



Posted: Wednesday, August 15, 2012 5:30 am  
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By Rebecca Unger Twentynine Palms Correspondent

### Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life

Lyn Balana of Twentynine Palms doesn't have to be an enrolled student to take a community education class. Receptionist Jason Hotch helps her register for a CPR course.

JOSHUA TREE — Enrollment at Copper Mountain College looks up slightly, as 1,904 registered students rang in the new school year Monday.

“We had a long line at 8:15 this morning,” Jason Hotch, an admissions office receptionist and “traffic coordinator,” said about 9:30 a.m. “It’s finally thinned out a little.”

School Superintendent Dr. Roger Wagner commented the fall semester always attracts the largest enrollment and the highest number of first-time college students.

“That first day of the fall semester is always a thrill,” Wagner said. “You come to work early, thinking, ‘It’s Day One!’”

Every new school year is a mix of returning and first-time students. In addition to two-year academic course cycles for fields such as anthropology, biology and mathematics, the college offers several vocational courses, from nursing to culinary arts to criminology. The school also has a veterans services office to make sure these students getting the most out of their education benefits.

“A lot of folks are looking for vocational programs so they can acquire job skills, then go out and compete for good jobs,” Karen Coghill, Wagner’s executive assistant, said.

Another gateway to good jobs is the school’s Community Partners Internship Program. The 100-hour internships provide training in fields such as engineering and design, finance and business, building trades and construction and information technology.

Since the program’s launch earlier this year, participants have interned with local business and agencies such as Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency, Joshua Basin Water District and Joshua Tree Memorial Park, and have found employment with these neighborhood job creators.

By mid-afternoon Monday, Wagner was ready to switch from Day One to Job Done.

“Every year on the first day of school, you brace yourself for what could go wrong,” he admitted. “That never usually happens, and so far today everything’s gone well.”