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SCSU Breaks Ground for \$32.5 Million Library for a New Century

ST. CLOUD, Minn. -- Education in Minnesota took a giant leap forward today with the ground breaking for a \$32.5 million high-tech library on the campus of St. Cloud State University (SCSU).

Governor Arne Carlson and Lt. Governor Joanne Benson joined SCSU President Bruce Grube and others to turn the first shovelsful of earth marking the start of construction. Actually, since the new 213,000 square-foot library will occupy most of two existing parking lots, President Grube broke asphalt with a jackhammer while others turned dirt with gold-colored shovels.

"This truly is a library for the new century," said President Grube. "It will be the largest library in the region, a high-tech hub linking Central Minnesotans to the technology essential for retaining a competitive edge in education and business."

The library is a central element to St. Cloud State's vision to become one of the top ten undergraduate universities of its type in the United States.

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The Minnesota legislature has provided \$30 million for "bricks and mortar," and private donors have contributed about \$2.5 million to date for technology and endowment.

The library, formally known as the Learning Resources and Technology Center, will be one-third larger than the current library building, which was constructed 27 years ago. It will have seating for 2,200 and will include 12 student study rooms, 6 electronic classrooms and an auditorium, plus 1,200 network connections and up to 700 computer workstations. Compact shelving will provide space savings for printed materials. The new learning resources center also will include climate-controlled archives, space for the Center for Holocaust Studies and a coffee shop. The library will serve regional partners that include K-12 school media centers, public libraries, college and university libraries and hospital libraries.

The new building, designed by Leonard Parker Associates, is expected to be ready for students by the fall of 2000.

Other special guests for the recognition and groundbreaking event included Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Chancellor Morrie Anderson, SCSU Foundation Board President Bob Hebeisen, Learning Resources and Technology Dean Kristi Tornquist, former Dean of Learning Resources and Technology John Berling, and SCSU Student Government President Amy Hanson.

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SCSU LAUNCHES CRUCIAL LIBRARY PROJECT



TIMES PHOTO BY PAUL MIDDLESTAEDT

After writing about the need for a new library on the campus of St. Cloud State University nearly 20 years ago, former dean of Learning Resource and Technology

John Berling had the pleasure Wednesday of taking part in the groundbreaking ceremonies for the \$32.5 million project.

Groundbreaking caps 20-year wait

Foundation soon to end fund-raising for its portion of \$32.5 million project

By John Molene
TIMES STAFF WRITER

John Berling had waited almost 20 years for this event — ever since he wrote in 1979 about the need for a new library. And he wasn't going to leave Wednesday's groundbreaking without a pretty good souvenir.

"Can I have one of these?" Berling asked, pointing to one of the golden shovels used to turn the dirt for the new \$32.5 million St. Cloud State University library.

"It was kind of like, will it ever happen?" said Berling, former dean of Learning Resources and Technology at St. Cloud State. "We've had our setbacks. We've stopped. We've moved forward. It's kind of been like the stock market, although hitting 9,000 doesn't come close to this.

"You don't see this many people at a groundbreaking," Berling said, acknowledging the crowd of several hundred. "What it is, is that it had the support of a lot of people."

Gov. Arne Carlson and Lt. Gov.

Joanne Benson joined St. Cloud State President Bruce Grube, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Chancellor Morrie Anderson and others to turn the first shovels of earth at the site.

While praising the start of construction, Carlson directed many of his comments to students.

"Ultimately, all this has no meaning unless it is embraced by the people it is designed for," Carlson said. "We can't give you an education. We can only give you the opportunities to seek an education."

St. Cloud contractor Donlar Corp. was the apparent low bidder for the project Tuesday, coming in with a bid of \$19.88 million. Construction of the 213,000-square-foot library is expected to begin within two weeks.

Donlar's bid was good news to Kristi Tornquist, dean of Learning Resources and Technology Services. Since the bid was about \$3 million below projections, the new library may be able to include items previously cut.

A group will meet in the next few days to consider items such as compact shelving for printed materials in all of the basement, and the addition of a basement under another of the library's wings, Tornquist said. Previously, \$9.5 million had been set aside



After helping make the new library a reality, former Vice President for University Relations Dorothy Simpson attended groundbreaking ceremonies along with a crowd of several hundred.

for interior work.

The library is expected to be completed by fall of 2000. The library will replace two central campus parking lots in front of the Performing Arts Center.

The Minnesota Legislature has provided \$30 million for the library project. Another \$2.5 million was to be raised by the university. SCSU Foundation Board President Bob Hebeisen said Wednesday 90 percent of the \$2.5 million had been raised.

"By the end of the month, I'm very confident we will have raised all of it," Hebeisen said.

The library is key to St. Cloud State becoming one of the top 10 undergraduate universities of its type in the United States, Grube said.

"I can't understate its importance," Grube said. "This is the building that will take us into the next millennium."

Former Vice President for University Relations Dorothy Simpson, another long-time proponent of the new library, said the groundbreaking brought relief and satisfaction.

"It's wonderful," Simpson said. "I'm searching for another word. Wonderful will have to do."

Simpson admitted the long process had been "very frustrating."

"It was tempting along the way to come out here with a pick ax," Simpson said. "We had other priorities, too, which we were working on. Each had to take their turn."

Clearwater firefighter's dismissal upheld