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EIU President Seeking Community Input Regarding Energy Center Design

Jan-07-2009

Charleston residents -- especially those from neighborhoods near the planned Illinois Route 130 location of Eastern Illinois University's Renewable Energy Center -- will have two public opportunities to discuss the facility's design with President Bill Perry.

Perry would like to hear suggestions from residents regarding the design of the facility, with particular attention to suggestions on external appearance. The date, location and time of this first meeting is 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 13, at the Neal Welcome Center, located at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Douglas Street.

The second meeting, scheduled to discuss design and appearance changes that could be made, based on suggestions from residents, will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, at the Charleston Public Library, 712 Sixth St.

These meetings were scheduled in response to a series of three earlier informational meetings regarding the energy center to be constructed on campus.

The structure will be an economical and ecologically friendly answer to Eastern's critical power needs, made necessary by the deterioration of the university's current coal-fired power plant. Built circa 1925, the plant has been plagued by persistent equipment failures and replacement parts have been difficult, if not impossible, to find due to the age of the equipment.

The new construction will be a "biomass gasifier" that will supply the university's heating and cooling needs by burning plant matter.

