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## State will allocate money for Spokane medical school

OLYMPIA — The Legislature will release a Capital Budget for 2011-13 Wednesday morning that will include some \$3 billion in large construction projects for the next two years.

Among the projects, sources said, is some \$35 million to start construction of a new Medical School in Spokane at the Riverpoint Campus. The money would be available in the first year of the two-year budget cycle, and represents about half the estimated cost of the building project. Request for the second year will have to be pursued in 2012.

The med school has been the top priority of the current legislative session for Greater Spokane Inc., other political and business leaders and some area legislators. It was not included in Gov. Chris Gregoire's initial Capital Budget released in December.

Senate leaders and a member of the House Republican caucus announced Tuesday afternoon a deal on had been reached on a Capital budget that will include \$1.1 billion in bonded projects and \$1.7 billion in projects funded by other revenues. They said a list of projects wouldn't be available until Wednesday morning.

As part of the agreement over the capital budget, legislators also agreed to set up a new Blue Ribbon Commission to study the level of debt the state faces and educate the public on the connection between the Capital Budget, which sells bonds, and the operating budget, which pays those bonds off. It will also lower the state's debt limit, by statute. The Senate had originally called for a constitutional amendment to lower the debt limit.