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For immediate release

Odessa College Board of Trustees vote to call Nov. 2 Bond Election

ODESSA (Aug. 20, 2010) – The Odessa College Board of Trustees took a step toward securing the future of Odessa College by placing a general obligation bond on the Nov. 2, 2010, ballot.

The bond measure will allow for implementation of the college's Facility Master Plan, which includes major safety repairs, renovations and modernization of the nearly 64-year-old Odessa College campus. Most importantly, the community needs are immediate, as are the space needs in order to accommodate Odessa College's new and expanding programs. The bond measure will ensure that Odessa College can add more classroom and educational buildings throughout the campus to meet the growing demand for higher education by Ector County students.

"Our college has two primary goals: to give our students job and career training and to prepare them to transfer to a four-year university," said Dr. Gregory Williams, president of Odessa College. "By law, the state legislature cannot fund renovations, maintenance or construction of buildings for community colleges. Only local funds can be used to build or improve campus facilities. This bond measure will ensure that our students have access to the 21st century education that they need to succeed and that will strengthen Ector County."

The general obligation bond measure is the culmination of several months of planning. Professional facility planners, architects, educators, students, community members and local business owners were involved in mapping out the future of the college and the facilities that are needed.

The most frequently identified community needs were facilities that mirror work environments as well as increased training in career and technical, medical, and public safety fields, said Dr. Tanya Hughes, OC chief of staff.

"Odessa College must expand its healthcare programs to provide for the aging Ector County population. OC is the community's primary source of healthcare professionals and new healthcare careers are emerging each year. OC must have space to add new programs in order to meet the demand for these highly skilled, well-paying jobs," Hughes said. "Additionally, OC

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provides our community with a qualified workforce in fire fighting, paramedic and emergency medical training,” she said. “OC does not have the facilities needed to simulate ever-changing emergency situations nor does it have the necessary space to cross train students in the emergency services.”

As the demand continues to increase for healthcare professionals, the Odessa College science and math classes required for all healthcare programs far exceeds OC’s current science and mathematics facilities; and most of OC’s science labs were constructed more than 40 years ago. In addition to math and sciences, core academic classes in English, speech, psychology, sociology, history and government represent OC’s highest demand courses.

“OC does not currently have the classroom space to expand its general academic programs to meet the current and future demand in our community. With the rising costs of higher education, the demand for core classes will continue to increase, especially with more and more students completing their first two years of college at OC before transferring to a four-year university,” Williams said. “Odessa College must respond to the community’s need for career and technical training, trained medical staff and emergency services, while updating its classrooms and expanding the opportunities for the community.”

The \$68.5 million bond measure will cost homeowners \$36 per \$100,000 of their home’s assessed valuation (not market value) per year or \$3 per month. It will cost senior citizen (over age 65) homeowners, \$27 per \$100,000 of their home’s assessed valuation per year or \$2.25 per month. The general obligation bonds are 30 years in length. No bond monies will be spent for salaries or administration.

For more information, please contact Dr. Tanya Hughes, Odessa College chief of staff, at thughes@odessa.edu.