

USC Village construction workers ring in longtime Trojan tradition with Victory Bell

With help from USC football coach Clay Helton, hundreds celebrate Trojan team spirit

By Ron Mackovich

The sounds of USC spirit roared from the USC Village construction site early Monday morning as 550 construction workers helped bring a longtime Trojan tradition to the 15-acre development. Trojan cheers and the sound of the Victory Bell filled the site with life just eight months before students are scheduled to move in.

“We dedicate this occasion to the hundreds of men and women building this monumental new part of USC,” said Trojan Knights leader Alex Bosch.

Moments later, construction workers jumped at the chance to ring the Victory Bell, which USC retains for one year after every regular season football victory over the UCLA Bruins.

USC head football coach Clay Helton thanked the workers for the quality of their work, then posed for pictures with carpenters and electricians.

“You’ll always be part of the Trojan Family,” Helton told the workers.

“I really felt the Trojan spirit,” said construction worker Ruben Ortiz. “I’ve always been a Trojan fan. It was great for the head coach to come out here and support our work.”

“Having the coach here and hearing the Victory Bell really made the guys appreciate working here at USC,” said Willy Marsh, director of construction at USC Village. “We’re five months away from finishing construction. Today’s event was a real motivation for the workers.”

USC Village is more than 75 percent complete.



1. USC head football coach Clay Helton thanks USC Village construction workers.
2. USC Village workers gather early Monday morning for a celebration featuring the Victory Bell.
3. Construction general superintendent Ron Bayek, left, and carpenter George Anderson, center, check out the Victory Bell as Trojan Knight David Monk looks on.

Photos by Gus Ruelas

The \$700 million project, the biggest mixed-use development in South Los Angeles history, will open next fall. USC Village will house 2,700 students, eight residential colleges and several retail outlets, including Trader Joe's and Target.

Moved by the spirit

Hundreds of construction workers followed USC Spirit Leaders in the SoCal spellout "Go Trojans" and "We are 'SC."

"It's good to see how many people it takes to build USC Village," said Trojan Knight David Monk.

Nearly 4,800 electricians, plumbers, carpenters, masons, roofers, sheet metal workers, HVAC and flooring installers, glaziers, painters, equipment operators, elevator mechanics and foremen have put up USC Village's six buildings in just over two years. Almost two million hours of labor have gone into the development.

First look

After the Victory Bell rang, a few Trojan Knights got a first look at the main dining hall, which is taking shape.

"I was talking to one of the construction workers who's working on the ceiling of the dining hall," Monk said. "The space is really beautiful. There's going to be exposed wood. It's going to be fantastic."

Added Bosch, "We talked to a few carpenters, and the amount of work and detail that's gone into the interior and exterior is insane."

The first students will move into USC Village starting on Aug. 15. Retail shops, which will include Solé Bicycles, are scheduled to open a few days later.



- 4. USC Spirit Leaders rally the crowd before the arrival of the Victory Bell.
- 5. Workers line up to ring the bell.

Photos by Gus Ruelas