



The Valley

Rain forces Wisconsin town
to evacuate downtown

MSU showcases changes across campus

Renewable energy center unveiled

By Robb Murray
rmurray@mankatofreepress.com

MANKATO — A \$1.8 million, 6,300-square-foot renewable energy center at Minnesota State University finally got the ribbon cutting it had been waiting for Thursday.

Before a crowd of about 100 dignitaries, faculty, staff, students and a few random onlookers, MSU resident Richard Davenport and a host of others spoke about the vision and determination

that brought the center to campus.

The center, officially called the Center of Renewable Energy, has been in the works for years and is being heralded by Davenport as one of the things that sets MSU apart from other institutions within the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and within the Midwest.

"We are truly a unique university on the move,

Please see CENTER, Page B3



John Gross

Dignitaries huddled under tents to get out of the rain Thursday as they broke ground for a new residence hall. University officials hope to have it open by 2012. Across campus, the Center of Renewable Energy is up and running as a place for emissions and renewable energy research.

Continued from Page B1

looking for creative solutions to everyday problems," Davenport said.

Chris Frederick, a current MSU graduate student in engineering and member of the MnSCU Board, said he looks forward to the cutting-edge research sure to take place within the center.

And Brian Yoltz, MnSCU's associate vice chancellor for facilities, said, "It's kind of a small place, but the potential here is enormous."

The idea behind the center is to be a place where research can be done in the area of emissions testing and biofuel research. Inside the building, about 1,500 of its square footage will be dedicated to the International Renewable Energy Technology Institute (IRETI). About 4,800 will be dedicated to emissions testing.

Students, faculty members said, will be able to conduct renewable energy research in the facility.

IRETI will begin work primarily with Sweden, a worldwide leader in renewable energy research. To emphasize that point, Davenport, disregarding superstitions, popped open a yellow and blue umbrella bearing the IKEA logo (IKEA is a well-known, Sweden-based home furnishings company.)

The Center of Renewable Energy, with the clever acronym CORE, was a source of pride for lawmakers.

"This is something we can hang our hat on in southern Minnesota and be very proud of," said Sen. Julie Rosen, R-Fairmont.

"It's easy to talk about the future of higher education when you're talking about projects like this," said Sen. Kathy Sheran, D-Mankato.

"The bricks and mortar of this facility are truly a monu-

ment to tomorrow," said Rep. Kathy Brynaert, D-Mankato.

The center was funded by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Minnesota Department of Economic Development, the U.S. Department of Energy, Minnesota Corn Growers Association, Fagen, Inc., AgStar Financial and others.

HALL: Paid for with student fees

Continued from Page B1

suite-style facility that will provide 300 beds. It will be built next to the existing McElroy Hall. It will be the second new residence hall on the Minnesota State Mankato campus in the last two years.

In 2008, Julia A. Sears Hall opened, revolutionizing the state of residential living at MSU. The 608-bed facility earned immediate praise from students for its two-bedroom "semi-suite" floor plan, 10-foot ceilings and large windows with sweeping views of the campus mall and the

Minnesota River bluffs.

The new hall will have similar features, including individually controlled air conditioning and heating, tile floors and sound-resistant walls, loftable beds, dressers and desks with lockable drawers, upholstered office chairs, closets, plentiful electrical outlets and dual Internet, telephone and cable TV jacks.

It will also have several "green" features, including water-saving toilets in bathrooms.

Unlike academic or administration buildings, the university does not have to seek bonding

funds. Instead, residence halls are funded directly through fees paid by student residents.

Brett Anderson, vice president of MSU's student senate, said: "This new building is not another dormitory. This building is symbol of what the residential life experience provides to a student's total education — it is the embodiment of a building where students can both live and learn. It is new facilities like this hall that will allow MSU to continue to be the flagship education institution in the MnSCU system."

New residence hall digs in

By Robb Murray
rmurray@mankatofreepress.com

MANKATO — It was more of a "mud breaking" than a "ground breaking."

But the result — even as the sky dropped a few buckets of rain on the folks wearing hard-hats and golden ceremonial shovels — was the same: The task of constructing another new residence hall at Minnesota State University has officially begun.

The \$23.8-million, 118,000-square-foot residence hall is slated to open sometime in 2012, just about the same time the university will decommission the venerable Gage towers.

The new residence hall will be a four-story, semi-

Please see HALL, Page B3

CENTER: Receiving high praise