

Economic punch

Tech parks fuse best of 2 worlds

By Steve Barnaby
staff writer

University brain power must be fused with industrial manpower, money and technology if the American economy is to remain competitive.

That's the message Oakland University's Frank Cardimen brought to Detroit area business officials last week.

"We're in the middle of a technological revolution. New products must be developed to be put on the market in a hurry," he said.

One solution is the development of technology parks, which allow universities and industry to combine their strengths, he said.

RESEARCH CAPABILITIES of universities combined with the technological expertise and funding of the private sector can provide the

winning economic punch to develop the new products, he said.

Speaking at the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce legislative conference on Mackinac Island, Cardimen pounded away at the importance of breaking down traditional barriers.

"The real difficulty is that two different cultures exist. Business has a bottom-line mentality, but universities are judged on their research," said Cardimen, who is Oakland's director of economic development and corporate services.

"It will be a test of both institutions to get management to look differently, to make the relationship work."

Development of technology parks, he said, is a sign that the importance of cooperation is becoming more appreciated.

At present, Oakland University is developing what will be one of the

five largest such ventures in the country when completed in 1992.

"It takes a great deal of gambling to participate in a technology transfer," said Cardimen, "but we want to participate."

OAKLAND'S technology park is one of 85 research parks that have been developed in cooperation with private industry. Of those, 62 have been developed since 1981.

Conceptualized in 1981, the 1,100-acre park will provide more than 25,000 jobs, with an additional 30,000 jobs created within five miles of the park, said Cardimen.

When completed a total \$2 billion investment will have been sunk into the project.

The development is in the northeast quadrant of M-59 and I-75, between Oakland University and the Auburn Hills campus of Oakland Community College.

COMERICA was one of the first tenants, committing to a \$42 million structure that opened two years ago.

The entire project is being financed through a consortium of private sector and public funds. Those participating are Comerica, Frankel Associates, Schott Brothers & Co., Oakland University and Oakland Community College.

The parks largest tenant will be the Chrysler Technology Center, which will employ from 6,000 to 10,000 workers in a 3-million-square-foot facility on a five-acre site.

Other participants include Electronic Data Systems with from 175 to 250 employees in a 150,000-square-foot facility.

Comerica has a 1,500-employee work force on site. GMF Robotics is slated to open this year with a 110,000-square-foot structure.

Fitzpatrick pulls petition signatures

Backers of a drive for a part-time Legislature angrily withdrew their petitions from the Secretary of State's office in Lansing, fuming about a constitutional issue.

Dean Fitzpatrick, a job shop owner from Troy, and supporters withdrew their estimated 380,000 signatures after state elections director Christopher Thomas said the petitions probably wouldn't satisfy

state requirements. That appeared to far exceed the 239,657 signatures needed to place the issue on the 1988 ballot.

Fitzpatrick's attorney, David Raaflaub of Ann Arbor, said, "This all should have been done last year. This should be rectified as quickly as possible. . . . The process of petitioning has been destroyed."

THE PART-TIME Legislature drive was inherited from Brighton businessman Richard Chrysler, who unsuccessfully sought the Republican gubernatorial nomination last year.

Also part of the drive is John Lauve of Grosse Pointe Woods, a General Motors Corp. engineer who tried unsuccessfully to recall Gov. James Blanchard after the 1983 income tax increase.

But Thomas said that under a recent court ruling, the signatures had to be collected between gubernatorial elections. Thus, any signature collected before Nov. 4 would be invalid, he said.

"We need to know that," Thomas said. "If they'd left them (the signatures) here, we would have gone through them. . . and let them know if it's a (valid) filing."

But leaders of the part-time Legislature campaign took the box of petitions away, preparing for a court hearing on a related dispute over the time period to be used for the petition drive.

OAKLAND CIRCUIT Judge Alice

Gilbert is to hear arguments stemming from her recent ruling striking down a state law requiring petition signatures to be collected within a 180-day period.

Fitzpatrick is asking her to order an immediate election on a proposal to impose the death penalty in Michigan.

Fitzpatrick was plaintiff in a suit against Secretary of State Richard Austin, in which Gilbert ruled that the Michigan Legislature violated the state constitution and its own rules in passing the 180-day "state signature" law.

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Learning disabled advocates to meet

A conference on developmental disabilities will be held in Troy June 10 under sponsorship of the Wayne Community Living Services and Macomb-Oakland Regional Center.

"The Retarding Environment" will draw together speakers from the tri-county area on the ways in which the retarded are inhibited in the community services environment.

The conference will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the San Marino Club, 1885 E. Big Beaver. Theme is self-advocacy by consumers. It is designed for professionals, service providers, advocates, foster parents and parents.

Registration deadline is June 3. Price is \$10. Registration information is available from Residential Systems Co. at 731-6998.

Conference moderator is Wally Berry of Livonia. Panelists will include

Metro expansion approved

Detroit Metropolitan Airport's runway taxiways and holding areas will be expanded with the Michigan Aeronautics Commission's blessing. The \$5.6 million project for the Wayne County-owned international airport was the largest of 10 airport construction projects approved statewide.

The project is expected to include a \$4.1 million federal grant, \$158,000 from the state and \$1.2 million from the county.

New snow removal equipment will also be bought.

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