

First Monday



*From the desk of: Marilynn Miller, President and CEO
Monday, July 5, 2004, 8:00 a.m.*

People, Pride & Promise Campaign goes public! The following is excerpted from the Saturday, June 26, 2004 issue of The Billings Gazette:

MSU-B Fund Drive Raises \$14 Million of \$21 Million Goal

By MARY PICKETT of The Gazette Staff

Not only was the \$21 million "People, Pride & Promise" campaign for Montana State University-Billings first announced publicly on Friday, but news that it had already raised about \$14 million may have pleasantly surprised many. The success of the campaign to date has delighted MSU-B Chancellor Ron Sexton, who came up with the idea. "I'm ecstatic," he said Friday, adding that the fund drive so far has exceeded his expectations.

The campaign started in January 2002 (*and will continue through December 2006—MMiller*) to raise money for scholarships and capital improvements and to build endowments for academic programs. The effort is the first comprehensive campaign of its kind in the history of the university, said Marilynn Miller, president of the MSU-Billings Foundation, which is running the drive.

The campaign helps address shrinking financial support from the state, a trend faced by many public schools around the country, Miller said. Twenty years ago, public universities usually didn't have fund-raising efforts like this. But that has changed because costs are rising and there are more demands on state money. "Taxpayers have a lot of others things on their plate," Sexton said.

The first part of MSU-B's campaign was waged quietly to test the campaign's financial goal through a feasibility study and establish a base from which to launch the rest of the campaign, Miller said. MSU-B is halfway through the five-year campaign but has already raised two-thirds of its goal. "We're thrilled and grateful by the outpouring of support," she said.

One of the larger gifts made so far is \$1.4 million from the Sam McDonald family, which (*is paying*) off the mortgage on the MSU-B College of Business building and started an endowment for the college.

A house on campus was renovated into a day care with \$275,000 of donations. An indoor tennis facility and the Cenex Stadium for women's softball are two more projects funded by the campaign so far.

Among other improvements to be financed in the future through the capital part of the campaign are:

- New science laboratory equipment and renovation of labs at the main campus and at the College of Technology.
- Upgrades for the Global Information System facility and modern language and psychology labs.
- Improvements to Peaks to Plains park on campus.
- A soccer field at the College of Technology.
- Improvements to Northcutt Steele Gallery.

Scholarships are another part of the campaign.

In the last four years, tuition and fees have increased 48 percent at MSU-B and other campuses around the state. In 1986, Montana students paid 18 percent of the cost of their college education. Now, students pay 52 percent, Miller said.

With tuition rising, schools like MSU-B need to keep college affordable for everyone, Sexton said. Funds raised during this campaign will go for scholarships based on both academic excellence and need. In addition to scholarships for Montanans, others will be earmarked to attract out-of-state residents, graduate students and athletes.

The third part of the campaign will start endowments for the five of the six colleges that don't have one now and add to the College of Business' endowment. *(Additional endowments will be created for other University programs—MMiller.)* Income from endowments could be used to supplement faculty salaries, hire more faculty members, update technology, enable students and faculty to attend special programs and make it easier to create university-business partnerships.

There are many good reasons to contribute to the fund drive, supporters say. MSU-B not only educates students and sends skilled people into the work force, it also enriches the community through concerts, art exhibits and lectures.

"I have never seen a dynamic community without a good university," Sexton said.

Bruce Parker, of First Interstate Bank, and Patrick Davison, of Davison LLC, are co-chairmen of the campaign.

Prefer e-mail? If you would prefer to receive *First Monday* electronically, please contact Campaign Associate Joy Hayworth (jhayworth@msubillings.edu).

First Monday is provided to the supporters of the Montana State University-Billings Foundation to advance the cause of philanthropy.

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