

Give support to COCC bond

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Central Oregon Community College isn't big enough to meet the demand for its classes. That's not good for Central Oregon.

Students know getting training at COCC can mean a better job and a better future. Graduates of the two-year nursing program at COCC, for instance, could have expected a starting salary of more than \$50,000 a year before the recession hit.

The trouble is, not everyone who wants to get the skills to qualify for a better job can get into COCC. Enrollment has increased by 45 percent over the past two years. And after adding instructors and adding classrooms, COCC still can't keep up.

About 5,500 people are enrolled for fall classes, with some 7,500 students on the waiting lists for classes. With classrooms full, the school had to close enrollment to more students weeks before classes began.

Voters will get a chance in the November election to help COCC grow. The college is trying to pass a \$41.58 million bond that will:

- Add new health careers and science buildings in Bend.
- Add a new technology education center in Redmond.
- Add educational campus facilities in Madras and Prineville, enabling students there to start their education closer to home.
- Renovate existing buildings.

The cost will be about \$2 a month for many homeowners. The bond would cost property owners 12 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, which is usually much less than the sale value of a home. A home that was assessed at \$200,000 would pay \$24 a year if the bond passes.

The bond represents a local match. If voters approve it, the state of Oregon will kick in \$11.47 million toward the COCC projects. If voters don't, COCC doesn't get that state money.

Passage of the bond means new construction and new jobs now. Passage of the bond means more and improved classroom space, creating jobs for Central Oregon's future. All that for only about \$2 a month. The COCC bond deserves your support.