

Delta puts \$598 million bond issue on ballot

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / June 21, 2024

A tax increase is on the horizon for property owners in portions of Calaveras County, all of San Joaquin County and parts of Alameda, Sacramento and Solano counties.

San Joaquin Delta College trustees on Tuesday voted unanimously to place a bond measure on the November ballot calling for more than a half-billion dollars to upgrade campus facilities.

According to college offices, if approved by voters in the fall, the \$598 million bond would help address the most urgent improvements needed across all Delta College campuses, such as fixing old plumbing, repairing leaky roofs, upgrading classrooms and labs and improving student safety.

The measure if it passes would cost property owners approximately \$16 per \$100,000 of assessed (not market) value, with the typical property owner paying about \$49 per year.

“Delta College trains community members for higher-paying careers in important local fields like agriculture, robotics, law enforcement, and healthcare,” said Superintendent/President Dr. Lisa Aguilera Lawrenson. “For the healthcare industry alone, Delta College prepares more than 400 workers each year to fill critical jobs such as registered nurses, emergency medical technicians, and more. To continue providing these programs, we urgently need to upgrade and repair our facilities to meet today’s academic and safety standards. We encourage the public to learn more about our proposed bond measure in the months to come, and about Delta College’s ongoing efforts to uplift our community,”

It has been 20 years since the college has gone to the voters asking for approval of a bond issue. Voters in 2004 approved a \$250 million bond issue that among a list of projects included establishment of an “Education Center in Mother Lode/Foothills Area to Accommodate Growth and Increasing Student Enrollment.”

Measure L in 2004 called for the college to acquire a Mother Lode site and one was identified near Valley Springs “to provide permanent classrooms, labs, job training and college transfer counseling buildings facilities, and allow local students greater access to an affordable education. Classrooms will be funded from a combination of local bond money and State matching funds.”

However, cost overruns for projects at the Stockton campus and a new campus at Mountain House forced the college to drop plans for satellite campuses in Valley Springs and Lodi.

“The decision to propose a bond measure in November 2024 is a landmark moment in the history of Delta College,” said Board of Trustees President Dr. Charles Jennings. “We must improve our aging facilities so that we can continue to provide a high-quality, affordable education for tens of thousands of students each year.”

The college, established in 1963, serves more than 26,000 students. According to a recent report, the college has an annual economic impact on the community of \$572 million per year and supports more than 6,800 jobs across the region.

More information about the proposed bond, visit www.deltacollege.edu/ourfuture .