Big plans for city, Tech

Tech eyes $14 million expansion

By Heidi Bell
Journal Staff Writer

South Dakota School of Mines & Technology is developing plans for a major campus renovation that would include a new High Plains Technology and Fine Arts Center, building additions and site improvements.

The project is still in the planning stages. Tech officials who soon begin "test marketing" the project, which would be mostly funded through the private sector.

Julie Sturmejewicz, Tech's director of university relations, said the first goal was to get a feel for which improvements people were interested in supporting.

She said the actual capital fundraising campaign would not kick off for at least 18 months, if the school decides to pursue it.

The project would not increase student fees.

The "Vision 2000" project includes plans for $15 million worth of private sector support for buildings, scholarships, research, and other items.

Included in that is $16 million for the capital improvements. Total capital improvements are estimated to cost $14 million. Smorejewicz said Tech hoped to pay the rest of the bill by leveraging into federal and state modernization funds and state money.

According to the February 1996 issue of Foundation Update, a Tech publication for alumni and friends of the university, a master plan for the school was completed in 1993. The plan is aimed at meeting short-range needs and providing for growth.

Last spring, the South Dakota Board of Regents approved Tech's request to obtain designs and cost estimates for that part of the master plan that involves the High Plains Technology and Fine Arts Center.

The addition would also provide conference and technology transfer center, an entry gallery and a new Environmental/Earth Systems Center.

Half-cent sales tax projects proposed

By Mark Andersen
Journal Staff Writer

A $10 million museum and $8.2 million indoor recreation center are the two big-ticket items on a list of eight proposed major Rapid City projects.

A task force of five Rapid City aldermen reached agreement Wednesday on proposed funding levels — which total $10 million — for the projects. They did not determine priorities.

Biggest among them are a $10 million museum downtown and an $8.2 million indoor recreation center to be shared by South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. The center would be on the Tech campus.

Other projects are: a household hazardous waste drop-off site, $800,000 contribution to the Rapid City YMCA's planned $2.8 million to $3.5 million renovation/expansion; $300,000 for parking lot paving and lighting at Fitzgerald Stadium; $1.5 million for the $2.6 million water-quality improvement project at Canyon Lake; $1.5 million for the $2.6 million water-quality improvement project at Canyon Lake; $1.5 million for the $2.6 million water-quality improvement project at Canyon Lake and $1.5 million for the $2.6 million water-quality improvement project at Canyon Lake.

Projects would be paid from the expected $50 million to be raised over seven years from a half-cent city sales tax. Voters approved extending the tax twice, most recently on Jan. 17.

Most projects would be funded providing space for classrooms, research, the Museum of Geology and the Institute of Atmospheric Sciences.

See Tech on page A2
Tax: YMCA may get funds

continued from page A1

from bonds. Others would be funded at the money comes in over the next seven years.

The spending package will be pre-

sented to the Legal and Finance
Committee Wednesday and go to the

Rich City Common Council March 6.

Members of the task force were

Aldermen C.C. "Buzz" Krapf, Karen
Balman, Tom Johnson, Vess "Babe"
Steinburg and Kenny Melzer.

While favoring the Tech recreation

center, Aldermen also agreed some

money should be given to the YMCA.

"The only way they (YMCA) can con-

tinue is if they get something new,
too," said city Finance Officer Rich-

ard Wheatstone.

If Ellsworth Air Force Base is tar-

geted for closure, the spending pack-

age might be reduced. An initial re-

port on whether a federal commis-

sion has chosen Ellsworth for closure

is expected to be released Tuesday.

Many of the eight projects have

been in development for years.

The Spirit of the Black Hills Mu-

nicipal Park has been proposed for 10

years. If the spending package is ap-

proved March 6, the museum could

be ready to open in May 1997.

The Canyon Lake water quality

improvement project is also ready.

Canyon Lake would be drawn down

after the irrigation season ends Oct.

15. Dredging, construction of an in-

land jetty and edge work there would

be completed before the irriga-

tion season begins in spring 1998.

Most discussion Wednesday fo-

cused on recreation center funding.

Aldermen struggled with two is-

sues: YMCA funding and the Tech

recreation center.

The Tech recreation center

would be built along with a large ex-

pansion planned by the school. (See

related story on page A1.)

Tech soon will begin to test markets

a fund-raising campaign for a major

expansion to its campus.

Part of its master plan for Tech’s

High Plains Technology and Fine

Arts Center includes a Campus Loop

Road behind the school. The road

would loop behind O’Hara Stadium

off East Main Street. Another road

would connect the loop to St. Patrick

Street.

The roughly $14 million project

would include many building addi-

tions and renovations.

Rapid City’s $8.2 million recreation

center would be built off the new

road next to the new Tech project.

City residents and students would

share the recreation center. A large

parking lot would be built off the

loop road at the building entrance.

Annual city operating costs would

be covered by a $300,000 per year

for a separate city recreation facili-

ty to about $100,000 at the shared

center.

The recreation center would in-

clude a swimming pool, field house,

aerobics center, racquetball courts,

weight room and more.

Aldermen said the Tech partnership

would save the city money, enhance

the partnership created during the

O’Hara Stadium renovation project

and help attract students to Tech.

Meanwhile, Aldermen also chose to

help the YMCA with its plans ex-

pansions.

YMCA officials told Aldermen $1

million had already been pledged to

its $2 million goal toward renovations

and additions. YMCA officials had

requested an additional $1.8 million

from Rapid City to complete its $3.8

million project.

Aldermen provided $800,000.

They said they would add the

YMCA’s projects except for an addi-

tional swimming pool.

Aldermen said they wanted to sup-

port the YMCA, which has many

other programs for poor and underpri-

vileged youth.

A city feasibility study said enough

recreation need existed to compete with

both recreation center expansions.

Enhancements to the YMCA would

enable it to compete with the new

recreation center at Tech.

The Tech recreation center could

be completed in 1998 at the earli-

est.