

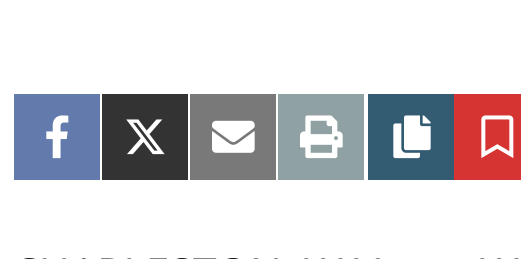
TOP STORY

West Virginia University requests funding for aging infrastructure, Coliseum renovations

By Faithlyn Graham STAFF WRITER 8 hrs ago 3 min to read



WVU President Michael Benson, center, gifts hats and a flag to members of WVU Extension, including Dean of Extension Services Jorge Atiles, right. Staff photo by Faithlyn Graham



CHARLESTON, W.Va. — West Virginia University President Michael Benson visited the House of Delegates Finance Committee on Tuesday to outline the university's financial needs and priorities for Fiscal Year 2026.



Benson

Benson focused much of his presentation on three major areas: deferred maintenance across WVU's aging campus infrastructure, expansion of health sciences programs and renovations to the WVU Coliseum.

Many of WVU's campus buildings, including Stewart Hall, date back more than a century and are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

"Stewart Hall, where my office is, was built in 1902. It's one of 18 structures that we have on campus that are on the National Register of Historic Places," Benson said. "... And so we're very appreciative of any assistance you can give as we address the aging infrastructure that is all around us. They're beautiful buildings."

Benson said aging infrastructure, including leaky roofs and outdated systems, poses ongoing challenges and requires sustained investment to preserve the university's historic facilities.

Health sciences expansion was also emphasized as a statewide priority.

Benson noted West Virginia's consistently poor health outcomes and said increased investment would allow WVU Medicine, alongside partners such as Marshall University and the state's osteopathic medical school, to expand facilities and class sizes while attracting additional federal and private funding.

"I referred to it earlier yesterday — the budget bill was passed — in it were the following federal support for these projects: \$15 million for phase two of our School of Dentistry renovation, \$11.9 million for the RNI Neuromodulation Center ..., " he said, referring to the WVU Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute. "Also \$2.45 million for a new emergency room renovation at the WVU Medical Center."

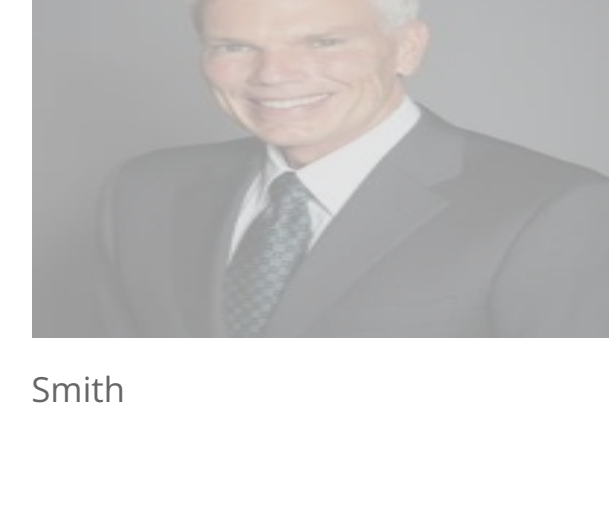
Benson also highlighted the need for renovations to the WVU Coliseum, an iconic structure that lacks HVAC capabilities.

"So whether it's a high school tournament or a concert or a lecture, that building, because of the heat, basically sits unused," he said. "So we would love some support for that."

In addition to infrastructure needs, WVU officials expressed appreciation for recent state investments, including funding for deferred maintenance, research initiatives and controlled increases to PEIA costs, which they said provided relief to both the university's operating budget and its employees.

Following WVU's presentation, Marshall University President Brad D. Smith addressed the committee, outlining Marshall's enrollment growth, financial stabilization efforts and long-term transformation strategy focused on affordability, workforce readiness and economic impact.

Committee members questioned Benson and Smith regarding their schools' debt, student food insecurity and infrastructure needs.



Smith

Del. Ray Canterbury, R-Greenbrier, questioned Benson about bond debt.

"According to the Higher Education Policy Commission, West Virginia University has bonds outstanding of \$723.8 million; with unamortized bond premium — \$747.9 million," Canterbury said. "Which is actually quite high on this per-student basis; benchmark you against your nearest peer, which would be Marshall. ... Your debt load for your institution is almost \$30,000 per student."

