

Research park director reports to council

■ McKnight offers update on Innovation Campus

By JILL FIER
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Teresa McKnight, director of the Innovation Campus at South Dakota State

University, met with Brookings city councilors on Tuesday to give them an update on the research park.

McKnight previously was director of the research park at Utah State University and began her work in Brookings last December.

The research park, which officials say will eventually grow to occupy 125 acres, evolved from the efforts of the SDSU Growth Partnership, made up of individ-

uals from SDSU, the City of Brookings, Brookings County, the SDSU Foundation and private businesses.

McKnight said that since taking over her post from volunteer Bob Miller, she's been studying the campus' master plan.

One of her first changes was to redraw the map of the campus. Her goal was to maximize the amount of money the

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PARK: Work now under way on incubator building, roads

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research park could bring in by eliminating green space.

"So we redrew the map and we can actually bring in 29 buildings into the area rather than 19, which helps us maximize the revenue that we need to bring in to the campus," McKnight said.

Two buildings, a business incubator and a seed technology lab, will be the first to go up at the park.

Architectural design of the 30,000-square-foot incubator is now under way. The multi-tenant building will be owned by the Growth Partnership and is to include a rotunda that can accommodate community functions of

up to 125 people.

Officials are still working on funding the 70,000-square-foot seed technology building, to be owned by the state.

The best step for the research park now would be to get as much infrastructure in as possible.

McKnight said the Innovation Campus has three anchor tenants right now, but the only way to keep them is to get the park's roads, curb and gutter, sidewalks, drainage, sewer and water installed quickly.

Ideally, all infrastructure should be in first throughout the whole campus, at an estimated cost of \$5 million to the Innovation Campus.

Revenue could come by creating a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) district.

"We need to get the infrastructure in as quick as possible so that we're not losing businesses.

"Sure, it's going to be beneficial to the Innovation Campus. But it's more beneficial to the City of Brookings and Brookings County because of the job stimulation that will be created out of these companies coming into the research park, the salaries that will be generated out of there, the number of bodies that will be moving into Brookings, S.D., the children that will be brought into the school system, and from there it just ripples."