

Kannapolis has come a long way, and has a long way to go, the mayor says.

Mayor Robert Misenheimer says the city — once a prosperous mill town and hoping to someday be a prosperous biotechnology hub — needs a city hall, a police station and a few more fire stations. In the past few years, the city hired a police chief and a fire chief and no longer relies on county or other jurisdictions for those services. It also opened a customer service center and moved some city employees from a shabby facility on Floyd Street.



**MISENHEIMER**

High hopes — and the city's future — are placed in the North Carolina Research Campus. Research park developers say the mixed-use NCRC will boast the most technologically advanced biotechnology campus in the country, featuring university-run research facilities and labs as well as private industries on 350 acres. The public-private venture is expected to be a leader in the development of biotechnology discoveries, processes and products with an emphasis on health and wellness.

Progress has slowed with the economy, even if hopes haven't dimmed.

"The economy has put a damper on the research center," says Misenheimer, noting the only building going up is the Rowan Cabarrus Community College facility. Next on the horizon, Misenheimer says, will be the Cabarrus Health Alliance building off Pine Street; the bidding process for that project is complete.



**Construction slowdown: The NCRC will offer more than a million square feet of lab and office space when complete**

Billionaire David Murdock has said in published reports that he remains committed to development of the \$1.5 billion N.C. Research Campus despite a slowdown in the economy and setbacks in partnerships.

Murdock considers the project his legacy and is part of his commitment to better health through improved diet. Murdock has invested about \$500 million in the campus so far.

The project has encountered delays in funding, including from the City of Kannapolis which has been unable to sell special bonds to help with some aspects of the project.

Misenheimer told the Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce directors during a recent "State of the City" talk that city leaders backed off on the \$168.4 millions in bonds for now because interest rates are so high and they don't want to over-burden taxpayers. "So, we're waiting," he says.

The development also lost a potential partner in Wilmington, N.C.-based Pharmaceutical Product Development.

Ground was broken earlier this year on RCCC's 62,332 square-foot building that will house its associate-degree programs in biotechnology and agricultural biotechnology and continuing education programs

related to biotechnology and clinical research. RCCC hopes to open the building in time for its fall 2010 semester with the focus of providing instructional space for hands-on biotechnology training in a realistic research and development setting. The cost of the building is about \$26 million.

Along with Rowan Cabarrus Community College, UNC Chapel Hill, Duke University and N.C. State University are expected to build facilities there.

"I hope before long that we can get that research campus back on track," the mayor says.

"I can't wait for economic development with the research campus to come," says Misenheimer says. "We need businesses downtown."

A furniture outlet is going out of business because the owners are retiring and retail stores such as a Belk department store have moved on.

"Did you know that a man can't buy a white dress shirt in the city of Kannapolis? That's unheard of for a city like ours," says Misenheimer.

URL: [http://www.businesstodaync.com/Hopes\\_riding\\_high\\_on\\_biotechnology\\_wave\\_-a-892.html](http://www.businesstodaync.com/Hopes_riding_high_on_biotechnology_wave_-a-892.html)