

GO BOND C GOOD FOR LEA COUNTY AND NMJC

Almost every day when I'm out in the community, someone comes up to me to say "I went to the JC!" And I hear the pride they have in our college, and rejoice in their stories about their experiences on campus. Thank you for your support of New Mexico Junior College for the past 55 years.

In this election year, when you go to vote, there are three General Obligation Bonds on the back of the ballot. I hope you will consider voting on these bonds, which includes GO Bond C for Higher Education.

This Bond is an investment in New Mexico Junior College and Lea County as a whole. As YOUR community college, we are here to provide a skilled and educated workforce, along with potential leaders, that are needed in Southeast New Mexico. Investing in GO Bond C is an investment in our future.

GO Bond C will NOT raise taxes, and it will create about 1,500 jobs for New Mexico. For New Mexico Junior College, this is an investment of \$4 million for our campus for capital projects. Let me explain:

\$2 million will be used to renovate and repurpose Watson Hall for additional healthcare professions, other than nursing. We have been meeting with Covenant Hospital, Nor-Lea Hospital and Lea Regional Medical Center, and discussed their shortages of skilled workers in various healthcare fields. With Watson Hall across from our Allied Health building, this is a natural space to teach a new workforce in this much needed career. Watson Hall is also 55-years old. Plumbing and electrical needs to be replaced to ensure a quality facility with which to train our students.

Another \$2 million will be used for security and repairs on campus. Many of our buildings, like Mansur Hall, have no vestibules with too many entrances. We need to make our buildings safe, so if there is an emergency, we can lock down our facilities. With air-lock openings, security will be easier to attain. Vestibules also help with energy efficiency. As many of you have experienced, when doors open at each end of Mansur, the wind blows right through, and heat and air escape. We will also repair many of our cracked, uneven sidewalks on campus, along with some renovation in our tunnel system.

We know times are challenging right now, but this is about the future. Here are the facts about GO Bond C:

- The bond will only invest in the state-owned facilities we taxpayers have already paid for. It allows colleges, universities and schools to repair and renovate current facilities, improve safety, and update technology. Funds cannot be used for anything other than capital projects.
- There is No Tax Increase. It is not a new tax, but a continuation of an existing property tax. If GO Bond C does *not* pass, property taxes will not necessarily go down. In 2010, when the bond failed, property taxes did not decrease.
- Projects funded by GO Bond C will create about 1,500 new jobs in construction, architecture and related fields. Workers will boost local businesses, and add to the local gross receipts tax bases.
- New Mexico's colleges and universities are critical to our state's economy. According to the New Mexico Education Department 2019 Annual Report, as of 2018, more than 122,000 students attended classes taught by nearly 7,000 faculty members, not to mention the thousands of staff employed at these institutions. For the 2018-2019 academic year, more than 30,000 certificates and degrees were awarded in our state.
- For New Mexico to grow, we need a well-educated, well-trained workforce. An individual with an associate's degree earns about 15% more than a high school graduate, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Additional research states that a college degree has a return on investment (ROI) of 14%, larger than stocks or bonds.

New Mexico Junior College has strived to provide an exceptional education at the lowest cost possible. By investing in our students, you are investing in our county. We need your support to continue remaining competitive and recruiting the workforce that Southeast New Mexico needs.

When you go to vote, you will also see other bonds on the ballot: Bond A is for Senior Citizen facilities, and Bond B provides money for libraries. Be sure to flip over your ballot to vote on all these bonds.

To learn more about General Obligation Bond C, please visit our website: nmjc.edu, where you can learn about the local impact of this bond, along with the state-wide benefits.

I am honored to live in a community that has supported New Mexico Junior College for over half a century. Please contact me if you have any questions about NMJC or GO Bond C for Higher Education.

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