Butte College, located in the center of Northern California’s Butte County on a 928 acre wildlife refuge, is one of the largest community college campuses in California. We are unique among California Community Colleges because we:

- function as a self contained city;
- manage our own water system;
- maintain our own sewage treatment facility;
- operate the largest community college bus transportation system in the state;
- occupy over 110 buildings & facilities;
- produce our own electricity and became grid positive in 2011;
- possess numerous awards as a national leader in Sustainability.
Early 1960’s

- Pre-organizational period of the College.
- Chico State College was finding it difficult to meet the needs of a growing student population in Butte and Glenn Counties, and local students were commuting to Yuba College in Marysville.

1962

- The Butte County Committee on School District Organization, and at least 50 members of various city and county Boards of Education, met in Oroville to discuss the addition of a junior college.

1966

- Voters approved the junior college measure on the Butte County ballot by a margin of 67.1 percent.
- The founding members of the Butte Junior College District Board of Trustees were elected.

1967

- Dr. Gibb R. Madson was appointed as the first Superintendent/President.
- Butte Junior College District became officially operational.
- The college curriculum focused on career education programs in vocational nursing, fire science, and law enforcement.
“Butte College” was the name selected by the Board of Trustees for the new two year college.

After extensive study and debate, a future permanent campus site was selected at Pentz and Clark roads, located midway between Chico, Oroville, and Paradise. The Trustees purchased 403 acres at $300 per acre, and leased approximately 500 acres with an option to buy.

With the surprise resignation of Dr. Madson, Albert A. Schlueter was appointed as the second Superintendent/President with the task of opening the college within seven weeks.

On September 23, 1968, Butte College opened its doors as a temporary campus at the small site of the former Durham High School. Student enrollment on the first day reached 1,994 students; more than double the 800-900 anticipated.

Four days after opening, the college played its first football game on Bechtel Field at Oroville High School against College of the Siskiyous.

With the acceptance of the athletic program into the Golden Valley Conference, several more men’s teams were added including wrestling, cross country, baseball, basketball, golf, track & field, with the addition of tennis a few years later.

In spite of overcrowding, portable facilities, and primitive conditions at the temporary campus, morale among students, faculty, and staff remained high.

The Trustees continued development plans for the permanent campus using an architectural master plan that included building designs compatible with the surrounding buttes.

In 1969, planning and development of the permanent campus was approved with enrollment not expected to exceed 5,000 students. As of 2010, student enrollment surpassed 12,000.

The first edition of the college newspaper, the Roadrunner, was published.
The Early Years

Our Founding Board of Trustees

John Cowan - Gray Lodge Superintendent, Gridley
Basil Gillett – Retired Pharmacist, Paradise
Dr. Thomas Enloe – Physician, Chico
Frederick Montgomery – Businessman, Durham
Robert Powers – Administrator & Teacher, Chico
THE COLLEGE

The Butte Junior College District was formed by the voters of Butte County in November of 1966. At that time, the first Board of Trustees was elected and began the task of organizing the district. In July of 1967, the district became operational and assumed several programs in career education fields, fire science and vocational nursing.

During the summer of 1967, the administration began planning a comprehensive educational program for the fall of 1968. The Board of Trustees also selected the architectural firm of Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall of Los Angeles to begin preliminary planning of a proposed permanent campus.

In the fall of 1968, the college opened on the old Durham High School campus. As the old Durham High School building was not large enough to house the many programs of the college, additional relocatable facilities were erected on the Durham Site. These relocatable buildings contain classrooms, laboratories and offices. The buildings are designed so that they can be relocated from the temporary campus in the future.

During the 1968-69 school year, the enrollment at the college far exceeded earlier expectations. Over 1900 students attended Butte during its first year of operation. In 1969-70, the enrollment jumped over forty-two per cent, which necessitated the addition of more relocatable buildings and the renting of space in Chico and Durham. It is anticipated that an additional twenty-six per cent increase in enrollment can be expected for the 1970-71 school year.

In order to accommodate these students, the college is leasing additional space in Durham, Chico and at Chico State College. With the expanding enrollment, the Durham Site is becoming seriously overcrowded. Classes are being offered in the college from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and the facilities are being used to their maximum capacity.
For the six years Butte College operated at the Durham location, enrollment continued to increase beyond expectations, and the college quickly outgrew its temporary facilities.
Old Durham High School Building
Extra portable facilities were installed at the temporary campus to compensate for overcrowding, and automobiles were parked as far as the eye could see.
First Year — 1968-69
Won - 3; Tie - 1; Lost - 5


BUTTE COLLEGE: FIRST YEAR OF FOOTBALL 1968

Butte College first opened its doors for classes September 23, 1968. Four days later their first football game was played on Bechtel Field at Oroville High School against College of the Siskiyouos. This was truly a historic occasion, because no college had ever competed in football the first year of operation.

