



News Release

Contacts: Robert T. Tad Perry, Executive Director
tadp@sdbor.edu

Janelle Toman, Director of Information & Institutional Research
janellet@sdbor.edu

T: 605.773.3455

F: 605.773.5320

www.sdbor.edu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, May 13, 2005

Higher Ed System Stands Ready to Assist Ellsworth

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota’s public university system stands ready to assist Ellsworth Air Force Base in the wake of its announced closing by the Department of the Defense.

“Not only is Ellsworth an important partner in bringing higher education services to western South Dakota, but we also recognize the significant impact this base’s closing would have on communities and individuals all across the state,” said Regents Executive Director Robert T. Tad Perry. Ellsworth hosts an off-campus higher education center that delivers college courses and programs, primarily from Black Hills State University.

Perry noted that today’s list of recommended base closures and realignments is only the first step in the formal process to identify affected installations. The Pentagon’s timeline by which to initiate closures and realignments is fall 2007 and the process must be completed no later than fall of 2011. “This timeline allows us to carefully plan and initiate appropriate services,” Perry said. “If Ellsworth ultimately remains on the DoD list, we have asked our campuses to gear up to provide whatever assistance we can during the closure process.”

“We are available to assist airmen, their spouses and dependents, and civilian base employees who may seek new careers or specific educational services during this transition,” Perry said. In addition, South Dakota’s higher education system can quickly respond to the needs of local economic developers and business leaders. “We know that the region’s business and community leaders will work on long-term solutions to this challenge,” Perry said. “Public higher education certainly can and will be a partner in that process.”