The Innovation Campus:
It's all about ‘the Power of the Place’

SDSU Innovation Campus on well-trodden path
By John Kimm
The Brookings Register

The Association of University Research Parks (AURP), a national organization with more than 200 members across the nation – the South Dakota State University Innovation Campus is one of them – has under way a national campaign: ‘The Power of Place.’ It’s not just about research parks – neither is it about the overall economic impact these parks have, much of that via the spinoff of entrepreneurial enterprises and economic development they engender.

As a spokesperson for where research parks have been and where they’re going, one has to look back to 1951 and Palo Alto, Calif., and Stanford University to appreciate the genesis of university research parks across the nation.

“The need for the beginning of research parks,” said Teresa McKnight, director and CEO of the South Dakota State University Innovation Campus and a member of the board of directors of the AURP. “Then the Research Triangle Park in North Carolina came on board, and the growth of research parks in the U.S. and around the world, has to look back to 1951 and Palo Alto, Calif., and Stanford University to appreciate the genesis of university research parks across the nation. Now we are in South Dakota.”

McKnight attributes South Dakota to be one of the most rural states in the nation, and when it comes to research and technology parks, it’s estimated research parks have about $2.96 million to fund a greenhouse facility. South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds pledged $2.96 million to fund a greenhouse facility.

But it’s not just about research parks – it’s all about the ‘location, location, location’ of real estate. A research park has to be that place where people, ideas and entrepreneurs walk together and empower entrepreneurs and scientists in the commercialization of their intellectual property.

People pay to the ‘power’ in the ‘place’

A research park’s ‘place’ is much more than the ‘location, location, location’ of real estate. A research park has to be that place where people, ideas and entrepreneurs walk together and empower entrepreneurs and scientists in the commercialization of their intellectual property.

People are the key to economic development and people need a place to innovate.

Research and technology parks provide the place where people can put their power into incubation. The results prove that by way of the creation of hundred thousands of high-paying, high-skilled jobs and intelligent property that start at home on American soil.

Within research parks are to be found a variety of entities – lots of different kinds, including: institutions of higher education; venture capitalists, angel investors; incubators; and government laboratories, with partnerships that promote technology transfer, research, business and economic growth.

“We have 125 acres, 32 parcels; some of those parcels are large enough for multiple buildings,” said McKnight.

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