Thirty-one prospective players turned out for the first practice two weeks earlier. Four were subsequently declared ineligible, two had never played football before and decided it was tougher than it looked, and a 32-year-old student decided his body could no longer endure all the bumps and bruises.

The practice field, on the old Durham High School campus, was only 60 yards long. The locker room was about the size of an oversized closet with no equipment lockers. Uniforms were suspended from the ceiling by coat hangers.

Henry Woodson, the captain of the team set rushing records that stood for 17 years. Butte College was a member of the Golden Valley Conference the first year of competition. Pre-season predictions by the experts gave the Roadrunners no hope of winning a single game. The final statistics showed three wins, one tie, and five losses. The most impressive win was against highly touted Hancock College on their home field, 28-14. The season ended against College of the Redwoods with only 16 players suiting up for Butte College. The team bus on its way to Eureka had to stop by the hospital to pick up Hureal Shelton, who, after three days in bed, convinced the doctor he was well enough to play the last game.

One year later nine of the original 23 players received scholarship to four-year colleges to participate in football programs. A.D. Johnson was the team trainer; equipment manager, custodian, assistant coach and team psychologist. Head Coach, Don Rogers and Assistant Coach, Remo Ferretti feel it was undoubtedly their most rewarding season.
In 1969, planning and development of the permanent campus was approved, and relocation to this newly constructed campus became a reality in September 1974.

Enrollment at the permanent campus was not expected to exceed 5,000 students. As of 2010, student enrollment surpassed 12,000.

In 1968, Trustees purchased 403 acres at $300/acre, and leased more acreage with an option to buy. By 1977, the College District owned a total of 928 acres.
1970’s
1970
- Trustees dropped the word “Junior” from the District name to become the “Butte Community College District”.

1972
- Preparations began at the permanent campus site with construction of roads, utilities, building pads, and a 1.6 million gallon water tank.
- On February 29, 1972, a community groundbreaking celebration was held at the permanent campus site.
- Butte College became a fully accredited California Community College by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.
- Construction began on the sewage treatment plant and several buildings, including physical science, life science, technology, agriculture, mechanics, library, auto shop, greenhouse, lath house, and horticulture lab.

1973
- Construction began on several more structures, including the business education building, playing fields, and gymnasium with two locker/shower areas.
- The first distance education courses were broadcast over Channel 9 from Redding.
- Trustees designated the permanent campus a wildlife refuge with no hunting or fishing allowed. The natural riparian habitat of the refuge makes it home to many plant, animal, aquatic, and bird species, and is used to this day for field studies by college classes.
- Butte Criminal Justice Training Center was added to the college’s instruction program.
1974

- Trustees expanded the permanent campus with the purchase of 481 of the formerly leased acres at $300 per acre, bringing the total campus acreage to 884.
- The Durham campus was closed and the “temporary” portable buildings were moved to the permanent campus. Enrollment at this time was 4,143 students.
- On September 7, 1974, the dedication and cornerstone ceremony of the permanent campus was attended by at least 1,000 individuals in 106 degree heat.
- On September 23, 1974, the permanent Butte College campus opened its doors with an enrollment of 5,831 students.
- Trustees voted to establish a women’s athletic program, including sports in field hockey, volleyball, basketball, and softball, with track & field, golf, and soccer added in later years. The women’s field hockey team won its first state championship just four years later in 1978.

1975

- Glenn County, including the cities of Willows, Orland, and Hamilton City, was annexed to the District and several college courses at various county locations were offered.
- Butte-Glenn Community College District became the official name.
- Early Childhood Education was added to the college’s curriculum.
- A weather monitoring station was established on campus.
- Construction began on the Campus Center, designed to house the college bookstore, admissions and records, financial aid, student body offices, dining services, and more.
1976
- The District’s governing Board was enlarged from five to seven members, with the addition of two trustees from Glenn County representing the cities of Orland and Willows.
- Men’s individual tennis won the first of a record five state championships, and the men’s basketball team succeeded in winning back to back state championships in 1975 and 1976.
- Mobile Intensive Care Paramedic program was established and would eventually be offered as a two year degree paramedic program.

