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## Press Release

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## Construction begins on Rural Learning Center expansion

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**Owner / Client:**  
*Rural Learning Center*  
*Randy Parry*  
*(605) 772-5153*

**Project Location:**  
*109 N. Main Street*  
*Howard, SD 57349*

**Projected Completion Date:**  
*End of 2010*

**Architect:**  
*KOCH HAZARD ARCHITECTS*  
*Jeffery A. Hazard, AIA, LEED AP*

**AUGUST 27, 2009 - HOWARD, SD** - A public groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday, Sept. 2, will mark the start of the Rural Learning Center building's expansion in Howard, SD.

The event is scheduled for 11 am at the corner of Main Street and Farmer Avenue. It will feature speakers Pamela P. Flaherty, president and CEO of the Citi Foundation, and Bob Sutton, president of the South Dakota Community Foundation. The Citi Foundation has presented a \$250,000 grant to the Rural Learning Center expansion. Ken Stork, president and CEO of Citibank South Dakota will also be in attendance.

The Northwest Area Foundation (NWAf) will be represented by its president and CEO, Kevin Walker. NWAf grant funding over the past decade helped sustain an aggressive and successful rural revitalization movement in Howard and surrounding Miner County, and that success shaped much of the Rural Learning Center's philosophy.

Rural Learning Center programming is aimed at revitalizing rural communities everywhere. The building will offer meeting space for hundreds of people, on-site lodging and food service, and telecommunications capacities for reaching national and international audiences. Built to the highest Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) standards, the center will in fact be a LEED teaching site so that builders can study it and follow suit.

"That's consistent with our philosophy that all kinds of learning will be necessary as rural America moves forward," said Rural Learning Center president Randy Parry. "Community leaders will have opportunities here to learn from one another, and we're also promoting education that will lead to attractive employment in rural places. Job training for the renewable energy field is an example."

Koch Hazard Architects of Sioux Falls designed Rural Learning Center to align with the owner's vision. Cutting edge sustainable technologies and materials will be integrated and displayed throughout the facility, with interactive displays giving real-time performance data on building systems.

"The Rural Learning Center's LEED platinum design is a unique response to the organizations remarkable mission. This is a building with amazing green features that tells the important story of sustainable rural living," said Jeff Hazard, senior principal and CEO of Koch Hazard Architects.

The Rural Learning Center and Miner County have already been praised for setting an example for other rural communities around the state and country. The Miner County Community Revitalization (now the Rural Learning Center) began its work in 1999, and now local population has increased for the first time in 80 years.

Economic impact analysis indicate the expansion will result in approximately \$6.3 million added to the local economy on an annual basis, due to an increase in population combined with new jobs, additional property tax revenue, and increased sales tax revenue.

Construction is scheduled to be completed by end of 2010.

"The Rural Learning Center is evidence of the collaborations and partnerships at work in Miner County," said Parry. "The expansion is further proof our partners see as an outcome of their shared effort. We are privileged to be a part of this project as it continues to move toward the vision for the future of Miner County, our region and rural places everywhere."

Koch Hazard Architects is an architecture, planning and interiors firm innovatively designing and effectively delivering quality projects that strengthen client missions.

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