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Gateway Center will provide a portal for entire region

Summary: The recent stamp of approval by Governor Tim Pawlenty to keep the Gateway Center Project at the University of Minnesota, Morris in the state's bonding bill is good news not only for the Morris campus, but for the entire region as well.

(April 15, 2008)-The recent stamp of approval by Governor Tim Pawlenty to keep the Gateway Center Project at the University of Minnesota, Morris in the state's bonding bill is good news not only for the Morris campus, but for the entire region as well.

"We are pleased that Governor Pawlenty has included the Morris Gateway Center Project in the bonding bill," said UMM Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson. "The renovation of this historic building provides an opportunity for us to highlight our past at the same time that we provide 21st century access to our campus for the many and varied external audiences we serve."

The primary objective of the Gateway Center Project is to create easy access for anyone—visitors, alumni, prospective students and their families, benefactors and friends—to the variety of resources available on the Morris campus. In doing so, the Gateway Center will also create access to the entire University of Minnesota system. Approximately 13,000 University of Minnesota alumni, for example, are within a one hundred mile radius of Morris.

The project will renovate the historic Community Services building (formally the West Central School of Agriculture engineering building) to transform the structure into a highly functional energy-efficient building. The Community Services building is one of 18 that comprise the last intact agricultural boarding high school in the country, listed on the National Historic Register.

The renovated structure will house the additional Offices of Admissions and External Relations, in addition to the Offices of Continuing Education and Regional Programs and The Center for Small Towns, which are located in the current building.

The \$7.5M project, with \$5M in state funds and \$2.5 M in University funds, will maximize the University's impact, providing a point of entry and invitation to the Morris campus, and a portal to the University's extensive resources.

"UMM is pleased to secure funding for this project. Bringing construction dollars into the community is a positive outcome for both the campus and the region," said Lowell Rasmussen, UMM vice chancellor for finance and facilities.

The governor vetoed two other projects that had been approved by the legislature for the University of Minnesota—funding for a new Bell Museum of Natural History on the Twin Cities campus in St. Paul and classroom renewal projects. The rest of the University's projects remain in the new bill.

Funding that was approved for other University of Minnesota projects includes \$35 million for "HEAPR" (essentially

basic infrastructure needs and building components) on all campuses, \$48.3 million for a new Science Teaching and Student Services Building on the Twin Cities campus, \$10 million for a civil engineering addition on the Duluth campus, \$3.5 million for Research and Outreach Centers around the state and \$3.3 million for laboratory renovations.

“We hope to secure construction contracts in the coming months and begin construction in fall of this year,” added Rasmussen.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at morris.umn.edu or call 888-866-3382.