

Letter: Reasons to vote for Measure F

To the community,

I've served on Lake Tahoe Community College's board of trustees for the college's entire 40-year history. I was also one of a core group of community members who, starting back in the 1960s, worked together to bring a community college to our town. I am asking for your support this November for Measure F, a bond measure that will revitalize and modernize our aging college while delivering real value to South Lake Tahoe. It will also make it possible for a four-year college education to be earned right here at home.



Roberta Mason

The Measure F bond will cost about \$75 per year for the average homeowner. That is a real cost to taxpayers, but it's a reasonable price to pay -- about the cost of two cups of coffee per month. Even better, that cost offers a great return on investment: more construction jobs, more students coming to campus and purchasing goods and services in town, and increased property values, to name a few. This \$55 million bond can be leveraged into approximately \$107 million through matching state funds and grant opportunities. So for their \$55 million, community members and business owners will potentially see nearly double that amount come into our community -- a much-needed economic shot in the arm for Tahoe.

I was there when the ground broke at LTCC's current campus, and I can now see clearly how time and mountain weather has eroded it. Measure F monies will maintain and modernize LTCC's 25-year-old campus, replacing outdated and failing electrical, heating and cooling systems, technology, and parking lots, trails and walkways. Leaky roofs will be repaired, and buildings will be made safer. Science labs and classrooms will be upgraded so students have the best learning environment possible. Measure F also provides for a new public safety training center, where our fire academy cadets and emergency personnel throughout the region can receive world-class training. This Center will also provide a hub during crises such as wildfires, earthquakes, and other disasters, so emergency officials can coordinate their efforts and save lives. There are a number of other projects the bond will also provide for: I encourage you to go to online www.ltcc.edu/measuref to see the complete bond project list so you know exactly what your dollars will bring to life on our campus, and in our community.

While providing access to four-year degrees wasn't the original mission of the community college system in California, many community members and business owners have encouraged LTCC to pursue offering baccalaureates. We heard them loud and clear at the college's 20/20 Vision session last fall. The state also recognizes that need. California is simply not producing enough college graduates to provide the work force it needs. The UC and CSU systems, while certainly high quality, are out of reach financially for many of our young people. If we want to employ our youth and educate the highly-skilled workforce California needs now, then the community college system must help. That's why it's launching a pilot program to begin offering four-year degrees once the governor signs SB 850 into law. We hope LTCC will be chosen for this program – we're in a good position to be tapped for it. But if not, then Measure F provides for a university center on campus where a partner university can come in to

jointly provide four-year degrees. No matter the outcome, LTCC will be poised to provide students and parents what they're demanding -- access to a baccalaureate degree that's affordable, and local.

The community college system's mission is changing as it responds to real-world issues facing California. With your help on Nov. 4, Lake Tahoe Community College can play a part in solving these issues while providing a modern, world-class institution to our town. Please vote Yes for Measure F – for our town, our future, and for our kids.

Roberta Mason, South Lake Tahoe