



GREATER IDAHO FALLS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce fully supports the initiative to turn Eastern Idaho Technical College into a community college, and urge all of our fellow citizens of Bonneville County to vote YES on May 16 for the creation of a community college district.

As a community college, EITC will be able to serve 4,000 students with its existing campus and buildings, whereas it now only serves approximately 700 credit students. The technical programs currently offered at EITC will continue within the new community college structure. In addition, the new community college will be able to grant two-year degrees allowing students to more seamlessly transfer their courses to other colleges and universities, whereas EITC does not presently have that ability. The community college will also expand access to dual credits for local high school students and vocational programs for those in need of career skills. This will greatly enhance the education of our local students and provided a needed improvement to the talent pipeline for local business and industry.

We are particularly persuaded by the impact on the cost of higher education for local students and their families. As an “open enrollment” institution, a community college would serve those high school students who traditionally do not go on to college, and will serve a population of non-traditional students who need additional skills to either complete a degree or begin a career. The cost of obtaining a two-year degree at a community college is estimated to be one-third the cost of attending ISU and 20% less than attending BYU-Idaho. Of particular note, a community college district will be governed by a locally elected Board of Trustees who will set strategy and programs based on the needs of the Eastern Idaho region.

The community college will be a key asset for attracting new businesses to our area and providing the skills for an increasingly technical workforce. The recent report by the Community College Study Panel calculated that converting EITC into a community college will result in 900 local jobs and the generation of \$66 million annually in local economic activity by the sixth year.

We are also encouraged by the low cost of creating the community college—an estimated \$13.37 per year for the average homeowner in Bonneville County, or roughly over \$1.00 per month. What is typically the most expensive cost of setting up a community college—buildings—are already built, and what’s more, the Idaho Legislature has set aside \$5 million for start-up costs for the new community college.

We believe that the great benefit to our local education, to our families and to our businesses makes the community college a very solid investment for our local community.

On May 16, vote Yes in support of creating a Community College District!