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Technology park on rise at Rowan

BY GEORGE MAST • COURIER-POST STAFF • NOVEMBER 4, 2008

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GLASSBORO — The array of plastic tubing that once filled Tom Merrill's basement and then a small lab at Rowan University now sits neatly in one corner of a pristine laboratory at the South Jersey Technology Park.

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Merrill, a professor of mechanical engineering at Rowan, now has one of 14 laboratories at the recently dedicated Samuel H. Jones Innovation Center near Route 322 and Route 55 to call home.

A mixed-use facility on 200 acres owned by Rowan about a mile from the university's Glassboro campus, the \$10 million center is the first building in an overall master plan that calls for a 25-building campus.

Senior mechanical engineer adjusts components on a machine at the South Jersey Technology Park on Thursday.

(JOHN ZIOMEK/Courier-Post)



Merrill, his wife, and several Rowan engineering students are working to develop technology to reduce tissue damage to the heart during a heart attack.

Merrill's start-up company, FocalCool, recently joined other Rowan research initiatives and fledgling technology companies at the tech park. A grand opening for the 45,000-square-foot building was held Oct. 27.

"It's outstanding. It's a great opportunity," Merrill said Thursday as he surveyed his larger workspace. "It's taken awhile but we have a lot to accomplish here."

The two-story building includes a mix of laboratories and office space for private organizations and for the university's College of Engineering sponsored research. In addition, it also houses the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the Rohrer College of Business Incubator operated by the Rohrer College of Business at the university.

Rowan University is leasing the first floor of the facility for engineering research labs and the business incubator. Rowan has announced the second floor will be home to the Educational Information and Resource Center. The center is a public agency specializing in education-related programs and services for parents, schools, communities, nonprofit organizations and privately held businesses in the state.

Thomas J. Drury Jr., executive director of the South Jersey Technology Park, said the building is already fully leased.

While the technology park is set up as a separate corporation, Drury said "the Rowan connection" is pivotal to its success.

"The Rowan connection really means access to the university resources," he said. "It really is all about using a premier location to attract tech companies that in turn will work with the university to do research . . . and help them get their products in the market faster."

In turn, as the companies benefit from Rowan resources the local economy will see a boost from the high-paying jobs and market products, Drury said.

"It's all about economic development for the region," he said.

Aside from FocalCool, three other businesses are also a part of the Rohrer College of Business Incubator. One company, Provonix, of Blackwood, acts as a research organization focusing on providing clinical trial solutions to meet the needs of pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device companies.

FocalCool is also a part of Rowan's sponsored engineering research. Other projects focus on research related to clean energy, sustainable construction materials, automotive technology, pavement analysis and heat transfer.

The projects receive funding from corporations as well as government sources, such as NASA, the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation.

"Before we were sharing a lab, now we have four times as much space," said Rowan graduate student



Graduate student Gorg
a virtual reality simulat



Senior mechanical eng
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George Lecakes.

The Haddonfield resident is a part of a Rowan team performing virtual reality simulations of NASA rocket engine tests.

The larger facility will allow the team to house a fully immersive, navigable and interactive virtual reality system known as a CAVE.

The South Jersey Technology Park has been funded through numerous private and public organizations.

Drury said construction on a second building should be started within the year.

"It's a pretty sizable project," he said of the overall master plan.

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