

ATTACHMENT 2

Investment Opportunities in Workforce and Rural Development

Montana University System

The Board of Regents of the Montana University System recognizes the challenging fiscal situation facing the State and has limited its budget request accordingly. However, the Montana University System is the most important potential driver in the expansion of the Montana economy. Therefore, we offer decision makers in the Executive and Legislative branches these ideas showing

- how specific investments in the Montana University System would provide specific economic returns and
- how the Montana University System could be held accountable for these investments.

Details about all of these ideas are available from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.

Investment Opportunities:

The University of Montana – Helena College of Technology

Community program to meet employers' needs for trained workforce, upgrade basic skills instruction, and expand automotive program.

The University of Montana – Missoula College of Technology

Provide workforce training by combining the resources of Job Service, Missoula Economic Development Corporation, and the College of Technology to increase productivity of workers and support business development.

The University of Montana – Western

Provide a Bachelor's degree in early childhood education to fulfill the growing need for qualified workers in the childcare industry.

Montana Tech of the University of Montana

Expand opportunities for students in nursing, information technology design, and health care informatics.

The University of Montana – Missoula

Reinstate the master's degree in speech science and communication disorders to train speech pathologists for Montana's public schools and community health care facilities.

Montana Tech of The University of Montana – Bureau of Mines and Geology

Establish a small program to compile and map regional oil and gas data held in records filed with State agencies which would enable operators to develop prospects and explore areas of the State where current knowledge of the subsurface is lacking.

The University of Montana – Forest and Conservation Experiment Station

Expand continuing education in forest management focusing on private lands in order to bring more forest stands under management and into production for the variety of goods and services demanded by the people of Montana.

The University of Montana – Flathead Lake Biological Station

Continue research on water quality problems associated with coal bed methane development in order to capitalize on these resources, create new jobs and reduce reliance on out-of-state energy sources.

Montana State University – Great Falls College of Technology

Establish satellite centers in Choteau, Gallatin, Pondera, and Toole counties to serve as one-stop facilities to assist local residents in accessing technical programs on-line.

Montana State University - Billings

Expand private, public, and Federal partnership to improve training and education offered to individuals and small businesses and provide teacher training in rural Montana communities.

Montana State University – Northern

Use technology to expand the initiative with area Tribal Colleges to offer teacher training to Native Americans, offer master's in education to cohort groups in several Eastern Montana communities, and expand the industrial technology program in Havre.

Montana State University – Bozeman

Meet workforce needs for healthcare professionals through partnerships with local providers and the use of distance learning to improve opportunities for place-bound students in rural Montana.

Montana State University Extension Service

Promote rural development by stabilizing funding for a tech transfer position and adding positions in marketing and technical support for ag producers.

Montana State University Fire Services Training School

Assist rural communities by adding 1.5 FTE trainers.

Montana State University Agriculture Experiment Stations

Increase repair and maintenance expenditures to preserve the State's facilities and infrastructure at the experiment stations.

Dawson Community College

Expand the offering of the farm and ranch management program into additional communities of Eastern Montana.

Flathead Valley Community College

Expand customized training and degree programs tied to growing market sectors and the needs of business clusters.

Miles Community College

Expand programs in chemical dependency, nursing, and power plant technology, the last in partnership with the Colstrip power plant.

The campuses of the Montana University System also have a variety of programs and services that contribute directly to the growth and expansion of Montana's economy. These include: tech transfer support to help turn research findings into profitable companies; support services to small businesses and manufacturers; customized training for workers; research on Montana economic conditions; economic development programs. Additional investments in all of these kinds of programs would expand their ability to help the Montana economy grow.

The total cost of all of these investments are estimated to be approximately \$4 million. Details of all of the investments are available in the Office of the Commissioner.

Return on investment:

- Improved productivity and income levels for Montana workers, leading to a stronger State tax base.
- Increased enrollment in areas of employment need and economic growth.
- Increase in number of patents, licenses, and new companies based on Montana University System research, development, and technology transfer.
- Improved productivity for Montana's farmers and ranchers through expanded research and training, value-added development strategies, and the use of more sophisticated marketing techniques

Accountability Measures:

- New programs, improved participation rates, and increased services to businesses in rural Montana.
- Improved productivity of Montana farms and ranchers through programs, research, and recommendations of the Montana University System and its agencies.
- Implementation of and enrollment in new degree programs, research efforts, and training activities tied to employment needs and economic growth.
- Long term—Increased jobs and company relocations or start-ups in targeted areas, improved income levels for Montanans participating in the programs and training activities, improved retention of Montana graduates.