

Home sweet school

*Volcano Vista High School
has grown and is ready for more kids*



JIM THOMPSON/JOURNAL

The second phase of Volcano Vista High School is ready for ninth- through 11th-graders when school opens in a few weeks. This photo shows the back of the school, which sits on a 133-acre site in the APS Northwest Education Corridor. In 2009, another wing will house the senior class.

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For the last year, ninth-graders and their teachers at Volcano Vista High School had a classroom building all to themselves.

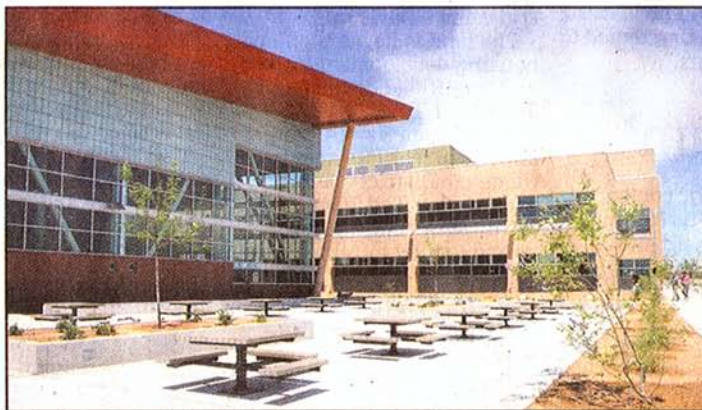
Starting Aug. 12, however, that will all change.

The first day of school culminates the end of what is the "first phase" of Volcano Vista's construction, bringing with it a gymnasium, three new classroom wings, various food courts and a long two-story corridor connecting them all and acting as a commons area.

But even the "old-timers" — the 500 or so sophomores who started there last fall as freshmen — will need to be re-oriented, principal Yvonne Garcia said.

"On the first day of school," said Garcia, "none of our kids will know where anything is. They'll all need a tour."

This construction has brought



Tables sit outside Volcano Vista High School's media center/library with the academy wings in the background.

72 new classrooms featuring specialized computer labs, culinary arts, ceramics, photography, band and orchestra in addition to science and chemistry labs. In the arts department, rolling garage-type doors allow for installation of large art pieces into a nearby

courtyard or heavy equipment, in the classroom.

The walnut-ceilinged library has two-story glass views capturing the Sandias and the athletic fields outdoors.

With full completion by the 2009-10 school year, the \$116

million campus will eventually include 486,206 square feet to accommodate 2,200 students.

Ultimately, the school's classroom wings will be divided into five subject areas called "Career Academies," with focuses like engineering, business and tourism, arts and entertainment, health and communications. Students were asked to select an academy at the end of their ninth-grade year.

But until the school's enrollment expands to a full four-year complement, the wings will be divided up into a 10th grade and 11th grade wing. In 2009, another wing will house the senior class.

That next phase of construction also includes a performing arts center, an auxiliary gym, weight room and Junior ROTC classrooms.

Grass already has taken root east of the school on the new fields that were laid last year.

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Volcano Vista's main gymnasium has three full basketball courts and a weight room in the upper level overlooking the gym.

Volcano Vista Ready for More

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The school is expecting to increase from its 500 ninth-graders to 1,100 students altogether, among them 200 juniors, most of whom attended Cibola High last year along with any new students to the neighborhood.

For the first time, Volcano Vista will offer varsity team sports, and add to its offerings of academic clubs.

There will be aeronautics programs, airplane technology tying in with the nearby Eclipse Avia-

tion near Double Eagle Airport and film programs training students for careers with the local film industry.

There will be a prom, and a modified homecoming: a "Homegoing," Garcia said, because there are no alumni yet to return for a football game.

Last year, PE was offered in classrooms until a temporary "bubble" gym was erected in February. For the first-day assembly, tents were erected in the parking lot and students were divided into smaller groups.