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Note to media: Groundbreaking video b-roll and photographs are available here. CSU System leadership is available for comment via remote channels.

CSU System breaks ground on Spur campus in Denver; to be complete 2022

Denver, Colorado — Colorado State University System broke ground today on a new Denver campus — called Spur — which will invite the public to explore and interact with educational content around water, food, and health.

Spur brings the expertise of the three CSU System campuses: CSU in Fort Collins, CSU Pueblo, and CSU Global to the public. Spur will also be a platform for other organizations, so every day at the campus will be different, with something new to learn.

Despite the groundbreaking celebration — originally scheduled for April 30 — being postponed due to COVID-19, the CSU System’s Spur campus officially broke ground this week on the first of three buildings as part of the future National Western Center, located near the intersection of I-25 and I-70.

The first building at Spur is named Vida and will focus on animal and human health, leveraging CSU’s world-class veterinary medicine program; hosting the second location of CSU’s Temple Grandin Equine Center, which provides equine-assisted activities and therapies to humans with a range of needs; and partnering with the Dumb Friends League to offer a donor-subsidized clinic for companion animals while providing hands-on education for CSU veterinary students.

“Spur is all about fostering joint research, providing free public access to education about issues that impact every facet of our lives, and encouraging deeper awareness and understanding of how food, water and health connect people and communities worldwide,” said Dr. Tony Frank, chancellor of the CSU System.

Amy Parsons, executive vice chancellor of the CSU System, agreed.

“To live is to be connected — to people, to community, to animals,” Parsons said. “The Vida building embodies this connectivity between human and animal life and health, as well as the connectivity of the Spur campus to the diverse cultures and Latinx ties within the surrounding neighborhoods of Globeville and Elyria-Swansea.”

Spur’s mission to promote deeper public understanding of the connections between food, water and health is more important than ever, said Tom Vilsack, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and former Governor of Iowa, and an adviser on the Spur project.

“The coronavirus pandemic underscores the importance of understanding connections between food and health. These topics are at the heart of animal health, human health, and a vibrant economy,” Vilsack said. “Spur will grow...
our appreciation for all those involved in our agricultural and food industry and will help develop sustainable systems that can adapt to challenging disruptions.”

Construction is just beginning, yet Spur programming is well under way and will expand as buildings open, said Parsons. Advance programming includes the annual Water in the West Symposium; yearly health clinics for pets whose families live nearby; equine-assisted activities and therapies offered through a Denver satellite of CSU’s Temple Grandin Equine Center; and a comprehensive, student-focused partnership with nearby Bruce Randolph School, among others.

“Our team has been building relationships in the surrounding community and across the state, and we’re already offering programming by our three System institutions: CSU in Fort Collins, CSU Pueblo, and CSU Global. These programs reflect what will become part of the daily fabric of Spur,” Parsons said.

Once fully open in 2022, Spur will be a one-of-a-kind offering from a higher education institution — opening its doors year-round to lifelong learners, and facilitating groundbreaking research in areas of global consequence. Spur will host families and tourists, K-12 student field trips, conferences and meetings, researchers in state-of-the-art labs, college students pursuing degrees in fields related to agriculture and sustainability, and local artists creating pieces in on-site studios.

As an essential function, the project construction remains on schedule, joining ongoing construction efforts on the site by the City and County of Denver. The Spur construction project will employ more than 2,000 people, and is taking all possible precautions to keep workers safe. JE Dunn is the general contractor on the Spur project; and CAA ICON is managing the Spur project. The Clark Enersen Partners is the design team for the Vida building.

Spur statistics

- Construction: building begins on the other two buildings in October 2020
- Financial: Colorado State legislature approved $250 million through HB15-1344: $200 million for capital construction of the Spur campus and $50 million went to CSU in Fort Collins to build out assets on the campus that will connect to the Spur campus.
- Campus statistics (square footage and completion dates):
  - Vida: 114,000 sq. ft. / Fall 2021 (September) completion
  - Water (name TBA): 122,000 sq. ft. / Summer 2022 (August) completion
  - Food & Agriculture (name TBA): 60,000 sq. ft. / January 2022 completion

About Spur: CSU System at the National Western Center

Coming in 2022: CSU System will open Spur, where innovative ideas and unforgettable experiences come to life at the National Western Center. Spur’s three buildings at the center of the landmark project in north Denver will ignite and fuel new ideas around water, food, and health and their impact on our lives and our world. Spur is where learning is open and accessible to all. Where researchers tackle the world’s most pressing problems around water, food, and health. Where art and culture challenge and surround you. Where rural and urban, local and global intersect. Learn more at csuspur.com.

About the National Western Center

The National Western Center is a year-round, global destination for ag and food innovation, western heritage and culture that will open in Denver in 2024. We will convene the world at the National Western Center and at nationalwesterncenter.com to lead, inspire, create, educate and entertain in pursuit of global food solutions.

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