

Synopsis: Construction will begin next spring in northwest Sioux Falls on a permanent location for the state's public university system. Classes and programs will be offered to students from all six public universities. Planning under way now contemplates constructing two buildings—a graduate education and applied research (GEAR) center and a classroom building—to be ready for occupancy in fall 2008.

Planning is well under way for construction at the new permanent location in Sioux Falls for the South Dakota public university system. The site in northwest Sioux Falls, near interstates 29 and 90, will enable students to take courses or enroll in certain academic programs offered by all six public universities.

On March 9, 2006, Gov. Mike Rounds signed House Bill 1238 and House Bill 1244. One of the bills, HB 1238, authorized the South Dakota Board of Regents to accept a \$5.8 million grant from the Great Plains Education Foundation for the purpose of acquiring 263 acres of land from the state Department of Transportation. The other, HB 1244, provided \$8 million in state funds for the construction of a classroom building on the site.

Immediate plans in Sioux Falls call for construction of two buildings—the \$8 million classroom building authorized by the 2006 Legislature and a \$6.3 million center for graduate education and applied research, which has come to be known as the GEAR Center. The GEAR Center is funded by \$4.3 million in federal earmarks and \$2 million from the state's Higher Education Facilities Fund (HEFF). In 2005, the Legislature authorized the GEAR center and a classroom building in Sioux Falls as part of the regents' 10-year capital plan. A second phase of classroom construction, part of the 2005 capital plan, will occur when finances and student demand permit.

The planning activities currently under way contemplate constructing both the GEAR Center and the classroom building on roughly the same timetable. This is the anticipated timeline for planning, design, bid, and construction:

- **August 2006** Complete planning activities
 - Site master plan
 - GEAR program plan
 - Classroom building program plan
- **September 2006** Select design team
- **February 2007** Complete design and bid documents
- **March 2007** Select contractor
- **April 2007** Begin construction
- **Fall 2008** Occupy buildings

Three planning committees are working in parallel throughout summer 2006 to meet these deadlines. Mark Lee, executive dean of USDSU at Sioux Falls, serves on all three committees:

1. The **Site Master Plan Committee** handles macro-level issues related to initial and future development of the site. This includes locating initial and future buildings, developing an architectural style, choosing acceptable building materials, and setting appropriate quality standards. This committee is chaired by Regents Executive Director Tad Perry and includes members of the Board of Regents.
2. The **GEAR Program Plan Committee** investigates and plans for the type of research space that should be built into the first phase of the GEAR Center. GEAR will, over time, become a multi-phase building based on demand for additional research space. University of South Dakota President James Abbott chairs this committee, which includes research administrators from the partner campuses as well as a Sioux Falls community representative.
3. The **Classroom Building Program Plan Committee** is charged with developing the facility plan for academic facilities that will be built on the new site. This is particularly challenging since USDSU will be operating out of its existing facilities on the Southeast Technical Institute campus as well as the new site until such time as it is viable to consolidate. Executive Dean Mark Lee chairs this committee, which includes academic personnel from the partner campuses and USDSU.

The Board of Regents has engaged *TSP Inc.* to assist with master planning and executing the classroom building program plan. *George, Henry, George Partners* was chosen to assist in the GEAR Center planning, based on the firm's experience and expertise in the area of research facilities and parks.

The Office of the State Engineer will help identify the best design team for these initial projects. It is the Board of Regents' plan to have one design team handling both the GEAR Center and classroom building to achieve maximum consistency and efficiency.

