

November 9, 2006 Murtha: Progress continues in rebuilding

For Immediate Release

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Johnstown, PA - U.S. Rep. John Murtha told the Johnstown Economic Summit today that several encouraging things are happening with the local economy to continue the area's economic rebuilding.

"We're continuing to attract international investment, we're continuing the growth of our defense-manufacturing and - research companies, and we have two local steel companies that are expanding with defense contracts," Murtha told the gathering of the area's economic and political leaders.

Murtha helped to attract Spanish windmill-manufacturer Gamesa, which has drawn a lot of attention by creating over 200 new jobs in Ebensburg, by supporting an initiative to develop wind power at remote military bases.

In addition, Martin-Baker America has grown to 65 jobs making ejection and crashworthy seats for helicopters, Kongsberg Defense of Norway has 15 people employed making weapon-system mounts and ODIM Spectrum, whose parent company is also from Norway, has a small operation with 3 people designing undersea sensor systems in the Concurrent Technologies Corporation facilities. In addition, ITSI Bioscience, a company owned by a Nigerian, is working on biotechnology efforts.

In the defense sector, Murtha noted that Northrop Grumman is placing another segment of its Information Technology sector in Johnstown, which will expand its employment to 100 and potentially more as they move into the planned Tech Park.

Meanwhile, CTC has grown to about 870 employees, DRS Laurel Technologies has about 750 and Kuchera Defense, 325 with plans to hire 25 more. Health Net Federal Services has exceeded its projected employment and has 130 people at work in downtown Johnstown, while KDH is up to about 100 workers making bulletproof vests and similar items.

"These jobs range from cutting-edge research-and-development to sewing. They range from health-care services to high-tech manufacturing," Murtha said. "But we have not forgotten our local economy's roots in steel."

Murtha has attracted funding for Gautier Steel to expand its operations into titanium products and has supported the efforts of Johnstown Welding & Fabrication to open a new facility in Windber that puts armor on Humvee transport vehicles.

"I'm pleased with the progress we're making in continuing our economic rebuilding. Our economy is far more diverse than it's ever been," Murtha said.

He has been directly or indirectly involved in creating at least 7,000 defense jobs in and around the 12th District, including about 4,000 in Cambria and Somerset Counties.