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Tech center aims to promote business

MARC MUNROE DION, Herald News Staff Reporter

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Herald News Photo by OMAR BRADLEY

FALL RIVER -- The Advanced Manufacturing and Technology Center made a first-of-its-kind announcement Wednesday morning.

"I think this is a center where there will be lots of press conferences," said Jean F. McCormick, chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

The university is the guiding entity of the Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center, along with the state of Massachusetts and the local business community.

Wednesday saw the center begin work on one of its end purposes, to provide incubation space and support for start-up businesses and entrepreneurs developing new products.

"We're here to celebrate another milestone in the history of the ATMC," said Fall River businessman Robert Karam, a UMass trustee who has been involved with the center since its inception.

Three businesses are now making their beginnings in the ATMC. They are Predictive Technology Inc., which commercializes proprietary methods of diagnosing respiratory disorders; Micro Magnetics Inc, which develops advanced sensor products and International Compliance Systems Inc., a Web-based compliance management software/service company.

Local elected officials who worked to get funding for the \$16 million facility on Martine Street in Fall River, spoke of their pride in their achievement.

State Rep. Robert Correia, D-Fall River, stressed that the ATMC was "not a pork-barrel project," and noted that the purposes of the center are quite

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clear to him.

"The end is to provide the people of Southeastern Massachusetts with better jobs, better technology, better benefits and better lives," Correia said.

State Rep. Michael Roderigues, D-Westport, noted that his grandfather worked at the old Kerr Mill, the cotton mill that once occupied the Martine Street site.

"It was a symbol of our industrial past," Roderigues said of the old Kerr Mill building, destroyed in a fire. "What we have here is a symbol of our economic future."

All of the elected officials at the event spoke of the need for continued and increased financing if the center is to meet its goal of incubating new businesses and providing a venue for university professors to do commercially viable research.

State Rep. David Sullivan, D-Fall River, noted that the business incubator and the rest of the center would "bring up our elevation in this area and I'm glad to be part of it."

Marc Munroe Dion may be reached at mdion@heraldnews.com.

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