

U of M Engages Strategic Planners for UMORE Park's Future

MINNEAPOLIS / ST. PAUL (2/10/2006) -- The University of Minnesota Board of Regents awarded a contract today for strategic planning for the University of Minnesota Outreach, Research and Education Park (UMore Park), a 12-square-mile site 25 miles south of the Twin Cities near Rosemount.

The goal of the six-month strategic planning process is to create the vision and potential for a unique, world-class venue and resource that supports the academic mission of the university while contributing to the broader community.

The recommendations of Sasaki Associates, Inc., of Watertown, Mass., to be delivered by Nov. 30, 2006, will better inform university decision makers as they determine next steps to a comprehensive plan for the property. Strategic planning for UMore Park is a component of the university's effort to strategically position itself among the top three public research universities in the world.

"Sasaki Associates will help us formulate a long-term vision for this unique property at the suburban-rural edge of the metro area. With an area that is about the size of Edina, we need to lay a plan for 25 years of possibilities-- and do it right," said Charles Muscoplat, vice president and dean of the College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences. The university will engage with local jurisdictions and community members during this "idea-generating phase" of the process, Muscoplat said.

The U.S. government in 1947-1948 deeded the parcel of land, formerly used as a military plant to produce gunpowder, to the university on the condition that it be used for education and research for at least 30 years.

In a report to University President Robert Bruininks in September 2005, a committee led by Muscoplat recommended that the university hire a world-class consulting organization with the expertise to create a unique, multi-use, long-range plan for UMore Park. The committee called for timely action for this "once-ever" opportunity to steward the resource, given its location in a rapidly expanding metro area, its size, accessibility and single, public ownership. The committee also recommended that any income generated through UMore Park should be invested in academic priorities that will benefit future generations.

Sasaki Associates specializes in comprehensive projects that integrate planning and urban design, landscape architecture, architecture and environmental factors into physical, symbolic and economic goals. The firm



has completed projects for Auburn University, the Princeton Forrestal Center, Pennsylvania State University, University of South Carolina Research Park and other public and private entities.

UMore Park is the site of agricultural and other research projects, and community resources including horseback riding and cross-country skiing trails and a large ornamental garden. Visit www.umorepark.umn.edu for details.