

Informational Item:

University of Montana-Missoula has been approached by a developer to construct two buildings to accommodate the anticipated growth of the Bitterroot College.

EXPLANATION

In November of 2009, the University of Montana entered into a five-year agreement with the Ravalli County Economic Development Authority to lease 840 sq. ft. of building space in order to accommodate start-up efforts of the BOR-approved development of the Bitterroot College, located in Hamilton, MT.

Within the first year and a half, growth at the college was significant, and an additional 3,391 sq. ft. of building space was added to the existing lease, bringing the total leased space to 4,231 sq. ft. By the fall of 2012, the enrollment headcount increased to 215.

A developer in the Bitterroot has approached the University regarding the construction of an expanded campus to include one 12,000 sq. ft. and another 15,000 sq. ft. building on the same tract of land as the current leased facility. Both buildings aren't needed at this time, but with the projected growth of the Bitterroot College they will be in the future. The University would not own the buildings or land and would not be involved in the construction, except to specify requirements for interior layout, ADA requirements, etc. Initial rental payments for use of the space would be covered by donations for a period of 10 years through fund-raising efforts involving the developer. The University would likely lease the space after the initial 10-year period.

The University will continue conversations with the developer and Ravalli County to explore the feasibility of this proposal.
