

## Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman to help MLE break ground at WestGate Tech Park

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By Nick Schneider, Assistant Editor

Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman will join Greene County officials to help celebrate the groundbreaking of MLE Enterprises' new facility at the WestGate at Crane Technology Park on Thursday.

The ceremony will be at 10 a.m.

MLE Enterprises, Inc., based in Terre Haute and Bloomfield, will construct a 7,000 square foot office/production facility in the Greene County part of the tech park near Crane Village.

John Mensch, WestGate at Crane Authority member and Greene County EDC Board Director, will give a short overview of the WestGate project, talk about MLE and introduce the firm's general manager, J.R. Davis.

Mensch, from Bloomfield, will also introduce Lt. Gov. Skillman.

Company executives, county and state officials will close the program by participating in the first shoveling of dirt.

The eight-year-old firm will construct a multi-use office complex that should be operational about 90 days after a groundbreaking ceremony is held, according to J.R. Davis, the firm's general manager.

"Our plans call for a multi-purpose 7,000 square foot office, work station, training and warehouse areas. Considering the construction and real estate costs, improvements and labor scheduled for the new operation, as well as building configuration, furnishing and supply. A fair estimate as to investment would probably be around \$200,000," said Ray Darnell, who serves as MLE's CEO for the SeaPort project. "Current configuration is for six business offices with a



Greene County Daily World File Photo by Nick Schneider TO ATTEND CEREMONY: Lt. Gov. Becky Skillman (left) will be the guest speaker at the groundbreaking for MLE Enterprises Inc.'s new facility at the WestGate Tech Park on Thursday. Here, she listens while she is greeted by WestGate Authority member John Mensch, of Bloomfield, at a dedication ceremony held earlier this year for EE & G, another WestGate tenant. See related column by Greene County Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Joan Bethell in the "Opinion" section of the website. [[Order this photo](#)]

reception area and conference room, a covered patio separating the warehouse and work/training station areas from the business offices."

Darnell said the firm is excited about its plans to expand into the tech park and pleased that Lt. Gov. Skillman will join with local officials in the groundbreaking ceremony.

"We look forward to providing unparalleled support for our customers with the modern conveniences and technology necessary to do so from a geographical location that serves both our customers and our teaming partners," he said Friday afternoon.

This will be the first WestGate building located within Greene County's sector of the tri-county tech park.

MLE Enterprises, Inc. (MLE), founded by Terre Haute resident Mary Luttrell, is a certified Woman Owned Business Enterprise (WBE) and HUBZONE Small Business Enterprise that provides government and commercial clients with construction programs, project management, quality control and inspections as well as environmental solutions, including asbestos, lead and mold abatement.

About three years ago, the firm bought the seven-acre property between Scotland and Crane Village. It connects with Greene County's 52-acre tract of land in the WestGate Technology Park -- a joint project of Greene, Daviess and Martin counties.

WestGate, which includes more than 300 acres, is the state's only certified multi-county technology park. It lies where the three counties meet near Crane Village.

"I think with what is going on down there, I think there is stuff that so many people in Greene County don't even know about and don't even realize that can happen because of companies like SAIC and EG & G and others," Davis, a native of the Solsberry area, said.

"We're in construction management and quality control.

"What a large contractor will do is hire someone like us to provide an independent third party inspection service. We do construction also. Two years ago, we started an environmental side of the business. We do asbestos, lead and mold abatements."

The decision to locate at Crane will allow the company to service its customers better, according to Davis.

Darnell agrees that locating at WestGate is a good fit for his company.

"The proximity to Crane and also to be linked to the growth that is in and around this county and to be linked to the other companies there (at WestGate) is key," Darnell said.

The Bloomfield office will be relocated to the new site at WestGate when construction is completed, Davis said.

The firm currently has 18 employees and plans to increase the workforce 50 to 70 percent in the next year.

Davis agrees the company is growing. He says there are 18 full-time employees and in two years the workforce will expand to 40 or 50.

"We hope to more than double in the next two years."

The firm currently has ongoing projects for NASA near New Orleans, Fort Sill, Okla., and an U.S. Air Force base in Missouri as well as several projects at NSA Crane.

Davis said the misfortune of the recent hurricanes that traveled through the Gulf Coast region has actually been good for his firm's environmental and mold mitigation work.

"They (NASA) were so pleased with our work that they've asked for a letter of commitment of people and resources to start working now at Johnson Space Center in Houston," Davis said.

"There we are doing sustainment and restoration. We are going in and helping NASA clean up after the hurricane came through. Our environmental side is doing some mold work and we do a lot of treatment."