



The Republican.

UMass touts Springfield ties

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By **JIM KINNEY**

Business writer

SPRINGFIELD - Renovations will begin in earnest on Feb. 5 for the University of Massachusetts Amherst's long-anticipated design center in the Byers Block on Court Square downtown.

Chancellor Robert C. Holub announced the "kickoff" for the design center Wednesday night at an event with UMass Alumni at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel.

"We already do a lot in the city," Holub said. "This will give us a permanent presence in the city."

Holub also touted the university's partnership with the Regional Employment Board of Hampden County and the Western Massachusetts Chapter of the National Tooling and Machining Association.

Funded with a \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation, the partnership seeks to get technological advances developed at UMass manufactured in local machine shops, at least in the prototype stage but hopefully as market-ready products.

Holub also talked about the Pioneer Valley Life Sciences Institute, a medical research center the university started in partnership with Baystate Health.

Dr. Paul Friedmann, executive director of the institute, said it is just about to begin construction and expand its labs into space formerly used as a Baystate call center.

"UMass has a presence in the city and we want to make it bigger," Friedmann said.

UMass alumnus Nicholas A. Fyntrilakis, MassMutual Financial Group assistant vice president of community responsibility and government relations, said the design office will, at the very least raise, the university's profile in the city.

"It will be a permanent physical presence, a sign on an office that says UMass," he said. "That is something we haven't had."

John D. Judge, Springfield's chief development officer, said the design center will be a place where both architecture and landscape architecture students can work on projects related to Springfield redevelopment.

The city's long-term goal is to have as many as 30 UMass researchers working in Springfield.

Judy A. Van de Geer of Monson, has a master's degree in education from UMass and is working on her doctorate in the subject. She said the university needs to address the brain drain, or the problem of UMass graduates in technical fields not being able to find jobs locally.

Holub also introduced local alumni to newly-appointed UMass executives: Mark F. Fuller, dean of the

Isenberg School of Management, Michael R. Malone, vice chancellor of research and engagement Provost
James V. Staros.

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