

## Avondale Estrella Mountain Community College's new aquarium will simulate reef

Oct. 14, 2010 11:36 AM  
The Arizona Republic

Estrella Mountain Community College has added a 600-gallon marine aquarium to the Science Mall in Montezuma Hall.

The aquarium simulates a natural reef habitat so students can observe a dynamic ecosystem, rather than learning only from textbooks and dissection trays. The tank will be used in water chemistry analysis, and students taking biology and ecology courses will also study the natural habitat within the aquarium.

"The live reef tank is still in the process of establishing a healthy ecosystem," said Bronwen Steele, EMCC science division chair. "Students will be able to observe the organisms, their adaptations, and their symbiosis in a simulated but natural environment as this ecosystem is established.

Steele said experiments related to the nitrogen cycle, growth patterns and chemical composition of the water will be assigned in biology and chemistry courses.

The working components of the tank are open for viewing. Tank and aquarium enthusiasts in the community are invited to see how the system is constructed, and to learn about the maintenance and science of the tank.

Posters and slide shows will also be available for spectators to learn more about the

inhabitants of the tank.

Information: Levi Torrison, chemistry faculty, at 623-935-8703 or Allen Reyes, lab coordinator, at 623-935-8420. The college is at Thomas and Dysart roads.

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