

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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YOUR FEEDBACK FROM THE BITTERROOT VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE “ASK & LISTEN” CAMPAIGN

The Bitterroot Valley Community College (BVCC) Ask & Listen campaign ended November 30, and the trustees have begun the work of tabulating and reviewing responses received during several summer events throughout the Bitterroot Valley, as well as reading online responses. The campaign surveyed local residents about perceived interest in and need for workforce training, general education/college coursework and classes catered to lifelong learners.

While the final summary is being drafted, here are a few initial observations:

- In relation to workforce training, respondents believe that trades programs (HVAC, plumbing, electrician, construction, etc.) are the most needed, followed closely by healthcare programs and computer/IT programs.
- In relation to general education/college coursework, respondents think general education courses for transfer are most needed, followed by college courses for high school students.
- Respondents indicated that lifelong learning classes were also of high interest.

When asked the question, “in addition to workforce training and college coursework, what would I like to see BVCC offer,” the answers were as varied as the individuals answering the question. Responses included: solar/renewable energy, welding, guitar, civics, map reading, survival skills, blacksmithing, basic life skills, home bookkeeping, gunsmithing, support for homeschooled students and parents, CAD, fitness classes, homesteading skills, and many more. The suggestions were widespread and thought-provoking.

The answer most often given to the final question of supporting the BVCC in the future was positive, with many comments about the importance of locally controlled education and training to provide what Valley residents need and want.

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The most interesting comments were volunteered as random observations and final advice. Here are a few:

- I always vote for education – the most valuable freedom we have.
- Education and training is important to keep people in the Bitterroot Valley – it will increase incomes so people can support themselves and stay here.
- People thought BVCC was Bitterroot College. They don't want to spend money on the University of Montana.
- Next levy I will vote for you if you tell us what you're doing with the money.
- People are on fixed incomes – please don't tax too much. Start small and scale up slowly as you grow.
- I like that I could stay close to home and have control in what classes are scheduled.
- Trade schools are becoming more important than a 4-year university.
- Need to reinvest in our community – this is our kid's futures.
- If we don't create skilled tradespeople here, Ravalli County will be paying prime for workers from Missoula and elsewhere to respond to our needs.
- A future vote in favor would depend on the amount of the levy – how would it benefit me if I don't have kids? How would it be good for the economy and community?
- People still don't understand the difference between UM Bitterroot College and BVCC, or what BVCC could do.
- BVCC would be an asset to the infrastructure of the community; we won't need to leave home for education or employment opportunities.
- Get It Done and Get It Running!

The BVCC Trustees want to thank all who participated in the Ask & Listen campaign. Your comments and suggestions will provide guidelines as we plan for the future of our community college. For more more information about Bitterroot Valley Community College and to sign up for email updates, visit bvcommunitycollege.org.