

Emmett Messenger Index, Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2010

CWI talks expansion with EHS

▼ **TAXES:** Voter approval needed to join taxing district

By Janet Monti

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College of Western Idaho officials are talking with Emmett High School Principal Dr. Bill Knickrehm to offer courses here. This could include dual-credit courses at the high school, technology programs or support, CWI President Bert Glandon said.

"We are actively working with the school to make sure we can provide the programs," Glandon said.

There has been a rapid enrollment increase since the Treasure Valley community college opened a year ago. No one anticipated the growth the college has experienced in such a short time. "We are pioneers," Glandon said. "We are finding our way each and every day ... We don't know how big we should be."

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CWI

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Glandon asked the state finance committee to consider Gov. Butch Otter's suggestion for supplemental funding of just over \$1 million for this fiscal year.

With its current facilities, CWI has room for 6,435 students. The college has 106 full-time faculty and 230 adjunct, or part-time, faculty. Sixty-eight of the full-time faculty came from Boise State University's Larry Selland College of Applied Technology, which CWI assumed control of last year.

CWI's property tax rate is far lower than those of the other two Idaho community colleges — College of Southern Idaho and Northern Idaho College. CWI's is at \$13.11 per \$100,000 while the other schools are at about \$80. Part of that is because the other schools have smaller tax bases on which to draw from. CWI board member Mark Dunham said.

Taxing district?

There may come a time

Advanced courses at EHS

Emmett High School is partnered with several colleges and universities to offer students additional coursework:

- Boise State University
- College of Southern Idaho
- Treasure Valley Community College
- Northwest Nazarene University
- College of Western Idaho

when becoming part of the college's tax base would be beneficial to Gem County's taxpayers, but according to Gem County Commissioner Michele Sherrer, no plans are being discussed.

"We haven't had a conversation with CWI about joining their taxing district," Sherrer said.

As required by the state, Gem County pays \$500 for each student who attends CWI, Northern Idaho College and College of Southern Idaho, Sherrer said. In 2009, the county paid \$15,000 of the budgeted \$17,000 for students to attend those three colleges. This year, the county budgeted \$35,000 for the expense.

"Now, the county pays per student out of the current prop-

erty tax. At some point, it will be a break-even point where we would want to join the CWI taxing district," Sherrer said. "The cost to the county will be more with the per-student fee and we would have to cut other services to pay it. But, the timing (to form a new taxing district) is not right now."

To change from a per-student fee, voter approval is needed to create a new CWI taxing district, Sherrer said. "I am not aware of" any talk in that direction.

Last month, Glandon spoke to the Idaho Legislature's Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee about the college's future. Current enrollment for credit classes is 4,837 — 63 of those from Gem County. This puts Gem in fifth place for students' hometown. CWI had 1,200 students when it opened last January.

There are a total of eight counties within the service area, Glandon said. Currently, Ada and Canyon counties are the only ones that have created a taxing district for the college.

*Idaho Press-Tribune
reporter Mike Burns
contributed to this story.*