Residents in the Lone Star College System service area will have the opportunity to vote on a $497.7 million bond referendum that will expand capacity to meet the unprecedented student population growth at LSCS.

In February, a citizens committee, representing area business, education, government and civic sectors, recommended to the LSCS Board of Trustees that the college system consider building new learning facilities and infrastructure sufficient to accommodate the system’s historical growth.

Board members voted unanimously to approve a $497.7 million bond referendum that will include improved campus security and safety throughout LSCS, new workforce training facilities, along with three new centers to serve some of the fastest-growing communities in the college system.

The bond referendum to go before voters includes financing for learning facilities at each campus – projects that were prioritized and outlined by the group of citizen leaders as part of their recommendation to the board.

In addition, LSCS is seeking approval from voters to add 996,000 square feet of instructional and support building space, along with related infrastructure, to its colleges and centers. The college system also anticipates needing to renovate 252,000 square feet of current space.

No tax rate increase
During this process, the board was adamant about receiving a plan that would accommodate the historic student enrollment growth without requiring an increase in the LSCS tax rate for local taxpayers.

“This was our most important stipulation as we considered asking the public to approve a bond referendum,” said Randy Bates, LSCS board chairman.

Tax exemptions in place for residents age 65+

The Lone Star College System Board of Trustees voted unanimously last year to continue tax exemption allowances and tax freezes for disabled residents and residents age 65 and older.

That means all residents who live in the LSCS taxing jurisdiction and who are homeowners continue to be eligible for a $5,000 homestead exemption.

Disabled residents and those over 65 years of age residing in the LSCS service area are also eligible for the system’s $75,000 property tax exemption and tax freeze, where the actual dollar amount owed is frozen as of the date the taxpayer qualifies for the exemption – even if the property value increases.

Any resident who already had an over-65 or disabled exemption on file with their county appraisal district will automatically receive the 2012 exemption and tax freeze.
Proposed projects by campus included in the referendum:

**LSC-CyFair - $55 million**
- New instructional building – 100,000 sf
- New instructional building – 50,000 sf
- Increase parking – 1,000 spaces
- County required traffic improvements
- LSC-Fairbanks Center – 200 parking spaces

**LSC-Kingwood - $38.2 million**
- New healthcare instructional building – 50,000 sf
- Student services expansion – 5,000 sf
- New instructional building – 20,000 sf
- Increase parking – 450 spaces

**LSC-Montgomery - $38.9 million**
- New student services building – 60,000 sf
- New university center – 54,000 sf
- Increase parking – 420 spaces
- Widen and improve entry drives

**LSC-North Harris - $120 million**
- New instructional building – 70,000 sf
- New workforce training building – 50,000 sf
- New instructional building – 50,000 sf
- Increase parking – 930 spaces
- Widen and improve entry drives
- LSC-Victory Center expansion – 25,000 sf
- Future East Aldine Center – 85,000 sf +650 parking

**LSC-Tomball - $102.2 million**
- New student services/instructional building – 60,000 sf
- Increase parking – 300 spaces
- New campus entry drive
- Build-out Health Science Building – 20,000 sf
- Future Creekside Center – 85,000 sf +650 parking
- Future Magnolia Center – 85,000 sf +650 parking

**LSC-University Park - $59.3 million**
- New instructional science building – 50,000 sf
- New instructional arts building – 45,000 sf
- Increase parking – 170 spaces

**System-wide support projects - $84.1 million**
- Campus safety and security improvements
- Technology infrastructure upgrades and expansion
- Program management and land acquisitions
- Cost and growth contingencies
- New educational support building – 46,000 sf
- Increase parking – 210 spaces

Details, including maps of proposed facility construction, may be found at [LoneStar.edu/Bond2013](http://LoneStar.edu/Bond2013)

Dr. Richard Carpenter, LSCS chancellor, noted that bond funds can only be used for construction and not for operating expenses, which requires the college system to work smarter and more efficiently.

“Our budget is focused on providing a top-notch education for our students” said Dr. Carpenter.

LSCS is able to absorb construction debt because of its strong financial foundation through superior budget management and accelerated pay down of previous debt. The college system also maintains administrative operating expenses below 12 percent, which is among the lowest of any college in the nation.

In addition, LSCS has benefited from eight credit rating increases in the last 10 years and maintains AAA status from Standard and Poor’s Ratings, which allows the college to save millions of dollars in interest expense.

