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SWOSU President's Newsletter

Newsletters

12-1-2019

December 2019

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SWOSU PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

December 2019

Weatherford City Sales Tax Project

As mentioned in the August Newsletter, it has been 10 years since the citizens of the City of Weatherford approved an extension of a one-penny sales tax to benefit the community. As you may recall, a portion of that revenue (\$7 million) assisted in the construction of the Pioneer Cellular Event Center.

The City of Weatherford has begun a process to identify new projects for a possible renewal of the one-cent sales tax. We have solicited thoughts and proposals regarding a project for SWOSU with these possible monies. The general idea is that the project should be academic in nature and will benefit a large segment of the campus. Additionally, the project should have popularity with the general public, so that it will succeed at the ballot box.

The proposal for the 2020 sales tax issue will be to provide infrastructure dollars for the creation of the Western Oklahoma Rural Healthcare Education Center at SWOSU. These capital dollars would be used to expand, enhance, and create programs that would help alleviate the shortage of trained medical professionals in rural Oklahoma. This expansion will positively benefit programs established at SWOSU including, but not limited to, nursing, pharmacy, allied health, medical laboratory technology, and radiation technology.

Some of the benefits of this initiative would be:

- 1) The ability to add classrooms and labs for healthcare-related programs should open up room on campus for the expansion of other classes. Therefore, this plan would benefit many, various programs on the Weatherford campus.
- 2) It is well known that there will be critical shortages of nurses and other healthcare providers in the near future. This shortage will likely have greater negative impacts in rural areas of the state. Thus, this proposal would help to staff healthcare professionals in critical areas for rural communities. SWOSU wants to be a leader and center for helping provide workers in rural Oklahoma—especially western Oklahoma.
- 3) The university would have the ability to look at providing more outreach programs to the public where people can learn to cope with medical issues such as diabetes, nicotine addiction, and diet.

I believe that this initiative is an excellent opportunity to benefit both SWOSU and the Weatherford community. It is estimated that the total sales tax plan would appear on the ballot on Tuesday, April 7, 2020.

I hope that each of you have a great holiday break!