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Future Forward to acquire available Corning facility; Center to join UNC system

- > **Engineering technologies center to focus on workforce development**
- > **Congressmen announce \$1 million grant for new tech center**
- > **WCU technology program to inaugurate center early next year**
- > **'Partners Campaign' under way to generate public-private support**

Hickory, NC (Nov. 21, 2005) – Seeking innovative ways to provide the advanced skills and knowledge required by the 21st century workplace, the Future Forward Economic Alliance today launched an engineering technologies center that will serve workers and employers across the Western Piedmont and northwest North Carolina.

The North Carolina Center for Engineering Technologies will occupy a facility being acquired by Future Forward acquired from Corning Cable Systems in a transaction expected to close in January. Located at 1928 Maine Avenue in Hickory, this facility has been available since late 2002 when the telecommunications technology leader co-located its optical fiber cable research and development activities with its Hickory area cable manufacturing operations. Corning has agreed to sell the facility to Future Forward at a significantly reduced price in support of the effort to strengthen technical higher education in Hickory and the region served by Future Forward.

When fully operational, the center will provide workforce development through specialized technical training and degree programs in engineering, applied science and technologies, and management education, according to Future Forward president Ann Smith.

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