

MCC millage question coming in 2024

By Shelly Springborn



The Montcalm Community College Board of Trustees will be asking voters to consider a proposal to renew the college's operating millage in 2024.

The levy is 1.1487 mills and currently provides approximately \$3.6 million annually toward MCC's operating budget, or about 19% of the total budget. It is a proposal to renew a levy that has been in place since 1996, when voters agreed to establish a mill levy to protect and improve the College's programming and facilities, and to keep tuition and fees affordable. Voters renewed this modest millage, which sunsets every 10 years, in both 2005 and 2014.

MCC Interim President Connie Stewart said the millage funds key operations that are vital to the college's core mission of "Transforming Lives Through Quality Education."

"The mill levy plays an important role in keeping college affordable, recruiting and retaining quality faculty, adding and refining programs to meet the needs of Michigan's fastest growing industries, keeping instructional technology and tools updated, and taking workforce training to the next level," Stewart said.

"Community is our middle name," Stewart said. "In addition to our credit classes, we also have many noncredit classes and other offerings that provide opportunities for learners of all ages and backgrounds."

MCC has been at the forefront of higher education and job training in our region since 1965, positively impacting the lives of more than 125,000 learners since its inception. MCC is a small college with big reach, delivering tremendous value to more than 1,600 students enrolled each semester.

"MCC drives job creation and economic development in our region," Stewart said. "The area's largest employers and small businesses rely on MCC when it comes to job training. We're training the next generation of nurses, business leaders, entrepreneurs, computer technicians, skilled trades professionals, agricultural workers and more."

"The mill levy helps fund the ever-changing equipment and curriculum needs of many MCC programs, from nursing to advanced manufacturing and skilled trades, all of which rely heavily on training students using real-world tools and up-to-date technology," Stewart said. "For example, the college's nursing students work in teaching labs that are similar to an actual hospital and health care examination rooms, learning on the same tools that are used in health care offices."

According to an economic impact study completed in 2021, the net impact of MCC's former students currently employed in the regional workforce amounted to \$40.6 million in added income in FY 2019-20.

MCC Board of Trustees Chairperson Karen Carbonelli said the millage is vital to supporting our region.

“Proceeds from the millage help the college deliver superior educational and job training opportunities that are affordable,” Carbonelli said. “This supports our overall economy as we continue to play a key role in economic development and support the strength and stability of our area.”

With campuses in Sidney and Greenville, MCC offers more than 50 degree, certificate and job training programs; courses for transfer to other institutions; online courses; cultural events; and career and personal development courses. ■

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What specifically does the mill levy fund?

- Keeping college affordable
- Providing workforce training and apprenticeship programs
- Recruiting and retaining quality faculty and staff
- Replacing outdated instructional tools and technology
- Introducing new programs focused on high-demand, high-wage career fields
- Supporting student services
- Supporting day-to-day operations and facilities maintenance
- Maintaining more than 50 associate degree, certificate and job training programs

