

# Construction is under way on incubator

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**I**nnovate Anderson President Michael Panasko has waited a year for construction of the high-tech business incubator on S.C. 187.

The planned Innovation Center is designed to serve as the anchor of a technology park and research complex at Clemson University's Advanced Materials Center. The South Carolina Research Authority

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also plans to build a \$4 million companion facility on site to conduct classified research for its work with the U.S. military.

"That to me is the biggest sign for future gain in Anderson," Panasko said. "It's no longer an idea. It's actually happening, but we need to get those shovels in the ground and have that bricks-and-mortar."

That's now about to happen, a full year after university and community leaders held a ground-breaking ceremony there. The state funding needed for the project had been in limbo because of the economy.

But in June, the state Treasurer's office closed on a bond sale that includes \$18.3 million for several Clemson projects, said Deputy State Treasurer Scott Malyerck, including the Restoration Institute at the former Naval base in North Charleston, the Translational Bioengineering Research Center at the Greenville Hospital System's Patewood Campus, as well as construction of the Innovation Center in Anderson.

The state funding was previously approved under the Innovations Center Act of 2005. That act also created S.C. Launch, which is managed by the SCRA.

With the bonds sold, construction

likely will start this month, said Chris Przirembel, Clemson's vice president for research and economic development.

"My expectation is that we will probably get more value for our dollar in this current climate. That's the silver lining in this cloud," he said.

Clemson previously received \$1 million each from Duke Energy Corp. and AdvanceSC that allowed the university to proceed with design work, he noted.

"We have startup companies waiting to lease the space," Przirembel said.

Vincie Albritton, the associate director of the Clemson University Research Foundation and head of the Technology Transfer program in the Office of Research and Economic Development, said the space will provide a centralized location for several startup companies involved in Clemson's Technology Innovation Program.

"The Innovation Center will be the cornerstone of the incubation program at Clemson," she said. "We are currently operating an incubation program here at Clemson and facilitating that through other Clemson spaces."

Participants include companies that have licensed Clemson research or have some other connection to the university, she said. There are eight startup companies in the program.

The SCRA, meanwhile, is ready to begin work on its portion of the building as well, said CEO Bill Mahoney.

"The bottom line is we should be underway in July," Mahoney said.

That would put the Innovation Center on schedule to open in the early second quarter of 2010, he said.

"This will allow us to expand our work for both the Navy and the Air Force, as well as support the startup companies that will be on the Clemson side," he said.

And for Anderson County, the incubator "is the biggest thing we've been waiting for," Panasko said.

The facility will help the county recruit business, diversify its economy

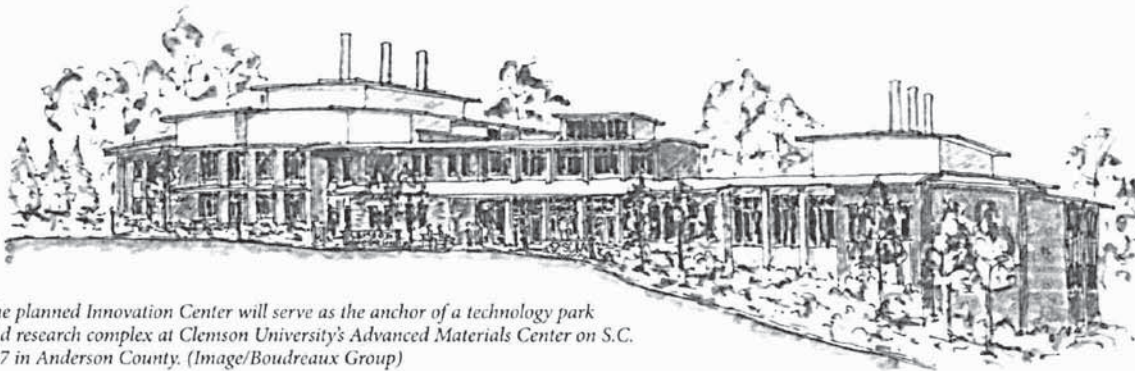


and attract and retain talent, he said. “We’re not just saying that there’s space available here, but also programs that will help them through growing pains and the way to becoming profitable companies,” Panasko said.

If they become profitable and expand, many may do so in Anderson County,

Panasko said.

“Getting that building up and out of the ground is going to be a fantastic start and will give us a chance to grow these companies that otherwise would be going elsewhere,” he said. “The innovation center will give us another marketing tool.” <sup>85</sup>



*The planned Innovation Center will serve as the anchor of a technology park and research complex at Clemson University's Advanced Materials Center on S.C. 187 in Anderson County. (Image/Boudreaux Group)*