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Rogue Community College Seeks \$60.3 Million Bond to Enhance Educational Programs and Infrastructure

by: Kelly Gonzales

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RCC

The Rogue Community College (RCC) Board of Education has unanimously voted to place a \$60.3 million bond measure on the November 2024 ballot for Jackson and Josephine counties. This proposal is set to drive a host of improvements across RCC campuses, ensuring that the institution can better serve its community and meet the growing demand for skilled workers.

The proposed bond will fund a comprehensive array of projects designed to enhance both academic programs and campus facilities. Key initiatives include the expansion and improvement of the manufacturing, welding, and nursing programs, as well as the introduction of an automotive program at the Table Rock Campus in White City. Additionally, the Redwood Campus in Grants Pass will see the addition of EMT and diesel technology programs. Medford's Riverside Campus is slated for improvements to the Student Success Center and classrooms, alongside enhancements in safety, accessibility, and infrastructure across all campuses.

For the bond to be enacted, it must secure a 50 percent plus-one majority vote from the combined district of Jackson and Josephine counties. Notably, the new bond would replace a 2005 RCC bond in Jackson County, which means property owners there would not see an increase in their property tax rate. However, in Josephine County, where a 2016 RCC bond remains active until 2036, the new bond would result in an estimated annual tax increase of \$36 for a property valued at \$400,000.

RCC President Randy Weber emphasized the critical role the college plays in the local workforce ecosystem. "The programs targeted for this bond initiative are experiencing significant growth and community demand," Weber stated. "This bond addresses challenges posed by the pandemic and supports programs achieving record enrollment." Weber's remarks underscore the pressing need for updated facilities and expanded programs to keep pace with the evolving educational and workforce landscape.

Gary Plano, the incoming Chair of the RCC Board of Education, also expressed strong support for the bond measure. “This bond measure is crucial for advancing our educational facilities and programs, ensuring that RCC can continue to meet the evolving needs of our students and the workforce in our community,” Plano said. His optimism reflects a broader consensus within the board regarding the potential positive impact of the bond.

The bond measure is part of a larger financial strategy that leverages additional funding sources. Should voters approve the bond, RCC will receive \$15 million in matching funds from the state. The anticipated total investment, therefore, amounts to \$87.5 million, which includes \$5 million from state and federal grants and \$5.7 million from reinvestment reserves. The breakdown of project allocations is as follows: \$33.6 million for the Redwood Campus, \$41.9 million for the Table Rock Campus, and \$10.2 million for the Riverside Campus.

As the November ballot approaches, the RCC community and stakeholders will be closely watching to see if voters endorse this ambitious plan to elevate the college’s infrastructure and program offerings. The outcome will have far-reaching implications for RCC’s ability to continue providing high-quality education and training to meet the demands of the local workforce.



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