

APPROVAL OF PLANNING PROJECT FOR THE SOUTHERN PIEDMONT AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION CENTER LABORATORY FACILITY

VIRGINIA TECH

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The Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SPAREC) is dedicated to tobacco, small fruits, forages, and other field and specialty crops research and educational programs to address the needs of the agricultural industry, a critical component of the state's economy. The vision of the faculty and staff of the SPAREC is one of service to the University, the agricultural industry, and the citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia with an emphasis on strong commodity-oriented research and extension programs to provide needed information and technology to the agricultural economy of the Southern Piedmont region of the state.

The current laboratory building at SPAREC was constructed in 1984 with five rooms and 1,812 square feet of space. Although this provided adequate laboratory space for several years, this building reached its capacity in the mid 1990's. The laboratory supports seven faculty, five graduate students, and 25 undergraduate students. The building size is too small for current program activities, and the laboratory facilities are not adequate for modern scientific research. Some instrumentation currently on inventory at SPAREC is not efficiently or effectively utilized because of insufficient facility space and infrastructure. Examples of instruments not fully utilized include the near infrared reflectance spectrophotometer, laminar air flow hood, gel documentation system, automated chemistry analyzer, high pressure liquid chromatography, and x-ray developer.

The envisioned solution is a multipurpose laboratory building. The new facility will provide a physical setting for scientists to undertake innovative research that addresses complex agricultural issues. The scope and scale of research at SPAREC has expanded over the past decade, requiring a higher level of methodological sophistication. These shifts have necessitated the use of more contemporary protocols including modern molecular approaches with state-of-the-art instruments. The proposed laboratory facility includes plant transformation, molecular biology, chemistry, cold room, dark room, offices, conference room, and break room spaces. The proposed laboratory facility will address the needs of SPAREC programs to apply sophisticated molecular techniques; the result will be significantly enhanced research programs at SPAREC.

The Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission (TICRC) grant program provides 80 percent support for projects with 20 percent matching support from the sponsor. The SPAREC applied for a \$375,000 planning grant for the proposed laboratory facility, and the TICRC awarded the grant. This request is for a \$375,000 planning authorization to move forward with design of a SPAREC Laboratory Facility. Funding is available from the TICRC grant (\$300,000) and SPAREC timber sale proceeds (\$75,000). The University will bring forward a subsequent request to move forward with construction when a program, cost estimate, and schedule are validated by the planning efforts and a construction grant award is secured from the TICRC.

Under the 2006 Management Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the University, the Board of Visitors has the authority to approve the budget, size, scope, and funding of nongeneral fund capital outlay projects. This project is not included on the University's 2008-2014 Capital Outlay Plan. Rather, it has only recently been identified as a high priority for implementation because of the timeliness of the funding from the TICRC.

Resolution on Planning Project for the Southern Piedmont Agriculture Research and Extension Center Laboratory Facility

WHEREAS, the Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center (SPAREC) is dedicated to tobacco, small fruits, forages, and other field and specialty crops research and educational programs to address the needs of the agricultural industry; and,

WHEREAS, the available space does not adequately support SPAREC activity and constrains growth; and,

WHEREAS, the envisioned solution is a multipurpose laboratory building to support modern molecular approaches with state-of-the-art instruments; and,

WHEREAS, the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission (TICRC) grant program provides 80 percent support for projects with 20 percent matching support from the sponsor. The SPAREC applied for a \$375,000 planning grant for the proposed laboratory facility, and the TICRC awarded the grant; and,

WHEREAS, funding is available from the TICRC grant (\$300,000) and SPAREC timber sale proceeds (\$75,000); and,

WHEREAS, under the 2006 Management Agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and the University, the Board of Visitors has authority to approve the budget, size, scope, and funding of nongeneral funded major capital outlay projects; and,

WHEREAS, this request is for a \$375,000 planning authorization to move forward with design of the envisioned SPAREC Laboratory Facility; and,

WHEREAS, the University will bring forward a subsequent request to move forward with construction when a program, cost estimate, and schedule are validated by the planning efforts and a construction grant award is secured from the TICRC;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the University be authorized to move forward with planning of a SPAREC Laboratory Facility.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the above resolution authorizing Virginia Tech to enter into design of a SPAREC Laboratory Facility be approved.

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