



News Release

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University Research Centers Pump \$40 Million Into State Economy

RAPID CITY, S.D. – In their first two years of operation, South Dakota’s four original 2010 research centers reported a \$40 million economic impact from a state investment of \$5.4 million.

At Gov. Mike Rounds’ request, the Legislature in 2004 funded specialized research on public university campuses leading to commercialization of new ideas or products. The first four research centers were created in infectious disease research and vaccinology, signal transduction, nanoscale applications, and light-activated materials. A fifth center for bioprocessing research and development was created last June, and Gov. Rounds has recommended starting up a sixth center for research in drought tolerant crops.

“Building a research culture in South Dakota is one of the board’s highest priorities,” said Dr. Scott Meyer, the regents’ system vice president for research. Meyer reported that in addition to the 2010 research centers, other significant progress is being made on the state’s research initiative:

- Six new doctoral programs have been approved, and four more are in the final planning stages;
- \$900,000 in individual research seed grants were awarded to faculty members at South Dakota public universities in 2006 and 2007;
- Grant awards were received from the National Science Foundation’s EPSCoR program (\$6.5 million and \$2.4 million in funding) and the National Institutes of Health’s IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (\$16 million);
- External funding in the regents’ system is at a record level: \$86.9 million in FY06 compared to \$55 million a year earlier.

The Board of Regents heard reports Wednesday from the 2010 research centers on their progress. Total value of grants awarded to the centers now exceeds \$27.8 million.

Among the developments reported by the 2010 research centers:

- Bioadhesive materials developed by researchers at the **Center for the Research and Development of Light-Activated Materials** are being shared with a major medical device company, which is investigating use of the material to seal incisions made in the eye. Research under way at this center is harnessing light energy to transform it into new chemical bonds, signals, electricity, and ultra-thin films that impart exceptional hardness,

with the potential to impact the health care, environmental remediation, and energy industries.

- Sponsored research projects are in progress at the **Center for Infectious Disease Research and Vaccinology** involving several private companies, including Novartis Animal Health, Alpharma, Tetracore, Rural Technologies, and Chronix Biomedical. A new company—Brookings Biomedical Inc.—has evolved due to the expertise of one of the center’s investigators. The center’s research focuses on developing therapeutic and diagnostic technologies and products for infectious diseases in humans and domestic animals.
- The **Center for Accelerated Applications at the Nanoscale** has formed a second research project in conjunction with Pacer Corp. of Custer, a leading producer of high quality muscovite mica and potash feldspar mined in the Black Hills. The center’s primary research is focused on applied development and research in nano-materials for radio frequency antennas and electronics and functional polymer composites with clays and minerals.
- Grant requests worth more than \$24 million were submitted this year to the National Institutes of Health and the American Diabetes Association by researchers at the **South Dakota Signal Transduction Center**. Cardiovascular disease and cancer are the most frequent causes of death in today’s society, and research under way at this center examines the pathways that regulate cell growth and differentiation, cell death, response to stress, and the maintenance of constant physiological conditions.
- Faculty members on staff at the new **Center for Bioprocessing Research and Development** are supporting KL Process Design Group in its development of a novel wood-to-ethanol process. KL plans to start up an industrial pilot facility in 2007. The center is also assisting VeraSun Energy, a Brookings company, in its efforts to develop additional products from its corn processing facilities.