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Death Valley National  
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## Death Valley News Release

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### **Furnace Creek Visitor Center Remodel Project to Begin November 15, 2010 in Death Valley National Park**

The Furnace Creek Visitor Center is the primary visitor contact facility in Death Valley National Park. It will be temporarily closing its doors Monday, November 15, 2010 for approximately 18 months. During the remodel a temporary visitor center will be located close to the visitor center and adjacent to the Furnace Creek Ranch and Resort property. The park plans to continue providing its full range of services including answering and assisting visitors with their questions and park planning needs, issuing backcountry permits, issuing park passes, and selling books and other educational materials through the Death Valley Natural History Association. The park will also be providing a full range of ranger conducted activities throughout the winter and spring. The project does not affect any of the park campgrounds and they will be open as usual.

Fifty years ago the National Park Service (NPS) at Death Valley National Monument held a grand opening and dedication ceremony for the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. A new state-of-the-art visitor center with exhibits, museum collections, information services, auditorium and administrative offices was one of many designed and built to launch the Park Service into the modern age. A ten-year program started in 1956 and closing out in 1966, Mission 66, upgraded facilities and services in parks nation-wide just in time for the Park Services golden anniversary.

Today, Death Valley National Park is getting ready for a visitor center remodeling project that is made possible with funds from the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA). These include fees collected from visitors entering national parks and are used to work on deferred maintenance and recreational projects inside parks. This, like several FLREA projects, will upgrade existing or bring on line new facilities throughout the park. The Mission 66 structure at Furnace Creek will close in mid-November after the Death

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Valley 49er Encampment. The project is expected to last up to 18 months. “This sounds like a long time for a remodel,” states Superintendent Sarah Craighead, “but this building has been nominated as a national historic structure and preservation of significant features of this mid-century modern facility will mean slow going to ensure that the historic fabric of the building is not lost.” It was designed by renowned Park Service architect Cecil J. Doty in 1959.

“The building and its exhibits have served the public for over 50 years, but it’s time to give it a new life,” explains Superintendent Craighead. The building has changed very little since its construction. The same heating and cooling units struggle to keep the building cool and replacement parts no longer exist. There is no insulation in the brick walls and the single pane windows allow the heat of summer and the cold of winter in as if they didn’t exist. “The National Park Service is dedicated to becoming carbon neutral by 2016,” says Superintendent Craighead, “and this project will help put Death Valley on the right track.” The improvements to the building are meant to make this a sustainable and energy efficient building in one of the most hostile environments on earth. New solar panels, insulation in walls and ceilings, thermo pane windows and energy efficient HVAC systems will reduce the park’s energy bill by as much as \$14,000 a year!

New exhibits and a new film will engage visitors in a variety of ways. Much has been learned about Death Valley in 50 years and the park has grown and changed its name since the 1950s. This is an exciting and overdue project. It will benefit the environment, provide the most up-to-date park and resource information to the public, and be a model for sustainable living in the desert.

The temporary facilities will be limited and the park asks for everyone’s patience and apologizes for any inconvenience this may cause. Staff emphasizes planning your visit in advance and to take advantage of the information provided on the park’s web site, [www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva), or call the park at 760-786-3200. The park will regularly update the progress of the visitor center project on the park’s web site.

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