

NMSU research park progresses as same envisioned for UTEP

By Vic Kolenc \ El Paso Times

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Arrowhead Business & Research Park, Arrowhead Center - NMSU. (Las Cruces Sun-News)

New Mexico State University in Las Cruces has stepped up development of its 257-acre research park at the edge of the campus.

Meanwhile, some El Paso leaders want to see the University of Texas at El Paso tied to its own research park.

Many universities around the country have research parks to attract companies that can link to a school's research facilities and hire students. For example, the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque has a 163-acre research park next to Interstate 25, near its campus.

The Arrowhead Business and Research Park, named after NMSU's economic development arm, Arrowhead Center, was created in 1988, but it wasn't until a master developer was hired about two years ago that development plans intensified. The completion of a mile-long road through the park last month opened the entire site to development.



Kevin Boberg, Arrowhead Center Director, Garrey Carruthers, Dean of NMSU's College of Business and Vickie Falindo, Arrowhead Center's Director of Work Force Innovation and Business Development, cut the ribbon during a ceremony opening the extension of Payne Street near Arrowhead Research Park. (Las Cruces Sun-News photo by Robin Zielinski)

Besides being on the edge of campus, the park is at Interstate 10 and Interstate 25 -- another asset for attracting companies, said Pam Wood, the park's director.

Not just any company can locate at the park. It must be involved in one of the park's targeted industries -- national security, aerospace, bioscience, energy, digital media and information sciences. It also needs to have a relationship with NMSU, or a "desire to develop a relationship," Wood said.

Mickey Clute, managing partner of Arrowhead Development Co., the park's private developer, said the requirement that a company be tied to NMSU is a two-edged sword in recruiting.

"Instead of a general market, it's a fairly focused market," Clute said.

Still, it's an attraction for companies that need links to NMSU, he said.

General Dynamics has two buildings in the park. One opened in 2000, and the second opened last summer. The company employs about 45 people in an operation tied to satellites.

Negotiations are under way with a federal agency to locate in part of an 8,000-square-foot building now under construction.

Clute said it may take 10 to 15 years to fully develop the park. Wood estimated it could take up to 20 years.

Arrowhead Development has spent more than \$6 million on the park, mostly constructing buildings, Clute said. The new road cost about \$2 million, paid with state, federal and NMSU money.

Bob Cook, president of the El Paso Regional Economic Development Corp., which recruits companies to El Paso and the surrounding area, said it does not promote the Arrowhead research park. But it would point a company in that direction if it expressed interest in that location, he said.

REDCo would like to see UTEP tied to a research park, Cook said. The 150-acre Global Reach Science and Technology Park being developed by the El Paso airport, next to the new Butterfield Trail golf course, would be a good place for UTEP to have a presence, he said. A section of the Asarco smelter site near UTEP also may be a good place for a research park, he said.

Monica Lombraña, the El Paso airport's aviation director, said that when a master developer is found for the airport park, the developer may want to partner with UTEP and other schools.

Cook said the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation has a concept for a research park near the new Texas Tech University medical school in Central El Paso.

Gary Williams, director of UTEP's Center for Research Entrepreneurship and Innovative Enterprises, said it makes sense for UTEP and Texas Tech to be involved with research parks in El Paso. UTEP, the city and others are looking at research park concepts and later will look at possible locations, including the planned airport site, he said.

Vic Kolenc may be reached at vkolenc@elpasotimes.com; 546-6421.

Information

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