

Regents take second run at new West River higher-ed center

BY BOB MERCER
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PIERRE — The Legislature will be asked in January to try again to put pieces in place for a new state universities center on Rapid City's east side.

Earlier this year lawmakers granted authority to the state Board of Regents to accept a donation of 12 acres of land for the West River center and allowed the regents to acquire an option for later purchasing

19 acres of adjacent property. Now the regents are ready to move forward with the project and the financial details are changing somewhat.

The current plan calls for acquiring a total of 40 acres of

land.

The acquisition still calls for a donation of the original 12 acres from regent Kathy Johnson of Hill City and her husband, developer Doyle Estes.

Estes has offered to sell to the

regents the remaining 28 acres at a price of \$2,233,755, which represents the value of the buildable area.

That's less than the appraised value for the full 28 acres of about *See REGENTS on Page 16*

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\$3.6 million. The difference of \$1,411,245 would become considered a gift. The \$2.3 million would come from private sources, according to

regents attorney Jim Shekleton.

"There will be no cost to the state to acquire this land," he said.

The regents also want legislative approval for constructing a \$16 million

building, with \$13.4 million to be covered by a bond issue that would be repaid from student fees. The remaining \$2.6 million would be covered by private donations.