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**QuickTakes!**

## **Stockton Aviation Research and Technology Park Takes Off**

May 16, 2017

Federal, state, county, municipal and university officials on May 15, 2017 broke ground for the first of seven buildings at the Stockton Aviation Research and Technology Park (SARTP) in Egg Harbor Township, New Jersey, a major step in diversifying the region's economy.

The \$17.2 million, 66,000-square-foot building is being constructed in the 58-acre park, located adjacent to the FAA William J. Hughes Technical Center, the nation's premier air transportation laboratory, and the Atlantic City International Airport.

The park will offer high-speed connectivity to FAA Tech Center laboratories, and state-of-the-art conference room. An FAA laboratory will occupy 7,000 square feet with an additional 47,000 of rental space for laboratories and offices.

"Aviation drives \$1.5 trillion – or 5.4 percent of G.D.P. (Gross Domestic Product)," said Deputy Director Jaime Figueroa of the FAA Tech Center. "SARTP is positioned to leverage the economic possibilities of aviation." He added, "The money that's earned here will be spent here."

"This is just the beginning of Atlantic County's future," said County Executive Dennis Levinson, adding the tourism and gaming are still important but economic diversification is necessary. "This is why we put our money where our mouth is."

The Atlantic County Improvement Authority (ACIA) helped to provide financing for the building, which is scheduled for completion in the second quarter of 2018, said John Lamey, the ACIA's executive director.

Stockton President Harvey Kesselman said the research park is a collaboration "between the academy and industry," offering Stockton and other universities opportunities in research and education.

"We consider this project to be central instrument for change," President Kesselman said, adding that Stockton's commitment to the project "will be unwavering."

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All the speakers noted that the project has been a decade in the making, and cited the strong partnerships and determination needed to bring it to fruition. Howard Kyle, Levinson's chief of staff, was singled out for praise, though Levinson joked, "That doesn't mean you're getting a raise, Howard."

Edward H. Salmon, president of the SARTP Board of Trustees, said it took five partners to make this work:

- Congressman Frank LoBiondo, R-2<sup>nd</sup>, chairman of the House Aviation Subcommittee;
- Atlantic County government, including the executive, chief of staff, the ACIA and the freeholders;
- Stockton University and President Kesselman;
- The FAA Tech Center;
- The Stockton SARTP board and staff, along with partners such as the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority, the NJ Economic Development Authority and the South Jersey Transportation Authority.

Mr. Levinson also recognized Ambassador and former Congressman William J. Hughes, for whom the Tech Center is named, and Congressman LoBiondo, saying, "I don't know where we would be without the two of them."

LoBiondo said the SARTP is "a guarantee of opportunity which we have not had up to this point." He praised Levinson as "a visionary always looking forward to what's best for Atlantic County and the region."

He also thanked Kesselman and Stockton for "stepping up in a way no other organization in the area could have done;" Joseph Sheairs, the SARTP's former executive director, for his work in making construction of the first building a reality; and Kyle and his own chief of staff, Maryannie Harper, for a decade of work.

The congressman said the Tech Center will provide "cutting edge" expertise and research, "all right here."

He introduced his fellow congressman, Democrat Rick Larsen of Washington's 2<sup>nd</sup> District and the ranking member of the House Aviation Committee which LoBiondo chairs. Larsen said he represents 23,000 Boeing employees who live in his district and another 7,000 who work there. He is visiting South Jersey to learn more about the connections between the FAA Tech Center's work and his district.

Congressman Larsen said the FAA staff is working on aviation cybersecurity and unmanned aircraft systems and how they will be used by businesses such as Amazon to deliver products. “Commercial space is literally the next frontier in the FAA’s world,” he said.

Stockton and the SARTP are members of the Virginia Tech team known as the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP) chosen by the FAA to help with the testing of drones under the federal government’s plan to commercialize unmanned aircraft systems over the next several years. Staff at the FAA also has a key role developing the NextGen system that will switch the nation’s air traffic control from a radar-based system to a satellite-based system.

The SARTP building was designed by AECOM, a multinational engineering firm with headquarters in Los Angeles which repeatedly has been ranked #1 in Engineering News Record’s “Top 500 Design Firms.” Command Company, Inc. of Egg Harbor City, NJ, is the general contractor, and the facility is being built by Hessert Construction Group LLC, of Marlton, NJ.

John Wiley and Joe Salvatore, both experienced leaders in aviation, have been named interim director of the SARTP as a team. A national search for a new, permanent director will be conducted.

For more information, visit: [Stockton.edu/sartp/](http://Stockton.edu/sartp/).