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THE POST-CRESCENT'S OPINION

UW-FV land buy should be explored

Now is hardly the right time for Outagamie and Winnebago counties to consider spending more money on the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley in Menasha.

Outagamie County is looking at a potential \$1.6 million budget gap going into next year. Winnebago County's budget certainly isn't flush with cash, either.

Besides, the counties earlier this year agreed to pay \$5.3 million each to fund the bulk of a new \$13.9 million communication arts center. The

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counties have to split the tab on any major UW-Fox Valley capital projects.

But UW-FV has a unique opportunity that deserves consideration by the counties. Two properties adjacent to the UW-FV campus are for sale. One is a 7,000-square-foot of-

fice building; the other is a 19,500-square-foot office and manufacturing space. Combined, they're listed at about \$1.7 million.

A healthy college is a growing college — and a healthy UW-Fox Valley is a benefit to the Fox Cities. The two properties offer space and parking that could be needed in the near future. It's hard to say when they might become available again — and at what cost.

So, despite the bad timing, it's worth the counties' effort to look at how a purchase might be funded,

bearing in mind that imperative county services shouldn't be hurt by it.

They — and UW-Fox Valley — also have to consider that buying the properties would take them off Menasha's tax roll, so the school's municipal services fee to Menasha would have to be adjusted.

Maybe the deal just can't be done; maybe the timing really is that bad. But the counties' commitment to UW-Fox Valley means that it should be given every consideration.