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SANTA BARBARA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
APPROVES PLACING CAMPUS IMPROVEMENT MEASURE
ON JUNE BALLOT

The Santa Barbara Community College District Board of Trustees yesterday unanimously approved a resolution to place a \$77.2 million campus maintenance/renovation bond issue on the June 3, 2008 ballot.

The bond issue, which will qualify the District for up to \$92 million in matching state funding, will allow for building and equipment upgrades and renovations at Santa Barbara City College's three campuses, improve academic facilities to help students prepare for jobs and/or transfer to four-year universities, and improve and modernize facilities for high demand careers such as nursing and radiologic and imaging sciences.

After months of discussion and deliberation, the Board of Trustees finalized a plan and cost projections that were characterized by Santa Barbara City College President John Romo as necessary to provide "core, essential facilities improvements." If a bond is not approved by the voters this year, Mr. Romo noted that some of the state matching funds would be in jeopardy.

"This bond measure is critical for Santa Barbara City College to maintain high quality, local higher education for this community," said Desmond O'Neill, Board of Trustees president. He noted that the school currently serves more than 19,000 credit students each semester and over 50,000 community members annually through its Adult Education Division.

College personnel, students and community members spoke in favor of the bond at the January 24 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Lanny Ebenstein, Treasurer of the County Taxpayers Association, sent a letter in support of the bond measure and said he would be encouraging the Taxpayers Association to endorse the measure. "Santa Barbara City College has demonstrated the need for more building funds at this time. The strength of this measure is that most of the funds local voters would approve will be matched at the state level. In other words, our tax dollars will go twice as far," Ebenstein said.

The project list includes restoration and seismic safety upgrades at Santa Barbara City College's Mesa, Schott Center, and Wake Center campuses. Most of the college's facilities are over 40 years old, and due to state budget reductions for scheduled maintenance over the past 10 years, have aging infrastructures. Part of the required work would focus on making SBCC campuses safer and more energy efficient by upgrading heating and cooling systems, fixing leaky roofs, windows and rusty structures, and ending power outages.

The District's commitment to sustainability, green building principles, energy efficiency, and alternative energy sources will result in a significant reduction in operating expenses in future years and position the District as a leader in terms of sustainable practices and innovations.

In addition, aging classrooms and labs would be updated with new technology, equipment, wiring, desks and computers, and all buildings, classrooms and community facilities would be made accessible to people with disabilities.

The bond measure also would support the construction of the new School of Media Arts building, which will consolidate educational programs for high technology careers, an area of increased student interest and industry need.

The \$77.2 million bond would cost homeowners an estimated \$8.50 per every \$100,000 of their homes' assessed valuation (not market value). No bond monies can be spent on instructional salaries or administration. By law, an independent Citizens' Oversight Committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the bond projects. Performance and financial audits will be performed annually.

Over the next several months, Mr. Romo and other representatives from Santa Barbara City College will be presenting information on the bond measure to the public. For more information about the bond or to schedule a presentation for your group, call (805) 965-0581 ext. 2307.

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