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Cal Poly only university in nation to use GPS Ranger for guided tours

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Cal Poly only university in nation to use GPS Ranger for guided tours



Thursday, September 11, 2008
Reported by: Amber Lee



In less than a week, the population of the city of San Luis Obispo will nearly double as students head back to Cal Poly.

Here are the Facts First:

- This year, more than 3,500 new students will be arriving for the Week of Welcome, also known as WOW Week.
- WOW Week begins next Monday, September 15 to September 19.



During WOW Week, dozens of walking tours are being offered to introduce new students to the 6,000-acre Cal Poly campus. If you have a busy schedule and can't make these campus led walks, don't worry: a new virtual tour is being offered.

No, it's not a Game Boy or a snazzy PDA: the sleek-looking device is the newest addition to the Cal Poly campus. Meet the *GPS Ranger*, a multimedia gadget that delivers video text and it even talks to guide you through campus.



"It's very easy. All they do is come to the office, they check it out, and they walk out to the front of the building and the tour starts," said Albert Nunez, associate communications manager for Cal Poly Admissions.

Through the power of GPS technology, the Ranger can tell where you are. A short narrated movie will pop up when you come within range of any of 18 designated spots around campus.



"We just thought, you know, Cal Poly is on the cutting edge of technology in what we offer to prospective students, so we thought this was a great match," said Nunez.

But the university said these computer like devices are not meant to replace tour guides. It is just another option.

"It's just to diversify our offerings in the tour arena for the people that miss our regular scheduled tour during the day," said Nunez.

The virtual tours last about an hour and a half.

Thousands start school next week, and administrators can't wait to show off their high-tech tours. Cal Poly is currently the only university in the nation to be using this technology.

Right now, there are only two units that students can check out, but more are slated for the future.

The Santa Barbara Zoo is also using this same technology to give visitors a behind-the-scenes tour of the zoo.

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