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Sports - Colleges - Columbus State University
Wednesday, Mar. 31, 2010

CSU foundation, developer to build technology park near Fort Benning

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Columbus State University has been looking for ways to heighten its presence with Fort Benning, says Tom Helton, the school's vice president for business and finance.

And it appears the school has found a way.

During a reception at 6 tonight in Columbus State's Cunningham Center, Otis Scarborough, the chair of CSU's Foundation Properties Inc., of which Helton is executive director, will announce its plan to partner with Flournoy Construction to develop land adjacent to Fort Benning's Sand Hill Complex as a regional technology park.

"There are 174 acres but, really, only about 70 can be developed," Helton said.

Rough terrain is one reason.

John Flournoy, chief executive officer of Flournoy Properties, will also be on hand tonight to give more details about the plan to defense industry contractors who will be present.

"Mr. Flournoy will give his vision and hear from the contractors," Helton said.

The park may not particularly be a lot of big buildings since the contractors could be more interested in office space.

Helton said the University of Central Florida developed a similar park near the local Naval Base in Orlando, Fla.

"It should be a big boost to that part of Columbus," Helton said of the park. "This development could mean internships and jobs for our students."

Some day, he said, the school might be able to hold classes there.

Foundation Properties Inc. was established to oversee the private funds in the development of several university buildings, including the CSU RiverPark campus.

"We've owned this property for a while," said CSU spokesman John Lester. "We're just now figuring out how it can be a benefit to the university."

He said the proximity to all major training and troop unit concentrations should make the property an ideal location for defense contractors doing and seeking to do business at Fort Benning.

The property is within a 10-minute drive to Fort Benning's Infantry School at Main Post and the new Armor School location at Harmony Church.

It is an 8-minute drive to Kelly Hill and less than a 5-minute drive to Sand Hill.



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