



# News Release

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## **Research Center Investigates Light Energy Uses in Medical Applications**

PIERRE, S.D. – A new 2010 research center at South Dakota State University aims to develop cutting-edge and high-demand tools for biomedical research, and will achieve that goal by using photochemical technologies to analyze cell functions and pathways.

“Exciting developments are under way using applications of electromagnetic energy to repair living tissue and allow cell growth for medical applications,” said Gov. Mike Rounds. “To further explore this field, new tools are needed that will use light to analyze and manipulate biochemical pathways within living cells. This new center brings together several highly-respected researchers engaged in complementary research, with the goal of creating medically useful drugs, therapies, and technologies,” the governor said.

The Center for the Biological Control and Analysis by Applied Photonics is under the direction of Dr. Ronald Utecht (YOO’-tek). Photonics is the science of generating, controlling, and detecting visible light particles. Utecht, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at SDSU, is also involved in the work of another 2010 center that focuses on developing light-activated materials.

“We are excited to welcome a South Dakota-centered research program that sits at the crossroads of new developments in chemistry, physics, and biology,” said Robert T. Tad Perry, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Regents. “The research work within this center is strongly supported by current funding agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health,” Perry said.

Secretary Richard Benda of the Department of Tourism and State Development said the goal of the research center is for universities to collaborate with private industry, offering students the opportunity to gain valuable work experience that will hopefully lead to employment here in South Dakota. “It will provide the emerging biomedical industry in South Dakota with a well-trained workforce,” Benda said. “Creating new intellectual property around these technologies also helps these companies to grow.”

The state previously established seven 2010 research centers to grow South Dakota’s economy by targeting investments in specialized research at the public universities. State resources supported these centers in their first five years of operation, after which they were to become self-sufficient and sustained only through outside funding. State funds that supported four original centers can now be directed to this and similar research initiatives, with no additional funds needed to support the new center.