The purpose of these funds is to:

Given the economic backdrop, declining numbers of high school students, and increasing competition for students, both in state and outside Montana, MSU faces many challenges in the coming years. To proactively prepare for the recruitment challenges of the future, we are requesting funds to create a 60 second and a 30 second advertising montage for television and Web.

The new production will support recruitment by targeting prospective students ages 13 to 17 and feature upbeat audio and fast paced visuals that reinforce MSU key points of differentiation: access to research opportunities, faculty mentors, friendly environment, student involvement opportunities and outdoor recreation. This production will include gathering new campus aerial footage and other visual elements to be used across all platforms.

This new production would appeal to a younger age group, by showing the full depth and breadth of the MSU experience. The “montage”, seeking to reach an even younger audience (age 13+), will be aired on youth networks such as MTV, TBS, the CW and on YouTube using our existing budget. As an added benefit, the advertising rates on these networks is much more cost effective.

The current spots will continue to be aired, especially on networks such as CNN, Discovery, and CBS, where the message fits well with the programming.

This is a one-time cost as we will use our current advertising budget to buy the media time.

The Return On Investment from these expenditures will be:

The advertising campaign of the past two years has contributed to successful recruitment efforts and it is essential to continue to be aggressive in the marketplace to maintain our market share.

The evidence shows that for the past two years, enrollment has increased. Many factors play into that, but certainly three years of consistent exposure in the Montana marketplace has had a positive effect.

In terms of quantitative data, during a six week flight in fall 2008, the MSU spots aired 4856 times in the following communities: Kalispell, Missoula, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, Hamilton, Havre, Polson, Livingston, Shelby, Anaconda, Conrad, Cut Bank, Deer Lodge, Dillon and Cody and Powell, WY on Bresnan, CBS and CW networks.

The analysis provided by CBS tracked four key markets: Bozeman/Butte, Great Falls, Missoula/Kalispell and Billings. The analysis stated that the total number of gross impressions for the six-week flight was: 1,073,583 impressions.
We know that if we are not present in the marketplace, while our key cross state competitor continues to be aggressive, we will lose out. Promoting and enhancing the university image is crucial to garner support for MSU. We need to maintain top of mind awareness with this key target audience and reinforce our competitive advantages.

In addition, research shows that both prospective students and friends of the university identify with our spectacular setting. Having a stable of aerial footage, will allow us reach those audiences with images that resonate. The production would appeal to a younger demographic, thus begin cultivating an affinity to MSU at a younger age. Media savvy youth are aware of dated imagery and music and it’s important to stay relevant to that audience.

The new spot would complement existing recruitment efforts and help create a positive image of Montana State University across the state of Montana and beyond. The return on investment will be in the form of new students from both in and out of state.