
The future looks bright for Aims

Two bills now before the Colorado Legislature could help strengthen our local community college, and we think that's a good thing.

House Bill 1079, introduced by Rep. Glenn Vaad, R-District 48, would allow the city of Berthoud to vote to be included in the Aims Community College taxing district. As it stands now, only school districts can petition to be included in the special taxing district. This would be the first – and only, according to the bill – municipality to specifically enter the Aims district.

This move makes sense. Aims owns 40 acres just outside Berthoud, where it plans to construct a campus specializing in environmental programs, such as solar power, wind generation and water quality and control.

Berthoud, which initiated this proposal, would still have to ask its residents to vote on whether to be included in the Aims district. But if the vote was affirmative, it could bring an additional \$350,000-400,000 to the Aims coffers.

HB 1079 is scheduled for a hearing before the state Senate this week. We hope it is a slam-dunk, and passes without any problems.

The other legislation – House Bill 1272 – would enact Amendment 50, approved by voters last November. It also has passed the house and will be debated in Senate committees this week.

This bill has caused a bit of a stir. Amendment 50 allowed the gaming towns of Central City, Black Hawk and Cripple Creek to vote to extend their hours of operation and to increase gambling limits. All, of course, chose to do so. A portion of the extra tax revenue collected from this amendment is to be earmarked for community colleges.

However, the Colorado Historic Preservation Society also gets a portion of gaming revenues. So figuring out how to divide the pot presented a bit of a challenge.

Although the formula finally agreed upon is a bit complicated, both sides seem content with the outcome. We also hope the legislature enacts this bill, so money can start flowing into the community college system as soon as possible.

Aims Community College offers invaluable services to our community. In these tough economic times, many residents are looking for affordable education or retraining in light of job losses. The many and varied programs Aims offers will help our residents equip themselves for changing and finding jobs.

With these new funding sources, Aims will be even stronger. And, especially now, it's nice to hear a success story once in a while.

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