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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## BMCC Board approves placing bond on May 19 ballot

PENDLETON, Ore. – The Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education on Wednesday night (March 4) passed a resolution to place a \$23 million capital construction bond on the May 19 election ballot. The Board also approved the bond’s ballot title and question that will appear on voters’ ballots.

After failing to pass a similar bond in November 2013, BMCC went back to the drawing board – and the public – to try again. The College held numerous community listening sessions to gather feedback on the failed bond, as well as conducted a phone survey. A Citizen’s Review Panel of community members and BMCC Board members, students, faculty and staff helped whittle down projects and costs based on the public’s priorities.

If approved, the bond would cost taxpayers 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value for 15 years. Only Umatilla and Morrow county voters will be asked to consider the bond. The bond would fund projects related to the College’s commitment to affordable education for family-wage jobs, safety and security and protecting the community’s investment in BMCC. All students, employees and BMCC locations in the two-county area would be impacted by approval of this bond.

Voter approval of the bond would provide upgraded equipment for numerous existing BMCC programs of excellence, including nursing, dental assisting and diesel tech, among others. In addition, it would fund the expansion of three workforce development programs to provide training for workers for local jobs in the agriculture, precision irrigation and advanced manufacturing industries.

A renovation of the agriculture center on the Pendleton campus would allow for an expansion of BMCC’s renowned agriculture program, allowing for a vet assistant program and additional opportunities in soil, horticulture and animal sciences.

Through a partnership with the Oregon State University Extension Service, bond approval would construct a precision irrigated agriculture center on the OSU Extension property in Hermiston. This partnership would allow students in the precision irrigation program free access to equipment such as pivots from OSU, rather than BMCC having to rely on taxpayer-funded equipment. Precision irrigation is a growing industry in west Umatilla County and Morrow County.

*(more)*

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A partnership with the Port of Morrow would place a Workforce Development & Early Learning Center behind the SAGE Center in Boardman if the bond is approved. The Port of Morrow has agreed to donate approximately 4 acres of land for the project, which would house programs in advanced manufacturing – an industry for which numerous jobs are available at the Port – and early learning in partnership with InterMountain ESD and Head Start. This program would also provide students in BMCC’s early childhood programs to learn and gain experience in the field.

Also included in the bond are funds that would protect the community’s investment in BMCC facilities, which are 53 years old. A front entry renovation in Milton-Freewater would improve safety at the facility, while updated technology infrastructure and classroom technology at the Pendleton campus and Milton-Freewater, Hermiston and Boardman centers would improve students’ learning environments and better connect classrooms for distance learning opportunities.

ADA access, surveillance cameras and improved lighting would occur at all BMCC locations in Umatilla and Morrow counties if the bond is approved. In addition, the Pendleton campus would receive a secondary access road up to the campus for use in emergency situations. Energy-efficient updates would also be funded if the bond is approved, with updated HVAC and electrical systems included in the bond’s budget.

Voters will have an opportunity to learn more about the bond in the coming months as BMCC administration and Board members will provide numerous occasions for the public to attend informational meetings. Those meetings will be publicized as they are scheduled.

More information about the proposed BMCC bond is available on the BMCC website, [www.bluecc.edu/about-bmcc/bond-measure](http://www.bluecc.edu/about-bmcc/bond-measure). An informational video will be available on that site next week. The College welcomes feedback, questions and concerns regarding the bond – please email [bondinfo@bluecc.edu](mailto:bondinfo@bluecc.edu).

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