

By Emily Ford

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KANNAPOLIS — After a lengthy delay, developers will break ground May 29 on a key component of the N.C. Research Campus.



The \$26 million, state-of-the-art building that will house Rowan-Cabarrus Community College's biotechnology programs is considered critical to the success of the Research Campus. RCCC will train the campus workforce and tailor classes to meet the needs of major employers at the campus.

The groundbreaking ceremony begins at 10 a.m.

Campus developer Castle & Cooke North Carolina signed a lease with the college in March but could not secure a construction loan.

Construction on the campus halted when the economy took a nosedive. The biorepository about one mile from campus has been the only new construction in a year.

Castle & Cooke will construct the 62,000 square-foot building for RCCC. After 20 years, like the other academic buildings on campus, the state will own it.

The state will provide about \$3 million a year to RCCC for lease payments and operating expenses.

The building should open in time for the college to hold classes there in August 2010. All RCCC biotech programs will move to the building.

While enrollment is booming, the college was forced to cut \$1.2 million from its budget due to the state budget shortfall. Twenty-one people lost their jobs.

On May 1, RCCC inaugurated its third president on the steps of the Core Laboratory Building at the Research Campus. Dr. Carol Spalding called this a "critical time" for RCCC, the state and the nation.