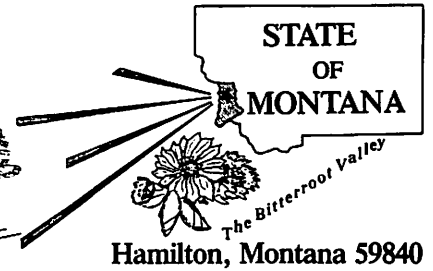


COUNTY OF RAVALLI



August 31, 2020

Casey Lozar, Chair
Montana Board of Regents
PO Box 203201
Helena, MT 59620-3201

Dear Chair Lozar,

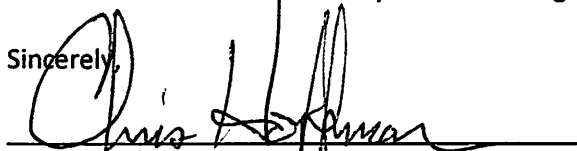
The Ravalli County Board of Commissioners submits this letter enthusiastically supporting a positive recommendation from the Montana Board of Regents to the Montana Legislature for the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. The Ravalli County Commissioners affirm the will of local voters to organize the new community college district.

Ravalli County is the seventh most populous county in Montana. It is the only county with significant population that does not have a locally administered unit of the Montana University System. The six most populated counties all have units of the MUS, and a handful of less populous counties have units of the MUS, as well. The labor force of Ravalli County is 20,278 people in July of 2020 (imi.mt.gov) However, the Bitterroot Job Service was closed several years ago by the state, despite the location of Job Service offices in nine counties with less population than Ravalli County. The location of Ravalli County next to Missoula County does not negate the need for local services.

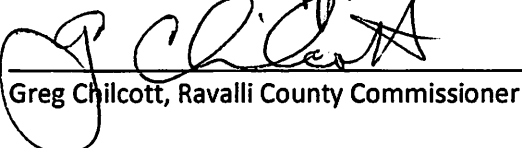
The Bitterroot Valley Community College District, comprised of the Ravalli County School Districts of Corvallis, Darby, Hamilton, Lone Rock, Stevensville, and Victor, will provide area residents with accessible, affordable, and responsive workforce training, transfer education, adult basic education, lifelong learning, and community development opportunities. The new community college district will have the authority, resources, and legitimacy required to effectively meet the varied programming needs and interests of the businesses, communities, and residents of Ravalli County.

The Ravalli County Commissioners look forward to working together with a robust, permanent, and locally controlled and committed Bitterroot Valley Community College to address local workforce and postsecondary education training. The Ravalli County Commissioners strongly advocate in favor of the organization of the Bitterroot Valley Community College District. We believe the new district is necessary as the County looks to maintain a sustainable economy within a changing workforce and population landscape.

Sincerely,


Chris Hoffman, Ravalli County Commissioner Chairman


Jeff Burrows, Ravalli County Commissioner


Greg Chilcott, Ravalli County Commissioner