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President's Report, 10/14/2008

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The Nov. 4 general election is just a couple of weeks away, and a number of issues before New Mexico voters are of enormous importance to the University of New Mexico and to the continued economic health of our state.

Higher education statewide has more than $200 million at stake in three of the four general obligation bonds on the ballot. Projects at UNM, the Health Sciences Center and two UNM branch campuses account for approximately a quarter of that total. Much of this money will go toward bricks-and-mortar projects that will translate into jobs in every area of the state.

Bond C for Better Health will provide $57.8 million for the construction and renovation of twelve healthcare delivery and training facilities in ten New Mexico communities. Bond C will provide $28.5 million for UNM, including funds to complete the construction of the new UNM Cancer Research and Treatment facility, which is the official Cancer Center for the State of New Mexico. Bond C will cost New Mexico taxpayers approximately $4 per year for every $100,000 of the assessed value of their homes.

Bond D for Higher Education will provide nearly $140 million for new capital projects as well as building expansions and renewals that improve 22 institutions in communities throughout New Mexico. UNM gets $21.2 million of that amount – money to fund biology expansion, new buildings for the College of Education and for film and digital media at Mesa del Sol, plus renovation funds for the Student Success Center. Another $4.2 million will fund projects at UNM-Gallup and UNM-Taos. Bond D represents an additional tax assessment of $9.77 per year for properties with an assessed value of $100,000.

UNM Libraries have a stake in Bond B, which will provide more than $11 million for public library projects around the state, including funding for materials UNM students need to keep up in their fields of study. Bond B will cost taxpayers 77 cents per year for every $100,000 of the assessed value of their homes.

This is also a crucial election for UNM Hospitals. Since 1954, the voters of Bernalillo County have supported UNM Hospitals operations through a mil levy. Every eight years this ballot measure goes to the voters, including Nov. 4 of this year. The voters of Bernalillo County will be asked to renew the ballot measure at 6.4 mils, the current assessment. This means there will be no tax increase to the homeowners in Bernalillo County to support UNM Hospitals. UNM Hospitals provide vital services to any member of our community, with special expertise in trauma, cancer and children. Support from the community will be vital for UNM Hospitals to continue its mission.

Meanwhile, voters in Sandoval County will be asked to decide on a mil levy that will impact their access to health care and positively impact the local economy and tax base. The University of New Mexico Sandoval Regional Medical Center, both a community teaching hospital and a medical office building, is being planned to fit on UNM’s property in the same area where the university is planning a new campus. This medical center is projected to bring more than 400 new jobs to the area in just the first year. The mil levy approval will increase property taxes in Sandoval County approximately $12 per month for every $100,000 of the assessed value of their homes.

You should carefully consider these investments in education, health care and the economy.

David J. Schmidly
President's Report

GO Bonds support UNM development

In 2008, General Obligation Bond Issues B, C and D will allocate money to provide needed expansions, improve aging infrastructures and fund equipment and materials for every higher education institution in New Mexico. Bond issues are paid for by property tax assessments. For property with an assessed value of $100,000, Bonds B, C and D combined will cost taxpayers an additional $14.58 annually.

Bond B includes $780,000 for University Libraries to purchase books and journals. Bond C includes $17,000,000 for the Cancer Research and Treatment Center, $7,000,000 for dental residency education facilities and $4,500,000 for a neurobiology building. Bond D includes $5 million for biology expansion, $6 million for the College of Education building, $4 million for the film and digital media building at Mesa del Sol and $2 million for the Student Success Center. The bond also has money for projects at UNM-Taos and UNM-Gallup.

University report card provides accountability tool

President David Schmidly highlights the importance of accountability as UNM works to achieve its goals. One way to track UNM’s progress is the academic ledger or university report card, available on the president’s Web site at unm.edu/president.

The ledger is meant to track multiple year trends for sets of data in 5-year increments. The current ledger looks at data sets from 2002, but will be updated this semester to look at the numbers from 2003-07.

Researchers awarded $1.1 million to build nanoscope to study living cells

Researchers at UNM were recently awarded a three-year, $1.1 million grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation to support a research program titled “A Facility to Perform Biomolecular Imaging; Real Time Phase Mapping of Biological Dynamics.” Hundreds of potential research questions could be answered with the Scanning Phase Intracavity Nanoscope, or SPIN, which will be capable of imaging the components of living cells at nano- and picoscale resolutions, a feat never achieved before. The Department of Physics, which houses the program, will collaborate with researchers in the Cancer Research and Treatment Center, Center for High Technology Materials and Department of Biology.

