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Livonia Chamber endorses Schoolcraft millage to support talent needed for local workforce

September 4, 2018 – In a move to support in-demand and flexible training for local employers, the Livonia Chamber of Commerce endorses Schoolcraft College’s pursuit to set a higher millage rate, a request that goes to voters in the Nov. 6 election.

Schoolcraft College is asking voters in the Livonia, Northville, Plymouth-Canton, Clarenceville, and Garden City school districts to raise its operations millage rate from 1.77 mills to 2.27 mills, and lock it in at that rate for 10 years. Voters initially set a millage rate of 2.27 in 1986. Typically, as property values rise, millage rates will decline to control annual property tax increases in accordance with the Headlee Amendment. If approved, the typical owner of a \$200,000 home will see an increase of \$48 in their annual property taxes.

The Chamber’s Board of Directors voted to endorse the millage Aug. 24 after a lengthy review process. It cited the following reasons for its support: Schoolcraft needs capital for agility to purchase equipment and develop programs to meet workforce demands, the school provides training for many in-demand jobs, it would maintain business support services that have been particularly helpful to local small businesses, and it would support maintaining reasonable college costs for local students.

“Supporting educational institutions that foster the needs of our business community is very important to us,” said Livonia Chamber Board Member Chuck Dardas, who is president and COO of AlphaUSA, a Livonia-based manufacturer that employs 150 people. “We believe the additional tax dollars will be well spent on overall business, education and community development.”

Dardas added Schoolcraft produces in-demand certificate and associate degree programs, and it also starts an affordable journey for many students seeking advanced degrees via transfers to Madonna University and other universities.

In explaining the need for the tax increase, Dr. Conway Jeffress, president of Schoolcraft College, said the tax capture in recent years has not kept up with significant increases in operations costs, particularly with technology and security. Also, he added the school has consistently kept student tuition increases at or below the rate of inflation.

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