



Friday, -

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## For just a few dollars more

When Scott Ferguson, president of United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, observed Monday that “it’s to there,” he could have been referring strictly to the area his organization serves, or to the whole recession-s country. The “out there” where things are tough encompasses a lot of territory and a lot of people.

Ferguson has an especially tough job right now: trying to raise funds for the agencies and people United W at a time when funds are in short supply and funds most people can spare for charity even shorter. In fact, I told Ledger-Enquirer staff writer Larry Gierer that this has been the hardest fundraising year of the 20 he’s this.

And that’s in Columbus, a famously generous community.

One of the problems is rising unemployment. Most of United Way’s contributions come in the form of pledge up into payroll deductions; when people fall off the payroll, that source dries up. Somebody who has been help is now in need of it.

As of the start of this week, United Way was projecting an \$80,000 shortfall, based on the fact that about \$ of the \$6.9 million goal has been collected.

To avert that shortfall, some anonymous donors, both corporate and individual, have put up a \$40,000 chal and are asking the community to match it.

This has been done before, most recently in 2003. But economic conditions were not nearly as dire then as now, and a shortfall could mean that some United Way programs would have to be cut back. Abbot Turner, chairman and a former chairman of the board of the local Easter Seals chapter (a United Way agency), put we don’t hit the goal, people may very well go without vital services.” United Way appropriations for the 56 26 different area agencies are based on those goals.

We’ve noted before, in more than one editorial or column, that it is precisely those times when giving is har is most needed. This is one of those times, and things are indeed tough out there.

Perfect choice

There could be nobody more deserving of having a building at Columbus Technical College bear his name late Webster G. “Griff” Hartline. As of this Friday, the school’s current administration building will do just the

Hartline, who died in 2004, led the school for more than 17 years and was associated with it for 30. He can Columbus Tech in 1965, just four years after the school opened, and was named its director in 1978; the tit changed to president when it became Columbus Technical Institute in 1987.

At the time of Hartline’s death, then-Mayor Bob Poydasheff said of the education leader that he “saw what could be, just as he saw what Columbus Tech could be.”

The dedication ceremony begins Friday at 10:30 a.m.

— Dusty Nix, for the editorial board

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