

Opinion: LTCC spending Measure F dollars

By Diane Lewis

With the support of South Lake Tahoe's voters, Lake Tahoe Community College successfully passed a \$55 million bond measure in November 2014. Called Measure F, the bond will make it possible for the college to upgrade and modernize its technology, make necessary repairs to aging facilities and systems, and improve educational programs and students' learning environment.

The first set of bonds was sold in July 2015 for \$19 million, or 35 percent of the \$55 million voters approved. With that funding in place, LTCC was able to complete several projects in the second half of 2015, and began planning projects slated for 2016 and beyond.

In January, the college's network and wireless system was upgraded to make Internet service more effective throughout campus. Students are also feeling the benefits from three new boilers installed in fall 2015, which are bringing clean and efficient heat to LTCC's main building. Another major project completed last summer that is improving students' experience is the One Stop office in the main building. This space brings together a wide array of services into one convenient location, making it easier for students to apply, register, make payments, get transcripts, meet with academic counselors, and perform other basic college functions.

"We intentionally chose this as our first bond-funded project," said Sue Gochis, LTCC's executive dean of Student and Academic Support Services. "The experience students have when they first start college can have a huge impact on their chances of success. The easier it is for them to apply, meet

with a counselor, and get registered, the more likely they are to stick with their academic plans and see them through.”

Enrollment and Student Support Coordinator Danny Masellones, who works one-on-one with students in the One Stop office, said, “This space and the way it runs creates a much better first impression. Now you get personalized service from a single staff member. It makes starting college a lot less daunting, which is really important for new students and older adults who are returning to college after a long break. It eases them in.”

Upgrades are under way in LTCC’s physical education building as well, where several projects that began in Summer 2015 will be completed at the end of this coming summer. New climate system controls were installed, which are delivering more consistent and controllable heat to the building. New bleachers and a new gym floor are all coming prior to the start of the fall quarter. There may be some inconvenience to gym users during this work, but the result will be a much nicer facility.

Another major project that will begin in 2016 involves the main parking lot on the south side of campus, which will be completely renovated. Construction on the lot itself begins in early May and is expected to be completed in October. In addition to resurfacing the entire lot, heated walkways will be constructed and a new path that will run through the entire lot will be added, providing quicker and safer building access during winter months. An outdoor plaza will also be constructed in front of the Roberta Mason Library, along with a new bicycle path that will eventually connect to other campus-dedicated bike trails and to South Lake Tahoe’s future bicycle trail expansion.

LTCC Vice President of Administrative Services Jeff DeFranco said, “We are creating new entry points on campus that are inviting to both students and the community, to encourage

interactions in an outdoor setting and improve student life. The plaza will provide outside learning space, allowing for learning to happen organically outside of the classroom.”

This project will impact parking access on campus. Students and visitors should watch for signs pointing to alternate parking, and should consider using public transportation or pedal power to visit campus during this time.

The college’s soccer field will also get a major overhaul. Work begins in May and will be completed in fall. The old synthetic field will be replaced, and a new scoreboard, bleachers, and pathways will be added, providing easier access to the field year-round. These improvements will not only benefit LTCC’s collegiate soccer program and physical educational offerings, but will also be a boon to the many club and youth soccer teams that use the field.

“We researched a number of Division I schools and some of the bigger community college athletic programs in the state to see what the best colleges were incorporating into their playfields,” said DeFranco. “The result will be a world-class soccer pitch that meets the needs of our athletic and educational programs, as well as community users.”

The first in a series of annual reports outlining all of the college’s bond-funded projects and associated financial information is being produced by the college and will be available soon. Information about the Measure F bond and the Citizens’ Oversight Committee (COC) charged with overseeing its expenditures can be found **online**. The COC is an accountability requirement for schools and colleges with bonds governed by California Prop 39. LTCC is currently seeking a volunteer for the COC who is an active member in a bona fide taxpayers’ organization. For more information or to apply for this position, send an email to shaferl@ltcc.edu.

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