

# 'Exciting things happening' at new tech center

■ Innovation Center groundbreaking set for mid-October

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The Brookings Register

A bit more than a year down the road, the first building – the Innovation Center – of the Innovation Campus on 125 acres adjacent to South Dakota State University's main campus will be up and operational.

That was a key piece of the news about "exciting things happening" that Teresa McKnight, CEO and executive director of the SDSU Growth Partnership and Innovation Campus, brought to

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a work session of the Brookings City Council on Tuesday afternoon.



Teresa McKnight

The Innovation Center's construction will kick off with a groundbreaking ceremony in mid-October; the building, to be put up in two phases, should take about a year, with occupancy planned for October 2008.

With the assistance of a representative of Banner Associates Inc. using a three-dimensional electronic slide-show, McKnight showed councilors what the

interior of the Center would look like. Featured will be a "hall of fame and a wall of fame"; they will pay tribute to those who put their "blood, sweat and tears" into the Innovation Campus project.

She also reminded councilors of the importance of recognizing the Campus as a place with "a creation of use-mixes," where SDSU, business, industry and government come together. The Campus is also "a community partnership, ... a community effort," a public-private partnership of city, county, SDRII and residents.

McKnight zeroed in on how university research and development aid "transfer technology." That in turn leads to "technology commercialization."

She explained, "If I'm a researcher and I have an idea

and ... form a product, something that's tangible, something in hand, then I spin that out into the private market, either by forming a private company or by licensing that technology to a company.

"And those companies want to be right next door to that new research, those new ideas, those new technologies coming out of the university."

Those companies can in turn "create high-tech, high-quality jobs" that can play a key role in keeping SDSU's "best and brightest" students here in Brookings. They will want to raise their families and stay; "it just creates generation, after generation, after generation, and we don't lose that," McKnight said.

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