

Rome News-Tribun

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Ground broken on Floyd College Bartow campus

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CARTERSVILLE — The blazing Georgia sunshine couldn't wipe the smiles off the faces of those turning over the first shovelfuls of dirt at Wednesday afternoon's groundbreaking ceremony for Floyd College's full-service Bartow County campus.

"This is a day that's been long coming and highly anticipat-

ed," said State Sen. Nathan Dean, D-Rockmart.

A college has been in the hearts and minds of Bartow County residents since the 1960s, when they applied to the Georgia Board of Regents for a junior college. But instead of Bartow, Floyd County ended up with the college, which was established in Rome in 1970.

However, the work for a full service campus in Bartow County did not die, said Floyd Col-

lege President Randy Pierce.

"Since the late '80s it's certainly been something that everyone in the community has worked on," he said.

Pierce said the combined efforts of Bartow County, Cartersville and state politicians, educators and other community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce brought the new Ga. 20 campus to fruition.

"This is a wonderful example of the participation of a lot of

people to make something happen," said Thomas Meredith, chancellor of the University System of Georgia.

Floyd College has two sites in Bartow County, which serve about 1,200 students, half of the college's enrollment. The programs at North Metro Technical College and downtown Cartersville will move to the new campus.

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Pierce said he expects as many as 1,500 students to enroll at the campus when it opens in fall 2004. He said the facility is designed to accommodate 2,000 students.

A long list of officials spoke at the ceremony, thanking those who worked to make the project possible.

"I'm just happy that we finally have an institution here we can call our own," said Joe Frank Harris, former governor of Georgia and chairman of the Board of Regents.

Harris singled out Bartow County Commissioner Clarence Brown for praise because of his work on the project. "This is Clarence Brown day," he said.

Pierce told the crowd of about 100 that the new facility will represent increased educational opportunity in the area.

"While we're here to celebrate the construction of a facility, we're also here to celebrate the educational opportunities offered by that facility," Pierce said.

Meredith said the visible location of the campus will be a daily reminder to passing



Contributed photo / Sandy Briscar, Floyd College

Randy Pierce, president of Floyd College, addresses those gathered Wednesday for the groundbreaking ceremony of the Floyd College Bartow County campus.

motorists of educational opportunity. "What we're trying to do in the state of Georgia is create a more educated Georgia," Meredith said.

The Board of Regents ap-

proved the \$19 million campus in December 1997.

The 99,000-square-foot building will house 21 classrooms, four lecture halls, eight science labs, eight conference

rooms, offices, a student center and a bookstore.

The Cartersville/Bartow College Foundation has raised \$500,000 so far to establish an endowment.