1977
- A plan to reorganize the management of the instructional program was approved.
- Trustees approved the purchase of 44 more campus acres at a cost of $90,000, bringing the total acres owned by the District to 928.

1978
- Randy Meeker of Chico became the college’s first student trustee.
- Voters approved Proposition 13, the controversial Jarvis-Gann tax limitation initiative, negatively impacting the college’s budget revenue.

1979
- After eleven years as Butte College Superintendent/President, Albert Schlueter resigned effective June 30, 1979. Jack Briggs, Assistant Superintendent/Vice President for Business, was appointed interim Superintendent/President.
Butte College Main Campus
1972 – 1975

In January 1972, construction of the 1.6 million gallon water tower, roads, utilities, and building pads marked the beginning of development at the permanent campus site.

Also in 1972, Butte College celebrated its new status as a fully accredited California Community College.
On February 29, 1972, the Board of Trustees hosted the groundbreaking ceremonies at the permanent campus site.

The Board consisted of Ned Kirkham, John Cowan, Bob Powers, Fred Montgomery, and Basil Gillette.

Original notation on photo at left has an incorrect date of March 29, 1972, rather than February 29, 1972.
More Campus Development

Over the next few years, construction continued with the completion of several more structures including:

• Agriculture
• Auto Shop
• Business Education
• Greenhouse
• Gymnasium & Showers
• Horticulture Lab
• Lath House
• Library
• Life Science
• Mechanics
• Physical Science
• Sewage Treatment Plant
• Technology
Relocation of “Temporary” Administration Building to Main Campus - June 1974

Board document at left dated December 20, 1973 states that the 1975 estimated date for completion of the permanent Administration building has been postponed indefinitely, and the Arts building postponed until 1978.

The new Administration and Arts buildings were finally completed in 2010, 35 years later.
September 7, 1974 – The Dedication and Cornerstone Ceremony held at the permanent campus was attended by 1,000 individuals in 106 degree heat.

September 23, 1974 – Butte College opened its doors to 5,831 students at the permanent campus.

Attending the ceremony were Congressman Buzz Johnson and the 1974 Board of Trustees, Robert Powers, John Cowan, Everett Brott, Fred Montgomery, and Dick Horton. Also in attendance were college President Al Schlueuter, and former Trustee Dr. Thomas Enloe.
In 1977, the college held ceremonies for the first graduating class from the newly established Paramedic Program.

Glenn County was annexed to the district in 1975, and the Butte-Glenn Community College District became the official district name of Butte College.

In 1975, construction began on the Campus Center, designed to house the college bookstore, admissions and records, financial aid, dining services, and more.
After the establishment of a women’s athletic program in 1974, the women’s field hockey team was successful in winning its first state championship just four years later in 1978.

In 1976, men’s individual tennis won the first of a record five state championships, and the men’s basketball team succeeded in winning back to back state championships in 1975 and 1976.
Our Wildlife Refuge

In December 1973, the Butte College Board of Trustees designated the permanent campus site a Wildlife Refuge with no fishing or hunting allowed.
Our 928 acre Wildlife Refuge is home to numerous plant, animal, and bird species, and offers “live” classroom settings for our students.

Wildlife Refuge photos courtesy of Deb Conway, Butte College Agricultural Farm Technician
1980’s
1980
- Dr. Wendell Lee Reeder was appointed Superintendent/President after Al Schlueter’s eleven year tenure.
- The John B. Cowan Sports Complex was dedicated to founding Trustee John Cowan for his continued support of the college’s athletic programs.
- Trustees approved the purchase of a computer system and software to assist with student registration and other administrative functions.

1981
- Fire Academy program became operational.
- Seven academic divisions were reorganized into three.
- Enrollment reached an all-time high of 12,683 students.
- Men’s Track and Field team earned a state championship.

1982
- State budget cuts resulted in faculty and staff layoffs, with fewer classes offered for several years.
- An associate degree in nursing was approved by the Trustees, and every student in the first graduating class became a registered nurse upon passing the state board examinations.
- Assessment and placement testing became a component of the student entry process.
1983
◆ Women’s basketball team triumphed by winning the state championship.
◆ High priority was given to courses transferable to four-year colleges, as well as vocational programs. CSU, Chico continues to be the popular transfer college for Butte College students.
◆ The campus library was named for founding Trustee Frederick Montgomery at his final Board meeting in November.

1984
◆ Budget cuts to community colleges came to an end, and the governor signed a bill imposing registration fees on students.
◆ Trustees approved changing the school calendar from the quarter to semester system.
◆ Men’s wrestling won a state championship.

