UNIVERSITY OF USI SOUTHERN INDIANA

NEWS RELEASE

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USI Board approves $30.5-million 1997-99 capital improvement budget

The University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees approved $30.5 million in capital improvements for the University's 1997-99 biennium at the July meeting held today at Clifty Falls State Park in Madison, Indiana.

The session was hosted by Board Secretary Thomas McKenna, a native of Madison. The historic community is a prominent component of Historic Southern Indiana Project (HSI), a USI initiative to preserve, develop, and promote the scenic and historical resources of southern Indiana. The Board was given an update on HSI activities.

The capital improvement request includes renovation of the Science Center and lower level of the Health Professions Center, $8 million; construction of a multipurpose classroom building, $18 million; construction of a wellness, fitness, recreation facility, $3.5 million; and general rehabilitation of campus buildings, including upgrading of restrooms and elevators to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and other projects, $975,000. State funding will be sought for all but the wellness/fitness facility which will be funded by user fees.

President H. Ray Hoops emphasized that the projects are needed to better serve the University's growing student population, which is projected to reach 8,887 students by the year 2000.

He said, "The University's first priority is the rehabilitation of the Science Center, which was built in 1969 as part of the first building on the campus, and completion of the lower level of the Health Professions Center, which was left unfinished when the building opened in early 1995. The completed work would provide improved laboratories, additional laboratories, and classroom space."

He continued, "In the past ten years, USI enrollment has increased by more than 90 percent from 4,025 students in the fall of 1985 to 7,666 students in the fall of 1995. The

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rapid growth has resulted in a serious deficit of laboratory, classroom, recreational, and office space. The budget request is designed to keep a minimum space deficit on this growing campus."

Board members reviewed the ten-year capital improvement plan which includes the above projects in the near-term along with a new child care center and student residence buildings; library expansion and a Physical Activities Center (PAC) addition in the mid-term; and a performing arts center in the long-term. The rehabilitation and new construction projects will be submitted to proper state agencies in the regular approval process.

In other business, the Board agreed to accept Murphy Auditorium from the Workingmen's Institute, the public library located in New Harmony, Indiana. Originally leased to the University, Murphy Auditorium serves as the main stage for The New Harmony Theatre, which is produced by USI.

The Board named the team of Hastings & Chivetta Architects, Inc., of St. Louis, Missouri, and Edmund L. Hafer & Associates Architects of Evansville to provide architectural services for the general purpose classroom building which the Indiana General Assembly approved in 1995.

In the Board's annual meeting, Bruce Baker of Boonville was re-elected chairman, a post he has held since 1992. Other officers include Charles S. Combs of Terre Haute, vice chairman for finance; Harolyn G. Torain of Indianapolis, vice chairman for long range planning; and Thomas McKenna of Carmel, secretary.

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