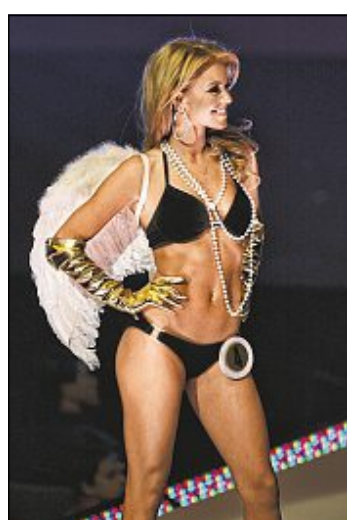
# Steelers tarnish Raiders' silver; NASCAR champ racks up wins



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# The Desert Sun

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First runner-up Miss Laurel Canyon USA Katie Blair, 22, competes at the 2011 Miss California USA pageant Sunday at Agua Caliente Casino Resort Spa in Rancho Mirage.

## Pageants provide lift to valley economy

BY DEBRA GRUSZECKI

The Desert Sun

The Coachella Valley was awash Sunday with more than dazzling rainbows.

The mix of glittering tiaras, a star-studded lineup of judges and guest appearances by TV celebrities

INSIDE: Results, more photos from Sunday's pageant. **B1**

was a pot of gold for Palm Springs tourism, as concluding ceremonies for the three-day Miss California USA and Miss California Teen USA pageants unfolded at The Show in Rancho Mirage.

Plus, at least two Palm Springs hotels and restaurants were packed with people attending the annual Keith McCormick Exotic Car Auction at the Spa Hotel and Casino.

The pageants, drawing 410 con-

Please see **PAGEANTS, A9**

### 77 photos online

Find a gallery of pictures from the the Miss California USA Pageant online at [mydesert.com/photos](http://mydesert.com/photos)

## HIGHER EDUCATION

# Hard times for UCR campus

Hit by budget cuts, layoffs, grad center fighting for future, university support

BY MICHELLE MITCHELL  
The Desert Sun

The Palm Desert campus of the University of California, Riverside is still reeling from the layoffs of its top administrators, but even before the recession battered its budget, the five-year-old graduate center struggled to find its footing.

Three years after the school's 2005 opening, the two graduate programs offered at Palm Desert shifted away from the classroom. Now, students spend little time on the \$16 million campus.

Of the approximately 75 students participating in the two programs, fewer than 10 live in the Coachella Valley.

"It's not what we envisioned when we did this," said Rancho Mirage resident Richard Heckmann, who donated \$6 million to kick-start the UCR Palm Desert project.

UCR's recent decision to slash 40 percent of its administrative budget and lay off six staff members at the Palm Desert center has caused concern that Riverside administrators, pressed for money, may be backing away from their commitment to develop the desert campus.

UC Riverside officials maintain that is not the case.

The Palm Desert campus has been touted as a key catalyst of development and diversification of the Coachella Valley economy and members of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership's board have described the cuts as a serious setback.

Inconsistent leadership at UCR and changing priorities for the desert campus have now been exacerbated by state budget cuts.

"You have this fabulous facility, and it's completely underused because you've had such a series of changes," Heckmann said. "You've gone from a



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The \$16 million UC Riverside Palm Desert Graduate Center campus opened in 2005. Of the approximately 75 students participating in two programs, fewer than 10 live in the Coachella Valley.

kind of a diminution of will to be successful out here because of all the changes, to a complete lack of the financial ability to do it even if you wanted it."

### What it means to valley

The Coachella Valley Economic Blueprint written by CVEP leans on UCR to provide an opportunity for higher education for valley residents, with the hope of keeping local talent and attracting business.

"We need to really as a valley reach out and find ways to make the partnership work," said Carolyn Stark, who was recently laid off as the executive director of the Palm Desert graduate center.

"The university is in a very stressed situation right now because of the fiscal crisis and I would hope that neither side turns their back on each other."

The CVEP blueprint also looks to the planned UC Riverside medical school

Please see **UCR, A8**



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The UC Riverside Palm Desert Graduate Center campus has encountered difficulties that were "not what we envisioned when we did this," said Rancho Mirage resident Richard Heckmann, who donated \$6 million to the project.

# Pat-downs will continue at airports, TSA chief says

Fliers should remain calm, officials say: New screening is 'minimally invasive'

BY THOMAS FRANK

USA TODAY

The Transportation Security Administration said Sunday it will try to make airport screening "as minimally invasive as possible," a concession in the face of withering public criticism over aggressive new pat-down procedures.

TSA Administrator John Pistole said the agency is "constantly evaluating and adapting" security and that procedures are refined so that "comment from the traveling public is taken into account." His statement softened remarks he made hours earlier when he told CNN's "State of the Union," "We're not changing the policies."

Pistole's updated statement stops

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short of describing changes to airport security and is more closely aligned with comments by President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton empathizing with passengers' annoyance as the busy Thanksgiving travel season gears up.

