



# News Release

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## **SDSU and EROS Commit to Collaborative Research**

ABERDEEN, S.D. – South Dakota State University and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) have teamed up to expand and enhance research and educational opportunities available in geographic information science. The South Dakota Board of Regents Thursday approved creating the Geographic Information Science Center of Excellence, a major research, teaching, and service center that incorporates the combined strengths of SDSU and EROS Data Center scientists and scholars in a collaborative program.

“This center builds on SDSU’s expertise in geography and geographic information sciences and our long history of collaboration with the EROS Data Center,” said SDSU President Peggy Miller. The EROS Data Center is the premier USGS geographic analysis and monitoring research facility, with a focus on documenting and understanding the changing Earth by utilizing geographic information science. EROS employs about 600 government and contract employees at its facility near Sioux Falls.

The plan calls for SDSU faculty and students and EROS scientists to carry out collaborative research, professional development, and educational experiences at levels that achieve worldwide recognition of scientific excellence. Geographic information science is an emerging scientific field devoted to managing Earth’s resources. Some areas of emphasis are remote sensing, geographic information systems, geography, cartography, aerial photo interpretation, engineering and land surveying, environmental sciences, and landscape architecture.

Almost one-quarter of EROS Data Center employees are graduates of South Dakota public universities. The majority of those employees are graduates of SDSU, with majors in geography, computer science, and electrical engineering. Through the Center of Excellence, SDSU and EROS scientists, scholars, and students will expand applied scientific research, increase instructional possibilities, attract more users of research results, and work with businesses and users at the state, national and international level.

“The center is an important expansion of our historically strong alliance with SDSU,” said R.J. Thompson, USGS EROS Data Center chief. “The collective vision of South Dakota political and education leaders to expand the state’s research capabilities will pay dividends for years to come. This innovative venture will further elevate USGS and SDSU science programs and together we will be a national and international force in geographic information science.”

“This center is really about South Dakota’s future,” said Regents President Harvey C. Jewett. “By its design and actions, this new center will be a research, academic, and economic vehicle for South Dakota. EROS needs an ongoing pool of trained scientists and scholars to maintain and grow its programs. At the same time, South Dakota students will have the opportunity to obtain a professional education that enables them to compete with their very best counterparts in the world.”