Humble Beginnings with Community Support

- The State of Idaho recognized the need
- Community members with vision and foresight stepped forth and spearheaded the process of establishing the College of Southern Idaho Junior College District
- Twin Falls and Jerome Counties responded by voting in favor of establishing a community college
- The city, civic organizations, and community members donated land and/or funds to help build the College

2007 JFAC Presentation
In 1965 the College of Southern Idaho became one of the more than 573 community colleges established in the United States between 1955 and 1974. During that period, a new two-year college was built every two weeks. CSI has participated in a dynamic, nationwide effort to increase access to higher education.

A selected chronology of the early years:

1945
- The Idaho legislature authorizes a survey of the State’s educational program. The Division of Surveys and Field Services of George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee, conducts the Survey.

1947
- The Peabody survey mentions Twin Falls as a possible site. It also says: “Additional Junior College facilities are among the most promising methods of improving and expanding the service in higher education to the young people of the State of Idaho.”

1954
- August – Clisby Thatcher Edlefsen of Boise submits “A Junior College Survey of Twin Falls, County, Idaho” as his dissertation for the Doctor of Education Degree at Stanford University.
- Lyle Louder advocates the establishment of a junior college in the abandoned county hospital building.
- September – The State Board of Education allows the vote to proceed.
- December 14 – voters defeat the proposal 2,983 to 471.

1958
- Bill Grange, secretary-manager of the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce begins to explore the feasibility of establishing a junior college in Twin Falls. A local newspaper editorial expresses doubt that the public would want to fund such an institution.

1961

1962
- February 6 – HR 8900 is passed to provide federal aid for building academic facilities.
• February 7 – Bill Grange receives a letter from Senator Frank Church considering legislation for funding the construction of academic buildings. Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce is interested in a junior college and provides leadership in starting the process. Local leaders support the establishment of a community college in order to expand educational opportunities and encourage economic development.

• March 7 – E. L. Rayborn offers to deed either 10 acres on East Addison or 40 acres near the airport for a community college.

• April 24 – Times News: “Besides the obvious benefit of an additional two years of education while still living at home, any college lends a cultural and progressive atmosphere to a community. Any community in which an institution of higher learning is located lists it among the community assets.”

• April 24 – In Idaho Falls citizens reject a community college by a vote of 6,895 to 1,110 - partly because Ricks and ISU are nearby.

• Bill Grange writes to Stanford University about establishing a junior college in the Magic Valley.

• October 11 – Former Idaho Technical Institute becomes defunct. Five staff members, including Dean James Taylor indicate willingness to continue under a new college, Southern Idaho College.

• October 19 – Southern Idaho College in Buhl incorporates.

1963

• Vocational Education Act of 1963 provides for the establishment of Junior College districts.

• April 5 – Northside News: Jerome citizens must be wary of a tax-supported junior college district in Twin Falls.

• May 29 – Although the State Board of Education had twice turned down a junior college in Buhl because of inadequate tax base, the board supports a junior college in the Magic Valley which “shall be in accordance with broad plans involving large general areas or multiple county regions which will best serve the higher education segments of the population.”

• June 28 – Twin Falls county voters reject the formation of a college, at least partly due to inadequate time to educate voters about the benefits of a community college. The college would have been temporarily located in Buhl. After the proposal was rejected, Southern Idaho College is dissolved and all equipment auctioned.

• July 1 – The majority vote required by the 1939 junior-college-district bill is replaced by a two-thirds requirement for approval.
1964

- July 19 – The Times News encourages the formation of a junior college in Twin Falls County.
- After July 19 a committee of 25 from Twin Falls County is formed to encourage the formation of a junior college.
- September 9 – A junior college district in Twin Falls County is proposed to the State Board of Education.
- September 14 – The State Board of Education enthusiastically accepts a petition to organize the College of Southern Idaho Junior College District.
- November 3 – People of Twin Falls County vote 10,636 to 4,976 in favor of establishing a junior college district (228 votes over the two-thirds needed).

1965

- January 1 – first Board of Trustees is selected.
- February 28 – Dr. James Taylor is offered the presidency of the college.
- March – District 411 trustees allow CSI to use its facilities from 3:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
- March – Administrative offices are established in the old hospital building.
- May – State Board for Vocational Education requires a survey before the establishment of an area vocational school.
- June 1 – CSI’s budget for the fiscal year 1966 is $539,035.
- July – State Legislature divides Idaho into six junior college areas, with Area IV including Camas, Blaine, Lincoln, Gooding, Jerome, Minidoka, Cassia, Twin Falls and parts of the Owyhee and Elmore counties.
- August 25 – the College is offered a 98 acre site along the Snake River Canyon west of Twin Falls Gun Club. The site is offered by the Civic Auditorium Association.
- August 29 – Jerome County votes 1,151 to 136, an 88.6 percent margin, to enter the Southern Idaho Junior College District.
- September 1 – CSI opens its doors to students for the first time. Enrollment figures indicate 540 students.
Academic classes are held at Twin Falls High School and vocational students attend at the Kimberly Road facility.

