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Chancellor's Column

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Chancellor's Column



(March 5, 2024) Thursday, Feb. 22 was U of M Day at the Capitol, and I joined a strong contingent of UMN Morris students and alumni to rally for essential state funding to support the University of Minnesota.

The University's 2024 capital request to the Minnesota legislature is entirely devoted to Higher Education Asset Preservation and Replacement (HEAPR) projects, helping us to take care of what we already have. HEAPR funds will improve accessibility and efficiency in several buildings as well as help with ongoing maintenance to maximize the lifespan of buildings, classrooms, and other campus spaces.

HEAPR funding is especially critical for Morris since the core of the campus is listed as an historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. Several buildings on the campus date to the early 20th century, including the one that now houses the Multi-Ethnic Resource Center, which was built in 1899 and has not been substantially updated. Greater access to this building and others will allow the campus both to better serve students and to maximize the useful life of its historic buildings.

The proposed improvements will also help the campus improve energy efficiency and reduce operating costs while contributing to UMN Morris's nationally recognized leadership in sustainability.

The total request for Morris includes 12 renovation and repair projects for a total of \$14.8 million, which is a fixed percentage of the total HEAPR request from the University of Minnesota. These are sorely needed maintenance and improvement projects that will employ local and regional contractors—the campus is an economic asset to west central Minnesota.

The UMN Morris campus has been a good steward of public resources as it has turned a 20th-century agricultural high school into a model public liberal arts institution for the 21st century, and a good partner with the Morris and regional community. We look forward to being here for the next hundred years, serving the region, state, and well beyond.

I encourage anyone who supports UMN Morris to advocate for funding in the 2024 legislative session. I also suggest joining UMN Advocates, an advocacy network of students, faculty, staff, and alumni focused on providing advocates easy, occasional, and timely action alerts and legislative updates. Learn more about UMN Advocates at z.umn.edu/UMNAdvocates.