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Organizers hope businesses embrace commercial possibilities from AMCIS

by Tim Karstens

The Americas Conference on Information Systems draws distinguished academics and researchers, and organizers expect hundreds of papers to be presented during the three-day session in Omaha, the first Midwestern stop in AMCIS' 11-year history.

AMCIS, starting Aug. 12 at the Qwest Center Omaha and the Omaha Hilton, will have more than 30 tracks on subjects such as e-business, IT in health care and information systems security.

Among mini tracks are "Business Models for the Digital Economy" and "Methods, Tools and Techniques for Medical Informatics." For the first time, papers will be presented in Spanish in the "IT in Latin America" mini track.

It's a marketplace of ideas where business and academia join in prospecting and intelligence gathering to bring the best research in information systems off campus and into commerce.

"There are so many ways they can engage, and we hope that they will," said Ilze Zigurs, an AMCIS 2005 co-chairman who is the Mutual of Omaha Distinguished Chair of Information Science and Technology and the director of the Ph.D. program for information technology.

Deepak Khazanchi, AMCIS co-chairman who chairs the Department of Information Systems and Quantitative Analysis at the Peter Kiewit Institute, said a conference with almost 900 delegates has obvious economic impact, it's a chance for "freshly minted Ph.D.s" to look for work and it's great PR for the university and the city.

"People will have the opportunity to network with researchers from around the world," Khazanchi said. "You will have the opportunity to listen and understand what people are studying today that might affect the technology and management styles of tomorrow."

Presenters come from North, Central and South America, and track chairmen are coming from Europe and Australia.

Business has its imprint all over the conference, Khazanchi said. Corporate sponsors include Union Pacific, Mutual of Omaha and First National Bank. Of the seven higher education sponsors, five are business schools.

When the co-chairmen started planning the conference, they wanted it to fit Omaha's business community, Khazanchi said, so there are tracks on product management, information security and IT leadership as well as medical informatics, bioterrorism and security.

"These tracks were included to get the attention of the business community," he said.

During three years of planning, Khazanchi and Zigurs made the rounds in corporate Omaha, raising an AMCIS conference record \$80,000.

"Omaha and Nebraska are focusing on more startups and entrepreneur activity," Khazanchi said. "People need to attend these kinds of things to discover what's happening."

Calls went out to 5,000 Association for Information Systems members for track suggestions and the submission of papers, and a committee at the host institution selected papers for peer review.

About 65 percent of submissions are selected, Zigurs said, and they will give attendees a wide representation of research being developed.

"There are two conferences held each year, and this one is the more inclusive," Zigurs said. "This one is intended to have much broader participation."

There are two morning and two afternoon sessions. In each session 18 simultaneous parallel tracks last an hour and a half. Three people make presentations per session. More than 420 will present papers.

To help customize the conference, Veronica Myers, the conference program editor and webmaster, developed a search engine to sort tracks, panels, workshops and tutorials by keyword.

AMCIS 2005 will have two presenting speakers. Linda Sanford, a senior vice president at IBM, will talk on business

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AMCIS 2005 co-chairmen Ilze Zigurs, at left, and Deepak Khazanchi at the Peter Kiewit Institute ... The program will bring in distinguished researchers.



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transformation in "Pursuing Growth and Innovation." Roger Schell, founder of Aesec Corp., will deliver "Trustworthy Information Systems: A Myth or Enabler?"

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