The statements reflect the administration's struggle to quell rising anger at new pat-down procedures while maintaining tough security that officials consider essential to stopping terrorists

from sneaking bombs onto airplanes.

TSA's new procedures require airport screeners to touch passengers in sensitive areas to check for hidden explosives if they elect not to go through body scanners, if they trigger an alarm at a metal detector or in a body scanner, or if they are chosen randomly to be hand-searched.

Pistole acknowledged on CNN that some passengers find the pat-downs "demeaning" but said they and other measures "give the highest level of confidence to everybody on that flight that everybody else has been properly screened."

Clinton told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday that she understands "how offensive it must be for the people who are going through it" and said she would not undergo a pat-down herself. "Not if I could avoid it," she said. "I mean, who would?"



TED S. WARREN AP FILE PHOTO

A passenger walks past a sign Friday informing travelers about the use of full-body scanners for TSA security screening at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in Seattle.

## INTODAY'S PAPER

### Hollywood mourns slaying

Nearly 1,000 people gather to remember publicist Ronni Chasen. **A9**

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The Richard J. Heckmann International Center for Entrepreneurial Management building at UCR Palm Desert Graduate Center.

# UCR: Valley campus underutilized

Continued from A1

having local ties, as well as the creation of a center for sustainability studies proposed for the Palm Desert campus.

“I think this is a temporary lull in the campus,” said CVEP board member Richard Oliphant. “It won’t play as important role probably over the next few years until they finally

get funded programs in there.”

Some of these programs have been promised from the school’s beginning.

A 2003 blueprint for the Palm Desert center suggested several educational programs that could take advantage of the resources of the Coachella Valley — entrepreneurial, film and visual culture, engineering, environmental science, Native

American studies and education.

The graduate center opened with a master of business administration and and master of fine arts programs, which offered traditional night classes for about 15 and 10 students, respectively, in the first year.

“This is a wonderful program and I proudly tell everybody where I came from,” said Vin-

cent Battaglia, a UCR Palm Desert success story who grew his Coachella Valley company, Renova Energy, from the MBA program.

## Change in direction

The program quickly grew to be nationally ranked, but support from the main campus diminished, he said.

“That momentum could have carried through and it just didn’t,” he said.

By the second year, the classes were not filling with new students and the campus started to change direction, said Dick Savich, adjunct professor and academic director of the Executive MBA program at UCR Palm Desert.

Not more than a handful of Coachella Valley residents even took the exam to qualify for a MBA program, he said.

“We thought there was really no future for this type of program,” Savich said.

The campus switched to a 21-month executive MBA program that brings students to the campus every other weekend.

There are now about 23 students — five of whom are from the Coachella Valley — and the program is 15 percent off from being fully self-supporting.

The MFA program also started as a more traditional class, but soon switched to a “low-residency,” mostly web-based program in creative writing and writing for the performing arts.

“What we found in fairly quick order was there weren’t many students in the Coachella Valley who wanted the traditional program,” said Tod Goldberg, administrative director of the MFA program.

Students spend 10 days in the valley. In December they will stay at a Palm Springs hotel and will visit the Palm Desert campus for a film screening and discussion, Goldberg said.

The program has 54 students — about four from the Coachella Valley — and is self-sustaining this year, he said.

## Blaming UCR

People involved with the campus lay much of the blame for the slow start on changing leadership at UC Riverside.

With a rotation of several chancellors and deans, the direction and priority of the Palm Desert campus has shifted.

A 2009 budget committee report from UCR stated that “given the severity of the budget cuts, the campus cannot afford to continue supporting PDC at its current level” and suggested that the chancellor “aggressively seek ways to make the PDC profitable in the near-term or at least cost neutral as quickly as possible.”

The two graduate programs are designed to be self supporting but the administration and general costs of the campus — about \$968,000 annually after the recent cuts — come from the main campus.

“If you take a look at it, we were too heavy in administration there,” said Dallas Rabenstein, executive vice chancellor and provost at UCR. “That’s really the bottom line.”

Part of the reason for the shift in programs is a lack of interest or qualified applicants locally, officials said.

“That has been a problem and that’s part of what we’re going to be taking a very close look at over the next six to 12 months,” Rabenstein said.

Financial issues were also blamed; scholarships offered for the first year in the business program were not continued, Battaglia said.

While the graduate programs spend little time on campus, about half to three-quarters of the available classrooms and meeting space are regularly used for lectures, meetings and other classes, said Tamara Hedges, chief financial and administrative officer at the graduate center.

Still, many say that the center is underutilized.

“We also gave the land to have a college there and we expect it to be run at its capacity,” Palm Desert city council member Jean Benson said. “So we will be expressing our concern and that we’re watching it very carefully to see what they do.”

Michelle Mitchell covers education for The Desert Sun. Reach her at (760) 778-4642 or at Michelle.Mitchell@thedesertsun.com

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