1985
◆ Excellence Awards for service and teaching were initiated.
◆ Board of Trustees honored John B. Cowan, the only founding Trustee remaining on the Board, for nearly twenty years of service to the college.

1986
◆ Drug addiction counselor training program was initiated.
◆ A joint effort between Butte College and the Butte County Fire Chief’s Association resulted in completion of the Public Safety Training Grounds.
1987
- The college’s twentieth year celebration commenced in September.
- Students were able to choose from a full schedule of general education classes which were transferable to four-year colleges, and/or over fifty vocational programs.
- Student Honors Program was approved by Trustees, requiring a 3.25 GPA.
- Initial broadcast of Butte College Television (BCTV) aired, offering distance education courses.
- Computer Access Resource and Learning Operation (CARLO) Lab opened, assisting disabled students to work independently.
- Small Business Development Center established (SBDC).
- The Glenn County Center in Willows moved to a new, more spacious location.

1988
- Butte College Foundation received charter.
- Criminal Justice annex opened and was later renamed Public Services.

1989
- Butte College became the sister college to Urawa College in Japan.
- Transfer Center to assist those transferring to a four-year college opened.
- Construction Technology program was initiated.
- President’s Athletic Awards luncheon honoring athletes was initiated.
After Al Schlueter’s eleven year tenure as Superintendent/President, Dr. Wendell Lee Reeder was appointed Butte College Superintendent/President and served in this capacity for the next ten years.

Al Schlueter: President, July 1968 – June 1979 (left)

Dr. Wendell Reeder: President, July 1980 – June 1990 (below)

Our First Leaders
Dedications

During this decade, several campus facilities were dedicated to former Butte College Trustees for their outstanding service on the Governing Board.

In September 1980, the John B. Cowan Sports Complex was dedicated to founding Trustee John Cowan for his continued support of the college’s athletic programs. Mr. Cowan served on the Board from 1966-1985.

The Frederick S. Montgomery Library was named for founding Trustee Fred Montgomery at his final Board meeting in November 1983. Mr. Montgomery served on the Board from 1966-1983.

The Everett Brott Student Center, currently called the Campus Center, was dedicated to former Trustee Everett Brott in September 1989. Mr. Brott served on the Board from 1973-1989.
Butte College celebrated its twentieth anniversary beginning in September 1987. Several other events also occurred that year.

The Glenn County Center in Willows relocated to a newer, larger location.

The first Butte College Television (BCTV) broadcast went on the air, offering distance education courses and public access channels.

The Computer Access Resource and Learning Operation (CARLO) Lab opened, assisting disabled students to work independently.
The 1980’s marked a decade of unprecedented growth in the computer industry. In 1980, the college purchased a computer system to assist with student registration and other functions.

From this point on, computer upgrades and purchases became the norm for the college, and a variety of computer classes were offered to students.

In 1984, this Apple “MacIntosh” was purchased for the microcomputer labs.
College Focus: Programs and Course Offerings

In the decade of the 80’s, college administrators and faculty focused their attention on improving student programs and course offerings. As a result, students were able to choose from a full schedule of general education classes that were transferable to four-year colleges, and/or over fifty vocational programs.

An associate degree in nursing was approved in 1982, and every student in the first graduating class became a registered nurse upon passing the state exams.

Construction Technology was offered in 1989.

In 1982, mobile career planning assistance became available at local junior and senior high schools.
And More Choices ......

Welding, Heavy Equipment, Biology, Automotive Technology, Fashion Merchandising, Mechanized Agriculture.
Public Safety Education & Training

The Fire Academy Program began in 1981 when a joint effort between the college and the Butte County Fire Chief’s Association resulted in the completion of the “Fire Grounds”, renamed the Public Safety Training Grounds in 1986.

In 1988, the Criminal Justice Annex opened and was eventually renamed Public Services in order to be more inclusive of other programs.

Fire Training Site

The training grounds can be seen near the bottom right in this 1987 campus aerial photo.

The fire grounds also included a small, plywood training tower.

The Instructional Firearms Range (1985) located off-campus in Oroville is still used as of 2011.
Go Roadrunners!

1981 Men’s Track and Field State Champions

International Outreach

Sister college ceremonies were conducted in December in Japan to formalize relations between Butte College and Urawa College.

In 1989, Butte College became the sister college to Urawa College in Japan, opening an avenue of cultural learning and exchange.

1983 Women’s Basketball Team State Champions