Benson answered by elaborating on how over the next three years the debt is expected to decline considerably, and he ensured lawmakers the debt will not become a problem of the state.

"If you look at kind of the next several years, ... we're going to pay down some of that considerably," Benson said. "We're very mindful of putting the burden of cost on our students in the form of tuition and fees."

Del. Margitta Mazzocchi, R-Logan, questioned Smith regarding what he plans to do about the number of students on Marshall's campus who struggle with food insecurity.

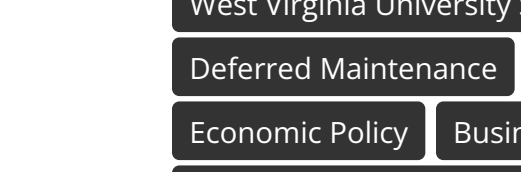
"And I don't know if you know, but we had a bill lately where people say that there are students that go hungry. And I wonder, can you all take care of it, or do you need us legislators to come and say you need to do something about it — that there are students that go hungry," Mazzocchi said. "And I don't want to be involved here in saying you have to do it, but we are talking about all this money here. Can you take care of it?"

Smith responded by outlining programs the university has begun implementing, including Marco's Marketplace, which partnered with food banks to help the 67% of students on Marshall's campus who are struggling with food insecurity.

"We have it stocked, and we've made it in a situation where you don't walk out with a stigma. You can literally go in, you can get things that you need," Smith said.

Reaction bar with emojis: 😄, 😊, 😐, 😞, 😡

Star rating: ★★★★★ (0 Ratings)



Tags: West Virginia University, Economy, Debt, Finance, Politics, Infrastructure, Economies, Hope Coliseum, Tuition Payments, Bond (finance), Marshall University, Food Security, Political Economy, Public Policy, Money, Public Economics, Social Policy, Public Sphere, Public Finance, University, Investment, Public Sector, Budget, Government, Social Issues, Government Finances, Policy, United States, Economy Of The United States, West Virginia University School Of Medicine, Health, Education, Fee, Virginia, Deferred Maintenance, Food Bank, West Virginia, Medical School, Macroeconomics, Private Sector, Economic Policy, Business, Emergency Department, Osteopathic Medicine In The United States, Society Of The United States, Renovation, Workforce, Macroeconomic Policy, National Register Of Historic Places, Research, Public Services, Liability (financial Accounting), Economic Problems, Governance, Health Care, Political Science, Public Administration, Committee, Social Programs, Academia, Higher Education, Business Economics, Neuromodulation (medicine), Trade, Tertiary Education, World Economy, Decision-making, Economics, Health And Politics, Concert, Poverty, Educational Stages, Organization, Economy Of North America, Cost, Federal Government Of The United States, Economic Development, Lecture, Architecture, Fiscal Policy, Food, Dentistry, Education Economics, Executive Branch Of The Government Of The United States, Natural Environment, Social Institutions, Culture, Health Economics, Presidencies Of The United States, Personal Finance, Politics Of The United States, Education Finance, Canterbury, Housing, United States Economic Policy, Humanitarian Aid, Distribution Of Wealth, Financial Law, Campus, Financial Problems, Service Economy, Medicine, Financial Markets, Charity, Monetary Economics, Government Spending, Public Law, Sustainability, Heat, Schools Of Economic Thought, Health Policy, North America, Buildings And Structures, Planning, Tenures In American Political Offices, Economy And The Environment, Service Industries, Technology, Society Of North America, Presidency Of The United States, Credit, Family Economics, International Relations, Payments, Macroeconomic Problems, Market (economics), Economy Of Europe, Economic Crises, Universities And Colleges, Progress, Construction, Economic Events, United States Federal Budgets, Hunger, Financial Services, United States Federal Policy, Branches Of Science, Aid, International Development, Business Cycle, Services (economics), Microeconomics, Financial Crises, Real Estate, Sustainable Development, Management, Economy Of Asia, International Economic Organizations, Wealth, International Trade, Food Politics, Financial Accounting, Malnutrition, Disasters, Social Movements, Economic Law, United States Government Budgets, Environmental Movements, Government Debt, Social Influence, Intergovernmental Organizations, Demographic Economics, Change, Social Crises, Economic Ideologies, Interdisciplinary Subfields, Law, Food And The Environment

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