Voters support CCC measure to expand facilities, upgrade technology

Clackamas Community College’s measure faced no organized opposition and enjoyed broad support from the community, including the Board of County Commissioners.

Local voters came out 52-to-48 percent in support of CCC’s $90 million bond measure to build a 53,000-square-foot Industrial/Technical Learning Center and a 18,355-square-foot DeJardin Science Addition in Oregon City for various skilled trades and to help rebuild the health-sciences building in North Clackamas.

Property taxes will continue at about $38 a year for finally putting Oregon City’s science, automotive, electronics, welding and manufacturing classes in line with current technologies. CCC is now poised to offer multi-axis milling, computer-aided design and cutting-edge instruction for the growing electric car manufacturers.

Greg Chaimov, chairman of the CCC Board of Education, said supporters could not have passed this bond without the respect that the community has for the work the college does, or without the hard work of friends and neighbors communicating the value of CCC to the community.

"Voters in the college district took an important vote in support of the future of college. Passage of the bond ensures students in our district will have enhanced opportunities to train for in-demand, living-wage jobs and pursue transfer degrees," he said.

A rebuilt facility at CCC’s Harmony Campus just east of Milwaukie will replace a 61-year-old workforce development facility to modernize its approximately 40,000-square-feet of health care classrooms and laboratories. The former middle school is falling apart, with myriad maintenance issues such as rot and wear. Repairs are also now slated for buildings throughout the district, and more than 28,000 students all over the county will benefit.

Over another 26 years (or less if the bond is refinanced), the average property owner will continue to pay 19 cents on every $1,000 of assessed value. CCC’s district from Molalla to Milwaukie, and from Happy Valley to Wilsonville, won’t raise taxes, because the 2014 bond debt service is anticipated (given current interest rates) to be the same average it has been over the past 10 years.

When the CCC Board voted unanimously July 16 to refer the bond to citizens, Clackamas County Chairman John Ludlow, State Rep. Brent Barton (D-Oregon City) and Jeanne Magmer, North Clackamas Education Foundation chairwoman, also expressed their support for the plan and looked forward to continuing their respective organizations’ productive partnerships with the college. Since its referral to the ballot, the measure has received public endorsements from hundreds of local businesses, individuals and organizations.

As part of the college’s 50-year-anniversary “Imagine Clackamas” outreach effort that led to the bond, CCC employees have spent the last few years asking thousands of citizens and key business owners what they’d like to see happen on their three campuses.

Several key differences in the current proposal, compared with proposed $130 million bond that failed in 2011, came out of that feedback, CCC President Joanne Truesdell noted. Beside the lower price tag, taxpayer money now targets specific projects that have been recognized as most crucial.

Oregon’s state budget will still provide a total of $16 million, but instead of just augmenting the overall bond as was proposed in 2011, now the state’s funding is slated specifically to be divided equally between CCC’s Harmony and OC projects. While sitting on key committees, Barton advocated for the Oregon Legislative match as part of both the original proposal and also during the current reauthorization