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University Center to Break Ground on GEAR Center, Classroom Building

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (Aug. 24, 2007) – The South Dakota Public Universities and Research Center, University Center, is hosting a groundbreaking ceremony at its new site at 60th Street North and North Career Avenue in Sioux Falls at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Aug. 29.

Gov. Mike Rounds, the South Dakota Board of Regents, the mayor of Sioux Falls and Executive Dean Mark Lee will be in attendance as the community officially dedicates construction of its newest facilities devoted to continued education and research in South Dakota. The project includes construction of the new \$6.3 million Center for Graduate Education and Applied Research (GEAR) and a \$15.7 million classroom building. The GEAR Center will be 21,000 square feet and home to new research activities that will establish a new level of economic development for the community. The classroom facility, meanwhile, will be nearly 60,000 square feet and house classrooms, a 24-seat physics lab, computer labs, an art classroom, offices, study alcoves and a journalism studio. The buildings are connected by an overhead link containing study areas, and they are scheduled to open by fall of 2008.

“This ceremonial groundbreaking is really the culmination of years of work by visionary leaders who see the need for public higher education in South Dakota’s largest and fastest growing community,” said Lee, Ed.D., Executive Dean, University Center. “The development of these facilities is truly historic. Never before has the state of South Dakota held land or owned buildings dedicated to public higher education in Sioux Falls.”

In addition to breaking ground at the new University Center site, Wednesday’s ceremony will feature an address from Gov. Rounds along with comments and observations by Regents’ President Harvey Jewett and Sioux Falls Mayor Dave Munson.

University Center offers a unique model for higher education delivery as it is currently a partnership of five South Dakota universities – The University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, Dakota State University, Northern State University and Black Hills State University – providing programs that meet the needs of local citizens and organizations. Since the fall of 2001, the number of students attending classes at University Center has increased by 78 percent while in the past five years, the number of courses offered at University Center has grown from 470 to more than 650.

For more information about the groundbreaking ceremony or the new University Center facilities, please contact Lee at (605) 367-5380.



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