

Exhibit Number: 4

The following exhibit is several assorted documents that exceeds the 10-page limit therefore it cannot be scanned. A small portion has been scanned to aid in your research for information. The exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and can be viewed there.

HB540

Testimony by John E. Cech, Dean of the MSU-Billings College of Technology

Mr. Chairman, honorable members of the committee, my name is John Cech, and I am dean of the Montana State University-Billings College of Technology

In that capacity, I am here to speak in favor of House Bill 540.

This bill will have the most significant impact on two-year education in the State of Montana in the past thirty years - it is an investment that will work for the State of Montana. I submit to you that an investment in the Colleges of Technology of Montana is an investment in the core economic competitiveness our great State.

The time to pursue this investment in Montana's COTs is NOW - why? Because proposed investment in our COTs links directly to the recommendations of the Board of Regents and State Board of Education "Shared Leadership Initiative." Let me share a few facts that surfaced in the Shared Leadership meetings:

- Montana is ranked 50th in the Nation for two-year education opportunities and for the percent of students pursuing them.
- 80.5% of all jobs in Montana require two-years or less of post-secondary education.
- Only 15% of our students enrolled in public post-secondary education this past fall were enrolled in one of Montana's two-year colleges.

These statistics coupled with massive projections of baby boomer retirements in the next few years spell trouble for Montana's economy.

National studies have calculated that increasing a county's average level of post-secondary education by one year correlates to increasing economic growth by 5-15 percent. In addition, nationally, 80 percent of graduates of two-year institutions remain in the County where they were educated.

What impact will HB540 have on the Greater Yellowstone region and the MSU-Billings College of Technology?

The 9.5 million dollar bonding issue will enable our College of Technology to fulfill its 2002/2003 Long Range Planning Study which was funded by the 57th Legislature in 2001.

At the Billings COT, our credit enrollment has grown by 79 percent from Fall 2000 when we had 497 students to Fall of 2004 when our enrollment reached 887 students. This rapid increase in student enrollment has been the direct result of the College's rapid response to the economic infrastructure needs of business and industry in the greater Billings region.

Our college prepares the economic infrastructure of our region. We train the paramedics who respond to an emergency, surgical techs in the operating room, the nurses who care for you in the hospital, and the radiological techs who take your XRays. We train the fire fighters who come to your house in an emergency, the drafting technicians who create your new floor plans, the people who install your new furnace, the welders at the new Coal Fired Power Plant in Hardin, the operators who run the refineries at ConocoPhillips/ExxonMobile, and the mechanics who repair your car when it breaks down. We train the people who keep your books, maintain your computer network, or answer your question when you call the help desk at Bresnan Communications regional headquarters in Billings. I could go on and on with other examples.

As we respond to the business and industry training needs of our region, we have simply run out of space in our 30-year old facility. Our facilities planning study outlines the infrastructure needs for the COT to grow, including:

- Construction of a new 32,000 square foot instructional building that will serve our growing two-year health programs, new business and entrepreneurship programs and technology-based programs such as computer aided graphics and design.
- Renovation of 29,000 square feet within the existing facility which will enable us to pursue new programming opportunities in areas such power generation training, significantly improved training in trade and industry areas such as automotive technology, auto body, collision and repair, and welding metal fabrication. This will position us to respond to other significant training needs in Montana such as construction and trades training, in which the Montana Bureau of Labor and Statistics is calling for 9,000 newly trained workers within the next ten years.
- The investment in our infrastructure will also provide us with the opportunity to establish a new satellite site for Billings Job Service to locate on our campus to better serve our students; increased capacity to support new partnerships with area Tribal Colleges, and enhance existing partnerships with the School District No. 2 Adult Education Program and neighboring Career Center.

I would like to end by quoting the February 13, 2005, Editorial in the Billings Gazette, "Among thousands of bills introduced this session, few have greater potential for statewide economic improvement than the college of technology projects in HB540. A skilled labor market is a major attraction for businesses considering locating or expanding in our state."

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I submit to you that by investing in the Colleges of Technology, you are investing in 80.5 percent of the workforce in the greater Billings, Great Falls, and Helena service areas. You are investing in the future competitiveness of our State to retain our existing businesses and recruit new ones. Most importantly, you are providing new opportunities for all our sons and daughters to remain in Montana.

Thank you for this opportunity to talk about the importance of this legislation and about the economic and educational future of Montana.

DESCRIPTION OF FACILITY:

General Description:

The College of Technology was originally constructed in 1979 as the Billings Vocational Technical Center, along with two subsequent additions. The twenty acre site and two story, 115,000 square foot facility was transferred to the University system in FY-88. This multi-phased project proposes to renovate 29,000 sf within the existing facility and construct 32,000 sf of instructional areas.

Impact on

Existing Facilities:

Presently, the college conducts a 49 hour instructional week, offering a full schedule of courses from 8 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday and from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm, Monday through Thursday. Scheduling Phase II major renovations throughout the summer of FY-07 offers the greatest opportunity to minimize impacts within the existing facility.

Functional Space

Requirements:

- Phase I renovated through Federal Appropriations a 10,000 gsf Technology Training Center and enlarged the Process Plant Technology area at a cost of \$2M which was completed in January 2005.
- Phase II with \$9.5M of LRBP funds will: renovate 28,920 gsf for the Computer Labs, Welding, Fire Science and Instructional classrooms and provide two Auto Tech classrooms; and construct a 32,140 gsf addition to provide Health Occupations & Medical Assistance Instructional areas, General Laboratory space for Core Biology and Chemistry, CADD/CAM & Digital Media Labs, and a Multi-use Lecture Hall/Auditorium.

EXPLANATION OF PROBLEM BEING ADDRESSED:

- Correct code/life safety deficiencies & needed electrical/mechanical repairs/upgrades
- Accommodate the demand for workforce training and development activities
- Provide support for partnership programs & community relationships
- Respond to community, industry and economic development needs
- Provide a center for public service, cultural and community activities