

# UW-Fox Valley pitches theater plan to Winnebago County

By **Bethany K. Warner**  
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OSHKOSH – University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley officials will make a pitch Tuesday to the Winnebago County Board for \$5.3 million from the county.

The money would be used to help construct a new communication arts and theater building at the two-year campus in Menasha.

While the building project has been discussed since the late 1970s, UWFV Dean Jim Perry says that if the building isn't started now, it may never happen because of rising costs.

"The costs have escalated so dramatically that if we don't do it now, I don't think we will," Perry said last week.

The total project is estimated to cost \$13.9 million, and

could increase to \$19 million if it's pushed off for five years.

The \$13.9 million total cost is divided among the state, Winnebago and Outagamie counties and the UW-Fox Foundation.

Both Winnebago and Outagamie counties each have to approve \$5.3 million funding for the project. Outagamie County has already agreed.

The state would pay \$1.35 million and the foundation hopes to raise \$2 million.

Perry said that without commitments of funding from the counties, private donors are waiting to contribute. If the county bonds for the \$5.3 million, that could increase taxes



Perry

\$6.22 for the owner of a \$100,000 home.

The board is not scheduled to take any formal action on the proposal Tuesday.

The current theater does not meet requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Also, the stage space is too small for many performances.

The theater is also used for lectures, community groups and campus activities.

"The facility is an academic facility for our students," Perry said.

The new building would house a 361-seat proscenium stage, with a balcony area, a lobby area with box office, coat check and concessions and a multi-purpose room that

can serve both as classroom and rehearsal space. The former theater would be converted into space for other uses.

Bethany K. Warner writes for the Oshkosh Northwestern.

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