



The Valley

MSU president: Recreation facilities plan was moving too fast

By Robb Murray
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MANKATO — Minnesota State University President Richard Davenport says he put the brakes on a campus recreation facilities proposal because university officials hadn't discussed the possibility of joint ventures with other stakeholders, there hadn't been adequate student involvement and the \$22 million price tag was premature and imprecise.

The plan, which campus recreation and athletics officials unveiled several weeks ago and said would cost students about \$22 million, tentatively called for a student referendum to raise their student fees.

Davenport said there was sub-

stantial negative feedback from students who said they wouldn't support the plan, especially if it contained what was said to be a \$10 million ice sheet facility.



Richard Davenport reconsidered the plan after getting feedback.

"It just seemed to get started and move way too fast for my comfort level," Davenport said. "We didn't have in-depth discussions with the school district or the city ... And the cost estimates were not given to us by architects. I felt really uncomfortable with the figures." Project costs were estimated by university officials.

Davenport says that since announcing the plan was on hold, he's heard from many students and community members.

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MSU: Meeting planned

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"I've gotten tremendous feedback," he said. "I haven't had one person say it's a bad idea that you pulled back. I've also heard from people that they're not convinced that it's the way to go."

Davenport says he plans to meet with Mankato Area Public Schools Supt. Ed Waltman and Mankato City Manager Pat Hentges to discuss each entity's stake in an upgrade to recreation facilities on campus.

Some of the improvements in the plan still may happen.

Davenport said Athletic Director Kevin Buisman and Vice President of Finance and Administration Dean Trauger are trying to determine if new turf and an all-season bubble can be purchased for Blakeslee Stadium.