FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Southern Oklahoma Technology Center
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Local CareerTech Seeks Support for Students and Local Economy in February 9 Vote

ARDMORE, OK – Voters in Carter, Garvin, Jefferson, Johnston, Love, Murray, and Stephens counties are encouraged to go to the polls on February 9th to approve an annual ballot measure for Southern Oklahoma Technology Center (SOTC) to continue its levy of 2.5 mills to be used for the campus’s operational building funds, as well as to approve a measure to keep the levy at 2.5 mills in the future. Voting YES on both measures will keep the current millage rate stable and will not increase the tax rate.

Revenue generated from the millage is used by SOTC to maintain their campus, which in recent years has expanded to meet the ever growing needs of the economy and families in Southern Oklahoma. Funding is also used for utility costs, maintenance, security, remodeling and other general upkeep.

SOTC also uses millage revenue to rehabilitate buildings for expansion projects like the Ferina Carbide building in Marietta, bought at auction in 2015. Once completed, the Love County SOTC Extension Center will assist with job training and other economic development functions in the communities like Marietta, Thackerville and Greenville. Property has already been purchased at the Healdton, Wilson “Y” with plans for an extension center to serve western Carter, Jefferson and Garvin Counties. The operations of these projects hinge on a stable future budget.

“The continuation of the millage will provide stability for the future of SOTC,” said David Powell, Superintendent. “We are the largest job training facility in the region and being able to plan for expansion of curriculum projects on a long-term basis is key to us fulfilling our mission. We are focused on growing our local economy by training the future workforce of Southern Oklahoma.”

The proposed levy is not a new tax or a tax increase, but is an annual requirement to continue the current operational funding that the Southern Oklahoma Technology Center receives. An election must be scheduled annually to approve the millage until the question to make the rate permanent is approved. Of the twenty-nine career tech centers in Oklahoma, all have made their building fund permanent, with the exception of SOTC. Taxpayers and the school will pay an estimated $24,000 to hold this year’s election, which could be re-directed to job training programs for high school students and adults.

“Passage of the second measure is in the best interest of taxpayers, said SOTC board member Bill Coleman. “Not only would it save local taxpayers as much as $24,000 every year, but SOTC could plan more effectively, meet future needs and keep dollars going to the classroom,” Coleman said. “We are hopeful that voters see the benefit we bring to the community and will support the measures on February 9th,” Coleman continued.

In addition to serving high school students from 13 districts, The Southern Oklahoma Technology Center provided training for 5,387 adults during the most recent school year.

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