



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Avera Invests in the Future of University Center

Sioux Falls, SD, (Feb. 8, 2008) – University Center announces that Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center has made a \$500,000 investment in the new campus in Sioux Falls. The money is considered an investment in generations of future UC students and health care professionals to serve the community and the region.

The investment from Avera McKennan represents the first public/private partnership of its kind for University Center and will be directed to the building of a high technology lecture hall.

Avera Hall will be a 125 seat auditorium including state-of-the-art technology and modern furnishings. Avera Hall will be available for groups, forums and meetings in the Sioux Falls area as a site where people can gather to discuss issues affecting the community. In addition to Avera Hall, the investment will also be used to support programmatic funds for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and potential student scholarships.

“We are gratified that an organization as caring as Avera McKennan Hospital has decided to invest in the wellbeing of University Center, our community and our students,” said Mark Lee, executive dean of University Center. “They aren’t just helping us create a new learning center, they’re helping educate students, who will eventually go out and become a part of the South Dakota workforce. Avera McKennan has an important vision of the future, and we’re thankful they’ve backed that vision with immense generosity,” Lee continued.

The new building will serve students in every stage of professional development as they pursue academic achievement and become valuable resources to the community and the region. University Center will develop the professionals needed in the business sector and the health care industry as well as continuing education and development.

“Avera recognizes the significance of these facilities in Sioux Falls. Our goal is to invest in educating students who will have an impact in health care and the future of our city, state and region,” said Fred Slunecka, regional president at Avera McKennan Hospital. “University Center is an increasingly important resource for the intellectual capital we need as an organization and community as we continue to grow and develop.”

University Center also promotes lifelong learning through noncredit programs as well as the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). The goal of OLLI is to create an intellectually challenging learning environment so that older adults from all backgrounds and levels of education are able to pursue learning simply for the joy of it.

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“We hope to change the face of aging by providing learning experiences which keep people engaged and thus healthier,” according to Lee

University Center is developing its new facilities in northwest Sioux Falls just south of 60th Street and west of Interstate 29 where the Board of Regents owns about 260 acres. Two buildings are under construction including a 60,000 square-foot classroom building and a 21,000 square-foot research building both scheduled to be completed by December 2008. University Center enrolled an all-time high of 2,089 students in the fall 2007 semester.

About University Center

South Dakota Public Universities & Research Center or University Center provides the greater Sioux Falls community with convenient local access to public higher education programs from in-state partner Universities. University Center offers programs from the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, Dakota State University and Northern State University. At University Center the focus is on the adult learner and academic programs and courses that foster and support the economic development of the Sioux Falls area. Over the course of a year 3,500 students take classes at University Center and the campus is home to over 50 degree programs.

About Avera McKennan Hospital

Our ministry, our people and our superior value distinguish Avera. We carry on the health care legacy of the Benedictine and Presentation Sisters, delivering care in an environment guided by our values of compassion, hospitality and stewardship. Avera McKennan colleagues work for the largest health system in the region. The Avera network has some 12,000 employees and physicians, serving 231 locations and 81 communities in a five-state region. Inpatient and clinic visits totaled 1.8 million in the last fiscal year, a number equal to nearly twice the population of the Avera service area.

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