Significant activity surrounds potential KCCD bond measure

Awareness and excitement is growing a result of the various presentations offered around Bakersfield. Faculty, staff, and community leaders are giving their time and talent to share information regarding our facility needs to different interest groups, clubs, and organizations.

Presentations have been well received and some have shown their BC pride, such as the Bakersfield West Rotary Club, who went all out with BC colors, including table decorations and traditional “flying saucer” cookies that have been a staple to BC for decades.

Other recent presentations have included the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Wounded Heroes Fund, Kern County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (KCHHC), and Kern Tax among many others.

Tom Burke, Mayor Harvey Hall, Congressman Bill Thomas and Sonya Christian gave a presentation last week to the Chamber Government Relations Committee. GRC members unanimously voted to recommend an endorsement of the bond to the Greater Bakersfield Chamber Board. It is wonderful seeing our community so engaged and excited about the work being done.

Our Blue Ribbon Committee, chaired by Mayor Harvey Hall has been meeting regularly. Members have shown complete dedication to this project by not only conducting community outreach, but by collecting information and important data, accepting constructive feedback from the community, and figuring out the ways in which we can most effectively build A Better BC (www.abetterbc.com)

In addition to Mayor Harvey Hall, we have a strong team including former congressman Bill Thomas, serving as the senior advisor, Norma Rojas-Mora, Jay Rosenlieb, Pastor Hayward Cox, Jay Tamsi, Michael Bowers, Karen Thomson, and Keith Wolaridge, among many more. Our e-newsletter series titled Letters from BC is reaching an audience without boundaries through the internet.

Our 4th letter has just gone out and explores what Governor Edmund G. Brown called in 1960, “the most significant step California has ever taken in planning for the education of our youth.” – The California Master Plan for Higher Education. It was during that same time frame in history that BC moved to the Panorama Campus and the letter states that today, “it is our turn to innovate, contribute, and inspire the next 60 years of quality and accessible education for all.”

Word is spreading like wildfire and the potential bond was also featured in an article last weekend. The Bakersfield Californian published, “College district to consider bond measure” – an article by Californian Journalist and BC adjunct professor Olivia Garcia. It is rewarding to see the hard work of so many be noticed in the community. All efforts for this project are sure to benefit the many students for generations to come.
Bakersfield College improves access for Arvin, Lamont community

To meet the growing demand, Bakersfield College is expanding the number of courses for students in Arvin. BC first offered 6-8 courses at Arvin High School in 2010-11 increasing the number of courses to 23 by 2014-15. We began implementing 1+1+2 Game Changer this year resulting in an even further increasing number of courses for fall 2016.

With limited space at the current Arvin High School location, BC is investigating alternative grounds to offer classes and services for the rising Arvin student body.

Possible expansion sites include local primary school classrooms, however these are not optimal and plans to add student support services (increased on-site assessments, counseling, administrative services, career and education advisement, and financial aid) will require permanent space.

We are leveraging high school counselors for support; implementing dual enrollment courses on-site; and planning the installation of interactive classroom technology to teach at a distance.

This plan has urgency as we discovered the high school is preparing for a 16% increase in freshman this fall. This makes Arvin High School the second largest school in the KCCD service area. Arvin and Lamont are among the most densely populated townships in Kern County ranging from 3,500 to 4000 citizens per square mile and have a thirty-percent poverty rate that challenges any in our nation.

The education needs of rural Kern has been a strategic focus of Bakersfield College. Our focus positively impacted the Arvin/Lamont KCCD participation rate going from 27.8 per 1000 residents in 2013/2014 to 33.9 per 1000 in 2015/16. The BC Arvin/Lamont area student headcount increased from 600-700 students in 2013 to 1,170 in 2016 – a 67 percent increase. In 2015, Arvin/Lamont population accounted for approximately 832 FTES. (IR data)

The biggest challenges currently faced are limited classroom space at the high school site, problems associated with sharing high school classrooms, and nonexistent space for counselors, advisors or administrators on-site. In spite of these, BC continues to reach out, granting access to our programs and services.

We are delighted to be directly aligning KCCD, Bakersfield College, Building Healthy Communities and Arvin City Council strategic plans for the next five years.

Bakersfield College sees increase in headcount, FTES for Fall 2016

The July 13th enrollment report shows and increase in FTES for Fall. BC is up 2.5% for Fall 2016, with the district as a whole up 2.2%. The headcount for Bakersfield College is has increased by 2.8%, while the district’s headcount is up 1.2%. There are 473 active sections at BC, an increase of 19.1%.