Cherry-Silver Games

Fraternities and sororities compete in a relay race at the Cherry-Silver Games in honor of homecoming.

This laser setup depicts a similar configuration to what will be used as part of the Scanning Phase Intracavity Nanoscope.
UNM wins 2008 Energy Leadership Award

UNM won the 2008 Energy Leadership Award. The New Mexico Association of Energy Engineers presented the award to President David Schmidly.

The award letter said, “With your courageous leadership, UNM is on the path to an energy and water neutral campus. You demonstrated foresight by signing the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment within one month of your arrival at UNM and by hiring Energy Education, Inc. to turn UNM into a truly sustainable campus.”

Additionally, UNM Physical Plant Facilities Engineer Hans Barsun and Associate Professor Andrea Mammoli, School of Engineering, were honored for the 2008 Renewable Energy Project of the Year.

UNM gets B for sustainability

UNM is making progress in sustainability initiatives. The 2009 College Sustainability Report Card gave UNM a B overall, up from a C on the previous year’s report card. The report card, which grades hundreds of colleges in the U.S. and Canada, is a project of the Sustainable Endowments Institute. UNM received an A in the categories of climate change and energy and transportation.

Engineering program to focus on Smart Lighting

The UNM Center for High Technology will receive between $3 and $5 million over the next five years as Professor Steve Hersee leads a research effort on Smart Lighting. Smart Lighting is shorthand for lighting devices that carry information as well as illumination. Hersee’s team will work on ways to illumine microscopes so that the samples being examined are not degraded by the strong lights used by technicians. The UNM researchers will put together devices to illuminate samples on specific wavelengths that will allow them to be preserved indefinitely. This is part of a ten-year project funded by the National Science Foundation. UNM and Boston University are partnering with Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

UNM-Gallup Construction Tech program thinks green

UNM-Gallup Construction Tech Instructors Chris Chavez and Rick Krouth are keeping the college canteen’s used cooking oil from going to waste. Using a $2,400 biodiesel processor, they’re churning out biodiesel for 50 to 75 cents a gallon in sufficient quantities to run all the machines in their program, including the adobe making machine, a flatbed dump truck, tractors, welders and others. In addition to saving on fuel costs, biodiesel produces fewer emissions.

Construction Tech lecturer Rick Krouth demonstrates the adobe-making machine, which is powered on biodiesel this year.
Cross country teams nationally ranked

For the first time in school history, both the men's and women's cross country teams are nationally ranked simultaneously. It's the first time the women have been ranked since 1985. The women's team is ranked 18th and the men's 29th.

UNM hosts NCAA Women’s Basketball Championship

UNM is hosting the first and second rounds of the 2009 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship on Saturday, March 21 and Monday, March 23. Tickets are now on sale. The Lobos will be assigned to play in Albuquerque if they are one of the 64 qualifying teams or selected for the championship field.

Ewart golfs at World Amateur Team Championship


Pep rally at University Stadium nationally televised

The Mtn. - MountainWest Sports Network came to University Stadium for a live nationally televised special, “Friday Nite Pep Rally,” on the eve of the Mountain West Conference homecoming showdown between New Mexico and Wyoming.

225 mile run

Lieutenant Colonel Erik Sevigny receives the ball from ROTC Cadet Luis Sanchez at Veterans Memorial Park in Tor C, while cadets Gabriel Montoya and Daniel Roberts look on. The cadets ran the official game ball from UNM to T or C where their counterparts with NMSU Army ROTC took the ball and ran it to Aggie Memorial Stadium in Las Cruces. This is the second year the ROTC units ran the ball the 225 miles between Albuquerque and Las Cruces.

UNM picked as national molecular discovery center

The National Institutes of Health selected UNM as one of only nine national molecular discovery centers in the U.S. with a six-year, $15.5 million grant. Part of the NIH Roadmap Molecular Libraries Initiative, the UNM Center for Molecular Discovery has tremendous potential for economic development in New Mexico. Discoveries at the molecular level can have pharmaceutical, clinical and research applications.

UNM United Way campaign sets $1 million goal

On the heels of a record-setting campaign in 2007, the 2008 UNM United Way campaign is set to embark on another ambitious fundraising goal: $1 million. UNM set the goal in conjunction with UNM Hospitals. Last year, donors on main campus contributed more than $608,000, while donors at the Health Sciences Center contributed more than $284,000, for a combined total of more than $892,000.

Alumni Association honors seven with Zia Award