

Board enters first stages of Union expansion plans

By Ann Stack
Staff Reporter

Several exciting things could happen in the Nebraska Union in years to come, Union officials said.

Daryl Swanson, Union director, said the Union Board was in the first stages of planning for expansion.

This includes developing a statement outlining the steps the expansion process would follow to present to the Board of Regents in the fall, Swanson said.

"It's something we've been talking about for several years," Swanson said. "The Union Board has been including questions in surveys about what students would like to see."

A major goal would be expansion of the Union Bookstore, Swanson said, which was first expanded in 1985.

The additions to the bookstore replaced many of the recreation services located in the basement, including a 10-lane bowling alley, a large billiard room and a commuter lounge.

However, Swanson said, the bookstore still does not have the service space it needs.

"Another goal we have is to improve handicap accessibility, to develop a new entry system and put in an elevator on the ground level," Swanson

said.

Other new services that would be offered to students would possibly be an on-campus music store, a pick-up and drop-off dry cleaners and a frozen yogurt outlet.

Other features would include a small convenience store that would offer more hours and more items than the bookstore, an expanded computer lab, and additional meeting rooms, Swanson said.

Improvements to the basement would include more recreational space with a larger billiards and game room and additional space for the Daily Nebraskan.

Another feature in the basement will be a 300-seat auditorium for films and small lectures, Swanson said.

Construction is still far off in the future, Swanson said, and all plans are subject to change.

If all plans and funding are approved, construction could start in the fall of 1996, he said.

The construction would either expand the Union north or west, Swanson said.

If the expansion moved north, there would be additional seating in the food court. However, the plaza and Broyhill Fountain would both have to be relocated and reconstructed.

Bus

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for a busing contract were included in the parking plan, and in part determined an increase in parking permit rates for next year. Some of those rates doubled.

Parking Services is self supporting, Cacak said, and the money for the contract has to come from either permit sales or fines.

Tad McDowell, parking services manager, said that last year, such a contract probably wouldn't have been financially possible.

Cacak said he didn't expect to see any dramatic changes come August 22, 1994, opening day for the proposed busing plan.

"It's probably going to take a year to see if it (free busing) really has helped," Cacak said. "It takes awhile for people to change their habit (of transportation)."

McDowell estimated that on average, 7,700 commuter students pay to park in university lots. Around 4,400 faculty/staff buy permits, he said.

Cacak said the lost fares that would have been paid by those expected to take advantage of the service were included in the \$228,000.

StarTran Manager Larry Worth said that during the 1993-94 school year, students took the bus 50,000 times. Faculty did the same for 21,000 trips.

Worth said those numbers only represented how many times each group boarded the bus. There is no way to estimate the number of students, faculty or staff who ride the bus, he said.

When asked about the possible conflict a student paying \$300 for 12-month reserved parking may have with helping fund a free busing service, Cacak had no comment.

In a later interview, Cacak said the service would benefit everyone, including those who find themselves helping to pay for it.

Those with "hunting permits" may find it easier to find a place to park with less people having the need to drive to campus everyday, he said.

There is no more land to build parking lots on, Cacak said, so busing was seen as one of the only alternatives for relieving UNL's parking stress.

Worth said StarTran was developing a special card for UNL students and personnel to use, and should have it printed this month.

Cacak said the card would be sent out with parking permits and distributed to non-permit buyers in the unions.

The NU Board of Regents and the StarTran Advisory Board have already approved the contract. The city council is expected to give its nod before the end of June.

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