



News Release

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Regents Launch Statewide Town Meetings This Fall

PIERRE, S.D. – Members of the South Dakota Board of Regents will hit the road in September to launch a series of town meetings statewide on public higher education.

The first of what will be 15 to 20 of these meetings will be held Tuesday, Sept. 11, at the Mobridge School Theater, hosted by District 23 lawmakers. The event begins at 7 p.m. Representatives of the Board of Regents, its staff, and public university presidents will be on hand to visit with area residents.

Other town meetings are Sept. 12 in Yankton and Sept. 13 in Vermillion. Additional meetings are confirmed for October and November, with several more locations still being planned.

This year's meetings take on a sense of added urgency due to recent announcements involving the deep underground lab project at Homestake and the new investments in health care and medical research made possible by T. Denny Sanford's donation, said Robert T. Tad Perry, the regents' executive director.

"These developments help position South Dakota to become a major player in the knowledge-based economy," Perry said. "I liken this defining point in time to what our country experienced after the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957. Sputnik changed everything, and it caught the world's attention. As a state, how we respond to this latest call for new technological and scientific developments becomes our own version of Sputnik."

Ideas exchanged at the town meetings this fall will help South Dakota's public universities plan for the future. "These town meetings are an important part of what we do every couple of years—go into local communities across the state, find out what is on people's minds, and exchange ideas," Perry said. "We have been doing these since 2001, with local legislators serving as our hosts. We welcome the public's participation."