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NEWS RELEASE

Sept. 30, 2009

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WEB SITE OFFERS HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT UM'S MEMORIAL ROW

MISSOULA —

Twenty-nine Ponderosa pines stand in two columns to form Memorial Row on the north side of The University of Montana campus in Missoula.

The living memorial's history stretches back to 1919, when 32 trees were planted and an Arbor Day ceremony was held to honor men and women with UM connections who died in service during World War I.

A new Web site at <http://umt.edu/memorialrow>, designed and built by UM School of Journalism Assistant Professor Ray Fanning, blends text, archival photographs and audio and video clips to tell the story of the memorial and the people it honors. The site includes background on the Student Army Training Corps on campus, as well as information and interviews about the flu pandemic in Montana and the origins of World War I.

"Memorial Row is right outside my office window," Fanning said, "but it never made much of an impression until a colleague showed me a short article about it in the Montanan magazine."

Fanning then started digging through material in UM's Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library Archives and Special Collections to learn about the University during World War I.

“I was surprised to learn that there had been an Army training camp on campus, and that more than half of those honored by the memorial had died as a result of (the 1918 influenza epidemic) rather than combat,” Fanning said.

Fanning would like people to have a better appreciation for the trees and what they represent the next time they walk through Memorial Row.

Each tree originally had a nameplate at its base, he said. Now more than half of them are missing.

“I haven’t found a lot of information on some of the honorees, but others, including Paul Dornblaser, Hazel Yoder and Marcus Cook have very interesting stories,” Fanning said.

He hopes that some of those who view the new Web site will contribute additional information to help the site grow.

For more information or to share possible contributions for the site, call Fanning at 406-243-4747 or e-mail ray.fanning@umontana.edu.

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