The LSCS tax rate is the same as it was 15 years ago and the college’s past two bond referendums did not cause an increase in the tax rate. In fact, many homeowners in the LSCS service area – those 65 years of age or older – enjoy a tax freeze implemented by the LSCS Board in 2006, which means the taxes for their existing home are frozen at the level they paid in 2006 or the year in which they qualified for the exemption.

The election will be held on Saturday, May 11 with early voting set for April 29 – May 7. More information including early voting polling places may also be found at [LoneStar.edu/Bond2013](http://LoneStar.edu/Bond2013)

**LSCS TRUSTEE ELECTION ALSO SET FOR MAY 11**

The May 11 election also includes three trustee positions that are up for consideration by voters.

- **Position 1:** David Holsey*; Elizabeth “Liz” Jensen.
- **Position 2:** Tom Forestier*; Janie Branham; Kyle A. Scott
- **Position 8:** Randy Bates*; Bill Morris; Ron Trowbridge

* denotes incumbent

**CHANCELLOR** Dr. Richard Carpenter

**LSCS BOARD OF TRUSTEES** Randy Bates, JD, Chair, Position 8; David Holsey, DDS, Vice-Chair; Position 1; Thomas Forestier, JD, Position 2; Stephanie Marquard, Position 3; Robert J. Adam, JD, Position 4; David A. Vogt, Position 5; Bob Wolfe, JD, CPA, Position 6; Linda S. Good, JD Position 7; Priscilla Kelly, Position 9
Quick Facts about the Bond Election

Who Can Vote in this Election?
Any registered voter living in the following Independent School Districts within the Lone Star College System service area is eligible to vote: Aldine, Conroe, Cy-Fair, Humble, Klein, Magnolia, New Caney, Spring, Splendora, Tomball, Willis

When Do I Vote?
Early voting is from April 29 to May 7. On Election Day, Saturday, May 11, polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Where Do I Vote?
For a complete list of voting sites, please see LoneStar.edu/Bond2013

How Do I Request a Ballot by Mail?
All application requests must be received in respective county office by May 3. To request a ballot be sent to you:
In Harris County:
Stan Stanart, Harris County Clerk
P.O. Box 1525, Houston, TX 77251

In Montgomery County:
Suzie Harvey, Montgomery County Elections Administrator
9159 Airport Road, Conroe, TX 77303

In San Jacinto County:
Sherryl Evans, San Jacinto County Elections Administrator
51 East Pine Avenue, Room A1
Coldspring, TX 77331

I Am over 65. Are My Taxes Frozen?
Yes! In September 2006, the Lone Star College trustees voted to freeze taxes for the disabled and seniors age 65 or older, and in 2012 voted to continue the tax freeze.
If you have ever faced the need for the services of an EMS technician or firefighter, chances are they were trained at Lone Star College.

LSC prepares students for many careers and no one program is more important than training area first responders.

According to recent statistics from the Texas Association of Community Colleges, community colleges like Lone Star College train 84 percent of all first responders in Texas. That’s more than 8 of every 10 EMS workers, firefighters and police officers who are certified each year.

Marco Guillen, a firefighter with the Conroe Fire Department, was the first student to complete an associate of applied science degree in fire science technology at LSC-Montgomery where the program has been offered for five years.

The degree encompasses more than 70 hours of coursework, including basic firefighter certification, basic emergency medical technician service certification, various fire science electives, and other core courses like English, math, and fine arts.

“The fire science courses were taught by other firefighters, so I could really relate to them,” said Guillen. “Plus, I was able to study during down time at work.”

The educational foundation he received at LSC only fueled the flame, and in the last year, Guillen has earned his intermediate firefighter certification and been promoted to engine operator for Conroe Fire Department. He said that he plans to continue to climb the ladder of success and complete his bachelor’s degree in public service leadership in 2014 from University of Houston-Clear Lake.

“When I had my boys, I knew I needed to get my degree,” said Guillen, whose young, active sons keep him on high-alert, even when he’s off-duty.

Fire science training is offered at LSC-Cy-Fair, LSC-Kingwood and LSC-Montgomery, and courses for EMS certification are offered at most Lone Star Colleges.

In addition to the Conroe Fire Department, LSC fire academy graduates can be found working at fire departments throughout the greater Houston area, including Houston, Caney Creek, South Montgomery County, Tomball, The Woodlands, Willis and more.

NURSES ALSO TRAINED AT LONE STAR COLLEGE

In addition to training 84 percent of first responders like EMS technicians, firefighters and police officers, Lone Star College and two-year colleges like it train 60 percent of all nurses and health care workers throughout the state and region. So the next time you see a nurse, chances are you’re being treated by a community college graduate.