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Mroz excited for research center

By Layla Aslani, DMG Writer

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HOUGHTON - At Thursday's Michigan Technological University Board of Control meeting, the board authorized the university to proceed with a number of construction projects. While President Glenn Mroz said he is excited for the planned new residence complex and new Design Center at the Keweenaw Research Center, as well as improvements to the John MacInnes Student Ice Arena, he said the Great Lakes Research Center is especially important.

"The Great Lakes Center is going to be a real strong strategic resource for us," he said Friday, explaining that the center will focus on themes such as water and the environment as well as materials and energy. "Having the Great Lakes Center is going to help us to do some different kinds of work than we have in the past."

Mroz anticipates the board will authorize the university to move forward with construction at its next meeting in May. If everything goes as planned, construction of the three-story building will begin on the university's waterfront in the early summer and be completed in the fall of 2010. The state has approved the \$25 million project, with the university paying for 25 percent or \$6.25 million. The building will include at least eight laboratories, Vice President for Governmental Relations Dale Tahtinen said.

"They'll be cutting-edge laboratories, very new concepts in laboratories," he said. "Having the Great Lakes Research Center is going to just open the possibility for even great amounts of federal research dollars and even private sector dollars because then our capability is so significantly enhanced."

Other research to be done at the center will focus on water systems and sewage disposal systems, with the research impacting systems both in the United States and abroad, Mroz said.

"The time is kind of right for a lot of work on public utility-type things, certainly because the developing world is building them really fast, but then we've got to replace them," he said.

Of course, Lake Superior will also be researched extensively.

"(Lake Superior research) will have applicability to the other Great Lakes and of course there's a huge emphasis now on fresh water, the Great Lakes are over 20 percent of the world's freshwater," Tahtinen said.

The building's final location is still being worked out, but Mroz said it will likely replace one of the million-gallon fuel tanks located between the water and the Dow Environmental Sciences & Engineering Building.

Layla Aslani can be reached at laslani@mininggazette.com.

Article Photos



Daily Mining Gazette/Layla Aslani
 Fuel tanks are seen along Michigan Technological University's waterfront. One will likely be replaced by the three-story Great Lakes Research Center. The university's Board of Control authorized the university to proceed with the project Thursday. The board will likely approve moving forward with construction at its next meeting at May, with construction to start in the early summer.



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