

Indiana Governor Daniels: WestGate to be 'Flagship' of tech, Engineering

The mission of *The Hoosier Coefficient*, which appears on *MidwestBusiness.com* every Thursday, is to profile the often-overlooked rich technology development and commercialization in Indiana. The Hoosier state is home to four of the top technology research and engineering universities in the nation and tech pros ignore Indiana at their own peril.

MARTIN COUNTY, Ind. (July 26, 2007) – Thursday “set the stage for a new era of growth” in southwest Indiana, said Gary Bracken, an executive with the multibillion-dollar Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

The occasion was a formal groundbreaking of a new 37,000-square-foot facility to house the Indiana operations of SAIC and make a major expansion of the WestGate @ Crane Technology Park.

On ground that previously was the site of an old U.S. Army barracks bordering a corn field two years ago, Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels and SAIC executives were among those taking part in the groundbreaking for the \$4 million SAIC facility.

Daniels also announced that WestGate is on deck to receive more than \$35 million in private equity development funding over the next 24 months.

So what's the future of WestGate, which is located just outside the \$2 billion Naval Surface Warfare Center at Crane (NSWC Crane) near tiny Crane, Ind? Referring to the network of state-certified technology parks within Indiana, Daniels said before the assembled guests: “This is going to be the flagship of them all.”

The WestGate tech park represents “an avenue to grow and strengthen partnerships,” said Michael Mitchell, an executive with NSWC Crane. The park could well be the “key enabler to grow technical competencies” at the base, which at 100 square miles is the third-largest U.S. Navy base in the world.

SAIC serves as a major commercial contractor for NSWC Crane, which employs 5,000 civilian engineers, scientists and technical professionals and pumps more than \$1.7 million a day into the Hoosier economy.

A Fortune 500 company and one of the leading contractors for the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security, SAIC will add approximately 75 new jobs to its current high-tech work force in south central Indiana.

Indiana already ranks No. 17 in the nation for receiving funding from the U.S. Department of Defense, according to Jason Lovell, an official with the Indiana Office of Energy & Defense Development. The WestGate is expected to grow the Hoosier state's already important contributions to the trillion-dollar defense industry, according to Lovell.

WestGate developers also broke ground during the announcement for an additional 16,800 square feet of high-tech office space that will serve as a business incubator and accelerator for start-up companies or existing companies engaging in defense-related business.

Initially adding 25 to 50 new employees, the developers are currently involved in negotiations with three companies to locate in the facility and provide defense-related services to Crane.

Apart from Purdue University, which is a national leader for engineering, Daniels says the region around NSWC Crane and WestGate represents “the single-highest concentration of engineering talent in the state”.

"We're excited about WestGate and look forward to supporting the park and the base," said John Schneider, assistant vice president for industry research at Purdue University. "Crane is already a great research park. We look forward to partnering further with WestGate to maximize the region's potential."

The tech park, which is located about 80 miles south of Indianapolis, is being developed by the WestGate @ Crane Development Co. (WCDC). The WCDC is a consortium of major Indiana-based developers whose accomplishments include commercial, office and upscale residential operations across the Midwest.

SAIC will also "work with the state of Indiana to bring more high-tech jobs to Indiana," Bracken said. The new building in WestGate is "a physical demonstration of our commitment ... to make southwest Indiana a more permanent home" for expanded SAIC operations, Bracked said.

"As the tech park grows, we have every reason to believe it will become a nationally recognized asset that adds real value for the defense community," said WCDC partner Dale Ankrom. "WestGate's location directly outside of Crane will enable high-tech commercial operations to work closely with federal engineers and scientists on the base."

Annually, NSWC Crane contracts out an additional \$700 million in services beyond the borders of the state. As it comes online with new buildings, R&D facilities and high-tech warehouses later in 2007, WestGate is ideally situated to bring more of that potential back into Indiana, according to Ankrom.

Certified as the state's only three-county *certified technology park* (CTP) by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), WestGate is a natural place for defense contractors currently providing technical support and R&D services to the base.

EG&G, which is a subsidiary of the \$2 billion URS Corp., is already located in the park along with the state headquarters of the Crane Federal Credit Union.

The state has funded plans to extend I-69 up to the tech park region. WestGate already has full access to fiber-based broadband through Smithville Digital, according to Ron Arnold, executive director of the Daviess County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC).

"WestGate will have outstanding physical and digital access, which is critical to long-term growth," Arnold said.

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