- **September 1** – The Chairman of the Civic Auditorium Association Board of Directors announces Civic Auditorium funds will be made available to match federal funds.
- **September 1** – Gooding County defeats proposal to join the junior college district: 1,105 against, 423 for.
- **October** – Conflicts over the proposed site. Trustees indicate that a three-member site survey will make an intensive study of the geographical area for the purpose of making a recommendation for a campus site.

**1966**

- **March 4** – The Trustees make the controversial decision to develop the second choice, the Kimes rather than the Beach site. The Kimes property is only one-half mile from the Beach site. K. H. Carr, one of the owners of the Beach property, refused to sell.
- **May 10** – Twin Falls and Jerome Counties vote 83.95% for the $3 million bond issue.
  - $3,000,000 local taxpayers
  - $1,800,000 federal grants
  - $3,200,000 self-liquidating funds
  - $8,000,000 total
- **May 12** – The State Department of Education reports the $3 million bond to be the largest bond ever passed for education and also the highest voter margin of any major educational bond issue.”
- **May** – CSI is accepted as a candidate for accreditation with the Northwest Regional Accrediting Association. Up until this time CSI is the only school that ever received this candidacy for membership in its first year of operation.
- **May** – Chairman Egon Kroll, of the Twin Falls City Commissioners, indicates that the approximately 78 acres at Frontier Field will be added to the CSI site. In addition to the original 153 acres of the Kimes site, the College acquired seven adjacent parcels, which with the donation of Frontier Field by the city council, brought the total to 240 acres.
• June – the Trustees unanimously accept the resources of the Civic Auditorium Association to match with federal grants to construct a Fine Arts Center.
• September – Walter Rees of the Twin Falls Bank and Trust announces the first $1 million of the $3 million bond issue, at an interest rate of 4.13 percent.

1967

• March – The CSI Trustees sell the remaining $2 million of the bond monies for a 3.48 percent interest.
• July – The first state aid, ever, for a junior college in Idaho becomes effective under a law passed in the last session of the legislature. Participating junior colleges are: Boise Junior College, North Idaho College, and the College of Southern Idaho.
• August 1967 – ground breaking for the Fine Arts Center.
• December 1967 – A tower marks the CSI campus. It rises 107 feet into the sky.

1968

• February 15 – CSI applies for funds for a P.E. Center from the $321,697 available for Idaho.
• November – First building phase completed: the Fine Arts Center, the Shields Academic Building, and the Maintenance Building are occupied, and the road system, parking, mall area, and utility loops are finished. Academic programs move to the new campus. The library moves into three rooms in the Shields Building.

1969

• January – CSI gets federal nod to begin $2 million new building program. Buildings in Phase Two include a Health-PE Building, a Student Union Building, and a co-educational dormitory.
• August 12 – Hospital battles nursing crisis because of the shortage of RNs.
• August 19 – CSI hopes to institute a Registered Nursing Program.
• September – Dr. Taylor receives word that Housing and Urban Development will provide a loan of $1.3 million for the construction of a multi-use building and a co-educational dormitory.
• December 7 – Vocational training needs are stressed.
1970

- March – Kellwood officials say that the people of Magic Valley should be complimented for the development of the comprehensive community college, which was a deciding factor in their choosing Twin Falls as a site for their new hosiery mill.
- May – CSI receives $210,209 grant from the Office of Education for construction of a vocational-technical classroom building.
- September 20 – The Health-PE Building completed.
- November – Plans under way to construct the first Vo-Tech Building on the campus site. The projected cost of the structure is $565,000. An Office of Education grant plus an appropriation by the state legislature will make this building possible.

1971

- January – The Multi-Use Building is completed; CSI administration and library staff move in.
- January 13 – The Student Housing Building is completed.
- February 17 – Registered Nursing class will begin June 1st; first graduating class will be in 1973.
- March 5 – The state funds the CSI Vo-Tech Building.
- April 2 – The legislature will fund vocational education 100 percent. The previous years CSI paid about 43 percent.
- April 20 – CSI Trustees increase tuition.

1972

- Vocational-Technical Building completed. Both academic and vocational classes held on campus for the first time.
Sources: