**A few key reasons to say NO to a new taxing district in Bonneville County-**

1. If this was such a good idea why doesn't it financially support itself?  In other words, why do we have to create a new taxing district to help subsidize this effort?

State Statute requires a “taxing district” be established to create a community college. There is no other way by law to create a community college. At year one with 1,500 students, property tax will account for 5% of revenue.

1. We have a huge amount of post high school educational opportunities right now!  Dozens and dozens of Associate Degrees are available within 50 miles of Idaho Falls.

There are only three post-secondary institutions delivering 2 year degrees - BYUI, ISU and CSI. BYUI as a private institution is not an “open enrollment” institution and has no public mission aimed at the region and region’s workforce. Additionally, it has a fairly high admission standards (many first generation students would not qualify to attend). CSI has very limited capacity in Idaho Falls, students from Idaho Falls would need to move to CSI. ISU has both “general education” and “technical degrees,” but there are high admission standards and the cost is 3X the cost of a community college. Students would need to drive to the ISU campus in Pocatello for most AAS degrees.

1. The future of education is in online learning... we are not keeping up with the times thinking of expanding a brick and mortar educational system.

A new community college would significantly utilized online and hybrid learning as a means to deliver these programs both in Bonneville Co. and to our nine county region. Online and hybrid as they mature would prevent having to build brick and mortal buildings as student demand exceeds 4,000 on campus. Online learning is not suitable for all programs such as nursing, welding, diesel tech, machine tool, etc. Innovative colleges utilize a combination of brick and mortal, hybrid and online to maximize learning opportunities based on the type of classes and to support non-traditional students who may be working and have families.

1. Even with a Community College in Idaho Falls, whenever a Bonneville County student attends CSI or other state community colleges the county still pays a tuition subsidy.  That does not go away.  And people attend CSI and other schools for specific things.  For example CSI has a top baseball program.  Since students already can get an Associate’s Degree locally, have a Community College here won't reduce what the County pays by much.

Bonneville County currently transfers $50/credit to CSI for each credit hour Bonneville County students take at CSI. This transfer is discontinued as the County resident’s fund their community college with property tax.

1. EITC can still expand many course offerings while remaining a technical college.

EITC as a “technical college” by state statute is prohibited from delivering any “General Education/Transfer Credits” beyond what is needed by EITC Associate of Applied Science Degrees. EITC is prohibited in support Dual Credit in High Schools. EITC cannot offer the college transfer degrees of Associate of Science or Associate of Arts because of its status of a technical college. EITC can only offer “terminal” Associate of Applied Science degrees which tend to end in a job, and in most cases cannot be articulated into a university bachelor’s program. A status change to a community college opens the same educational opportunities of Idaho’s three existing community colleges to residents of eastern Idaho.

1. EITC is landlocked by some of the most expensive real estate in the region.  The dream of EITC becoming a 4 year school, or even a CSI which is on dozens of acres, is absurd.  It is in a bad location surrounded by expensive real estate that would cost too much to expand.

EITC owns in excess of 60 acres which is perfectly situated to deliver community college programming to Idaho Falls and the surrounding region. There is ample space to expand buildings if needed and the property is bordered to the north by additional City of Idaho Falls property which is currently vacant. EITC is currently owned by the Idaho State Board of Education. Given the CWI scenario, the 60 acres would be deeded to the newly established community college district and would be given local control from 5 Trustees who are residents of Bonneville County. Bonneville Co. through the 5 Trustees establish local control of the campus facilities and the delivery of community college programming.

1. The costs to all of us seem very understated.  The opening request is about $14.00 per year per $100,000 of taxable value in the county.  If you own an apartment building, commercial building, or other rentals, you could be paying hundreds of dollars each year in new taxes.  And unlike a school bond which has an ending date, this taxing district goes on essentially forever!  When they want to add more programs or buildings, this rate we all pay may go way up!

The Bonneville Co. millage rate cannot go up beyond the amount established by the Trustees without another vote of the citizens. New buildings cannot be funded by taxpayer funds, even if they are needed due to unanticipated and rapid growth, without the agreement of 2/3 of Bonneville Co. voters.

1. Why does this idea need our extra tax dollars to make it fly?  Even with Governor Otter throwing in $5 million of our tax money, the buildings already being in place, and staff and directors already on the payroll, they still need more?  It seems like it is a money pit from the start and may only get costlier to all of us.  All the while we really don't need another school with so many in the area already!

Educational opportunity is an important factor in the economic health of a region. Eastern Idaho is bleeding productive millennials to other communities both for educational opportunities and for jobs. Forty-two percent of graduating seniors do not go on to post-secondary education in eastern Idaho due to cost, or perception of or reality of not being “college ready.” Most family wage jobs require a minimum of a post-secondary degree or certificate. The Lab and Lab contractors are experiencing significant loss of technical workforce due to retirements. From a pure economic development perspective, a new community college would create or sustain 900 jobs through college operations and student spending. Nearly $66 million would emerge in economic activity as a result from the new college and taxpayers would receive $5.80 in economic benefit for every $1.00 in cost.

1. Voters need to remember that the residents of Bonneville County already yelled a resounding NO to this idea once.  We already have enough opportunities nearby, and many more now on line, we don't need another new taxing district!

That was 25 years ago. Voters should be given an opportunity to re-evaluate changing economic and demographic needs. Additionally, College of Western Idaho in Boise has proven the importance of a community college to the health and vibrancy of a region at essentially the same millage rate.