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Tim Brower shows the Colorado Mesa University Unconventional Energy Center Endowment Committee around the Archuleta Engineering labs at the Western Colorado Community College on Friday.

\$3.2M gift energizes university

Committees deciding which unconventional energy projects to fund

By GARY HARMON

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The effort to make Colorado Mesa University an epicenter for unconventional energy development is taking a step forward as committees are visiting the campus to gauge the kinds of projects they will fund.

Colorado Mesa University has a \$3.2 million endowment. It will use proceeds from the endowment to fund projects aimed at advancing energy develop-

ment of all kinds.

The effort is intended to foster a relationship between industry and the university, said Derek Wagner, director of special projects and strategic initiatives for the university.

"It also gives our students the chance to get some hands-on research" during their academic careers, Wagner said.

Wagner on Friday led the committee that will handle applications for applied scientific

projects through a series of labs in Wubben Hall on the main campus and in the Archuleta Engineering Building on the Western Colorado Community College campus.

He will conduct a similar tour on Tuesday with a committee that will evaluate proposals for workforce development.

One committee member, Bob Loucks, a veteran of the oil shale industry, noted that the university's X-ray fluorescent

spectrometer could have an immediate application.

"We always wondered if the shale contained rare earths," Loucks said.

Rare earths are used in high-tech electronics, and China, with some of the world's largest deposits, is halting their export.

Committee members wanted to see the kinds of laboratory and research facilities available before they consider projects for funding, Wagner said.