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Benoit said a recent economic impact study demonstrated the sizable effect MMC has on Sioux Falls, Watertown and Yankton, the communities where it has campuses. In Yankton alone, the impact is \$19.28 million annually. Beyond the economic impact, Benoit said the college provides a valuable education that is expanding into new areas, such as the health care administration emphasis that will be available to business administration majors beginning next fall.

"When we're talking to prospective students, when we're talking to individuals who are bringing businesses here, when we are talking to people who are considering moving to Yankton because of a business, we need to be able to articulate our story and why it is important," Benoit said.

The college must continue to look at options to add value to its students' education through partnerships, he added. Avera, Yankton Area Progressive Growth and the Benedictine Sisters of Yankton are among the entities MMC already counts among its partners.

"Those become really key

parts of our future," Benoit stated.

Developments at MMC that are being discussed for the future include a community hour during which no classes would be held so students and staff could participate in community enrichment activities such as service projects, interfaith dialogues and lessons on the wisdom of St. Benedict.

Also on the agenda is a Bede Art Gallery renovation, a Bede courtyard project and the construction of a science center.

Benoit said renovation of the Mount Marty library and high school building into the new Avera Science and Nursing Laboratory Complex is expected to begin in late summer. It is anticipated that students will be in the updated facility by the fall of

2014. Displaying a picture of students having fun last year during a water balloon fight, Benoit reminded faculty that it is the students that make all the college's efforts worthwhile.

"We're here because these students are here," he said. "We want to continue to give them a good education. I think we provide them some excellent opportunities for their future."

You can follow Nathan Johnson on Twitter at twitter.com/AnInlandVoyage

