

**EXCLUSIVE REPORTS**

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## **Forsyth Tech adding 53-acre campus in King**

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Forsyth Technical Community College is expanding north to the Stokes County line with a new campus on 53 acres of recently purchased land.

Forsyth Tech plans to develop the site into an extension campus for hands-on classes for firefighters, police officers and other students studying public safety, along with worker-training programs for Triad manufacturing companies. The campus will be completed by fall 2007.

"It makes sense for us with the growing population in King," said Gary Green, president of Forsyth Tech. He'll be explaining his plans for the future "Northwest Center" campus next week to members of the King Chamber of Commerce.

Last week, Forsyth Tech closed on its purchase of the land on Big Oaks Drive in the portion of King that is in Forsyth County. The community college paid Big Oaks of King LLC \$796,500 for the land, according to public records.

"Certainly we in Stokes County have been in need of increased involvement by a Triad community college," said Ron Morgan, director of Stokes County Economic Development. "We're like every other Triad county; we've lost jobs in tobacco, textile and furniture, and we need job training for our people."

Construction will begin in January in order to open some of a proposed 40,000-square-foot classroom building by January 2006, Green said. Forsyth Tech is spending \$6.2 million to further develop the campus with money saved from a 2001 college bond fund in order to complete the entire campus by fall 2007.

A "fire tower" building where firefighters can practice rescues and putting out blazes will be one of the first programs at the new campus along with emergency medical technician training programs.

Morgan pointed out that the Angelou economic report that came out in January noted that worker retraining is the top need in Stokes County.

King City Manager Lane Bailey points out that King's population has doubled since 1990 to 6,000 as the city has become a bedroom community for Winston-Salem. But Stokes County doesn't have a community college, so more residents have been driving to Forsyth Tech for classes.

Green noticed that Forsyth Tech's enrollment has been going up 10 percent a year each of the past three years while roughly one in 11 Forsyth Tech students comes from Stokes County. Green and Bailey expect the area around the new campus will grow if R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. follows through with proposed plans to expand operations at its plant in neighboring Tobaccoville.