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UW-Fox Valley seeks \$1.735 million to buy adjacent land

By Susan Squires
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MENASHA — The landlocked University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley wants Outagamie and Winnebago counties to consider buying two neighboring properties listed at a combined total of \$1.735 million.

One is a 7,000-square-foot office building at 1428 Midway Road. The owner, Midwest Real Estate, is asking \$775,000 for the property.

The other is 19,500

square feet of office and manufacturing space at 1655 University Drive. Advanced Tooling Specialists vacated the building when it built a new place on Midway Road. The asking price is \$960,000.

Campus CEO/Dean Jim Perry said the university would use the space for offices and possibly some classrooms. The engineering program could



Perry

use the former manufacturing space. The purchase also would add 109 parking spaces.

Outagamie and Winnebago counties co-own the property. Earlier this year, each promised the university \$5.3 million for the construction of a new communication arts building. The university's foundation is working to raise \$2 million for the project.

In a June 19 letter to the county executives, Perry wrote, "I know the time is less than ideal for this, but they are available

now and would address significant space and parking issues that will eventually need to be addressed under any circumstances."

Winnebago County Executive Mark Harris and Toby Paltzer, his counterpart in Outagamie County, agree that the timing is less than ideal, but also acknowledge the rarity of the opportunity.

"It's a shame it follows so closely on a capital project there, but any time adjacent property becomes available it needs

to be given consideration," Harris said. "There is clearly a need for additional parking and additional space, so we'll take a look at it."

Paltzer said, "It's not often land becomes available around the campus like this and I believe possibly we should take advantage of it."

Last year's taxes on the two properties totaled \$34,105. The university pays municipal services fees, but not property taxes.

"Anytime property is

converted to a nonprofit, tax-exempt status it strains the city's ability to provide services," Menasha Ald. Don Merkes said. "Therefore growing within the existing footprint of the university would be my preferred choice. However, that being said the university provides tremendous value to the community and the Fox Cities as a whole by educating future business and community leaders."

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