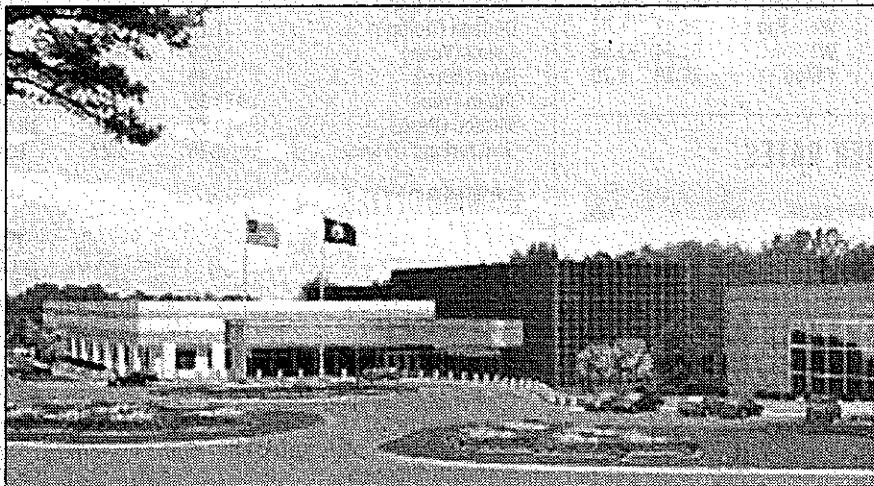


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Southwest Virginia tech center could spur economy



NORTHROP GRUMMAN CORP.

Officials in Southwest Virginia said the center will not only boost Russell County's economy, but the fortunes of surrounding counties. "We're tickled to death," said Danny Brown, chairman of the Russell Board of Supervisors.

Groundbreaking today for a new Northrop Grumman facility is cause to celebrate

BY REX BOWMAN
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Officials including Virginia's governor plan to ceremonially break ground today on a \$22.8 million high-tech facility in Russell County that will help overhaul the state's technology systems.

Northrop Grumman anticipates the 101,000-square-foot building will be complete by late fall 2007 and will employ about 400 of the global defense and IT contractor's workers.

Southwest Virginia officials, meanwhile, hope the opening of the Southwest Enterprise Solutions Center in Lebanon

will spur the economy in Virginia's Appalachian corner.

"The community is going to have a celebration," said Tony Dodi, mayor of Lebanon. "Everything is right on track."

Construction of the center is part of a 10-year, \$2 billion deal the state signed with Northrop Grumman to modernize the state's creaking information infrastructure. As part of the deal, the company in May began construction in Chesterfield County of a \$34.6 million, 167,000-square-foot operations center. That center, to be complete in mid-2007, will provide office space for about 630 employees of Northrop Grumman and the Virginia Information Technologies Agency.



Between the Chesterfield center and the backup-data center in Russell, state officials hope the contract with Northrop Grumman will save millions of tax dollars.

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine plans to join company representatives and local officials today at the Russell Regional Business Technology Park to help celebrate the beginning of construction.

Officials in Southwest Virginia said the center will not only boost Russell's economy, but the fortunes of surrounding counties as the company begins hiring high-tech employees.

"We're tickled to death," said Danny Brown, chairman of the Russell Board of Supervisors, adding that the center could create a demand for more housing and spinoff businesses.

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