

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM**2011 BIENNIUM BUDGET PLANNING – NEW PROPOSALS (JANUARY 2008)**

UNIT/CAMPUS: MONTANA TECH – MBMG	UNIT PRIORITY: 1
NEW PROPOSAL NAME: MONTANA BUREAU OF MINES & GEOLOGY ENHANCED RESEARCH CAPABILITIES	
BOARD OF REGENT STRATEGIC GOAL: <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECON DEV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EFFICIENCY <input type="checkbox"/> RECRUIT/RETAIN	
TOTAL BIENNIAL COST: \$616,714	FUNDING SOURCES: State Appropriation
FY 10 TOTAL COST: \$303,800	FY 11 TOTAL COST: \$312,914
FY 10 BASE FUNDING REQUESTED: \$303,800	FY 11 BASE FUNDING REQUESTED: \$9,114
FY 10 OTO FUNDING REQUESTED: \$0	FY 11 OTO FUNDING REQUESTED: \$0
ADDITIONAL STAFF IN FY10 (FTE): 3.10	ADDITIONAL STAFF IN FY11 (FTE): 0

DESCRIPTION OF NEW PROPOSAL:

This initiative requests increased State general funds to increase the number of currently budgeted FTE positions to authorized levels. In 1990, the MBMG budgeted 27.06 FTE from general funds. In FY2008, only 23.1 FTEs could be budgeted. Budgeted FTEs have slowly declined for several decades because of budget cuts, higher salaries required to replace vacant positions, and the need to increase salaries by counter-offers in order to retain critical staff being recruited by other organizations. Each action impacts the remaining pool available for staff salaries and the resulting deficit has not been backfilled in succeeding budgets. The net result is slow but sure erosion in the number of budgeted FTEs. The MBMG has coped with a tightening salary pool by not filling positions, and is increasingly dependent on grants and contracts to fund professional positions. This has resulted in a research staff with highly fragmented funding. For example in the Research Division's FY08 budget, 8.04 FTEs are split amount 14 individual researchers; the remaining salary for these individuals must come from soft dollars. This necessitates constantly shifting individuals and their responsibilities to projects where funding is available, rather than consistently maintaining individuals in positions that meet longer range programmatic goals.

The MBMG is currently authorized at 26.2 FTEs in the State general fund budget. This request is for funding that will allow filling an additional 3.1 FTEs, to bring us to authorized levels. Each FTE is estimated to cost -\$98K (salary, benefits, and operations) for a total of \$303,800.

The MBMG Director, Assistant Director, and Research Division Chief will collaborate on assignment of additional FTE funds within the existing staff in order to maximize benefits. Considerations will include providing individuals with stable funding to focus on a single programmatic area, decreasing the fragmentation of individual responsibilities, and prioritization of programs recognized as most critical for both long-range and short-term issues. High priority areas to be addressed include:

- Research to provide information for evaluation, exploration, and responsible development of Montana's natural resources - oil, gas, metallic and non-metallic minerals, and water.
- Research on alternative and "green" energy issues, including carbon sequestration, compressed air storage for peaking power, and *in situ* coal gasification
- Increased staff time for answering inquiries from the public, particularly in the area of ground water concerns and information;
- Oversight for conversion of archived information to digital formats so that it can be made freely accessible via the internet;
- Public outreach and information dissemination, primarily through additional staffing in Montana Tech's Mineral Museum. (Currently there is no staff present much of the time that the Museum is open, and additional staffing will also enable presentation of more seminars, lectures, and workshops.)

HOW SUCCESS IS MEASURED:

Much of this initiative is devoted to increased generation and dissemination of information, and this is inherently difficult to measure. Measureable outcomes would include:

- Publications that provide regional data and interpretations to enhance evaluation, exploration, and responsible development of resources.
- Time devoted to responding to public inquiries, and also to presentations of project interpretations in public forums.
- Increased availability of archived data over the Internet.
- Increased outreach programs by the Mineral Museum, increased staffing during public hours, improved exhibits inside the Museum, more time for tours by school groups, and traveling exhibits that go to schools.