

UMBC News

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U.S. Geological Survey to Move MD-DE-DC Water Science Center to UMBC

COPT to Develop Tech Park's 3rd Building; Research Collaboration Drives Move of 60 Experts on Region's Water, Environment

BALTIMORE - The University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) announced today that it has signed an agreement with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) that will relocate the USGS Maryland-Delaware-DC Water Science Center to a new facility at [bwtech@UMBC](mailto:bwtech@umbc.edu), the University's on-campus research and technology park. Ground breaking is slated for summer, and the completed facility is expected to open in spring 2007 to more than 60 USGS scientists and support staff. The move is intended to strengthen collaborative work with UMBC and U.S. Forest Service scientists who monitor the ecosystems of the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the health of the region's water supply, rivers and streams.

Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT), one of the region's largest suburban office companies, is partnering with the UMBC Research Park Corporation to deliver the park's next building. The one-story, 23,500 square-foot facility will be located at 5522 Research Park Drive. The total construction cost of the project is projected to be approximately \$4,236,000.

Research collaboration with UMBC's core of water and environmental science expertise was the key factor in the USGS decision to move its Center to [bwtech@UMBC](mailto:bwtech@umbc.edu) from its previous location in White Marsh. The USGS has a longtime research partnership with UMBC's Department of Geography and Environmental Systems, Center for Urban and Environmental Research and Education (CUERE), Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, the U.S. Forest Service and the Baltimore Ecosystem Study.

James M. Gerhart, Director of the USGS MD-DE-DC Water Science Center, said, "By co-locating on the UMBC campus and becoming part of the university research community, we expect to strengthen our existing collaboration with UMBC on water-related science. We'll have easier access to student employees, labs, scientific instruments, and university researchers. The university will benefit from having USGS water science experts nearby to teach classes, work with student interns and lead field trips. All in all, I am confident that the move of USGS to UMBC will be a win-win situation."

"This move gives the citizens of Maryland a unique, new resource in higher education as USGS scientists will work shoulder-to-shoulder with UMBC professors," said Claire Welty, director of CUERE at UMBC.

“UMBC science and engineering students will receive an outstanding education that combines classroom training with hands-on research experience by simply walking across the street,” said Welty.

UMBC’s formal connection with USGS goes back to 1997, the beginning of the Baltimore Ecosystem Study (BES), a National Science Foundation-funded Long-Term Ecological Research Project whose field headquarters are located on the UMBC campus. BES, which was renewed for another 6-year term in 2004, makes Baltimore’s streams, rivers and water quality among the most highly monitored in the country thanks in large part to an extensive network of USGS equipment and personnel.

bwtech@UMBC was Maryland's first university research park and is the only research and development park in Baltimore County. The 41-acre park's first building, completed in 2001, is occupied by RWD Technologies. A second building, completed in 2004, is fully leased.

“We are very pleased to be selected as the developer to assist UMBC with their plans to expand the research park, but more importantly to have the opportunity to create a relationship with one of our local institutions.” said Randall M. Griffin, President and CEO of COPT.

The news from bwtech@UMBC comes as technology transfer and workforce development connections between UMBC, the research park and its nearby business incubator, techcenter@UMBC, are on the rise. Thirty-six UMBC faculty members collaborate on research and development with tenant companies. One hundred students are employed part-time or as interns and 54 alumni work or partner with the UMBC family of on-campus companies.

According to Ellen Hemmerly, executive director of the UMBC Research Park Corporation, the University is just as excited about the growth in human capital as it is about bricks and mortar. “The entire UMBC community is buying into the value of the park, which makes us much more attractive to the market,” said Hemmerly.

The COPT investment follows on the heels of the Dec. 23, 2005 sale of bwtech@UMBC’s first two buildings for \$22.5 million to Merritt Properties, another top player in the Baltimore/Washington commercial real estate market. Merritt’s purchase from former developer Grosvenor included 123,000 square feet occupied by tenants including RWD Technologies, Invoke Systems, BD Metrics Inc. and the NASA Goddard Earth Sciences and Technology Center.

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About The U.S. Geological Survey: The U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) is the nation's largest natural-science agency and has served the U.S. and the world for 126 years. The USGS provides reliable scientific information to describe and understand the Earth; minimize loss of life and property from natural disasters; manage water, biological, energy, and mineral resources; and enhance and protect the nation's quality of life. The USGS Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Water Science Center is one of many regional USGS science centers across the country.

About the USGS Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Water Science Center: The USGS Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Water Science Center collects basic data and conducts scientific investigations on the region's streams, springs, lakes, coastal bays and underground aquifer systems. USGS data on streamflow, ground-water levels, and water chemistry are used to define the quantity and quality of the region's water resources. Data on water use and consumption are also collected to determine human impact on the resource. Hydrologic research studies use these and other data to understand the vulnerability of water resources to over-use and contamination, and to learn how to preserve the resources in a sustainable manner for aquatic life and future human generations. Most of this work is done in cooperation with other federal, state and local government agencies, universities, and research centers.

About COPT: Corporate Office Properties Trust (COPT) is a fully integrated, self-managed real estate investment trust (REIT) that focuses on the ownership, management, leasing, acquisition and development of suburban office properties primarily in select Mid-Atlantic submarkets. The Company is among the largest owners of suburban office properties in the Greater Washington, DC region. COPT currently owns 182 office properties totaling 14.6 million rentable square feet, which includes 18 properties totaling 885,000 square feet held through joint ventures. The Company's shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol OFC. More information on Corporate Office Properties Trust can be found at www.copt.com.

About bwtech@UMBC: bwtech@UMBC is a 41-acre research and technology community at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). bwtech@UMBC has a total development capacity of up to 330,000 square feet of office and laboratory space. The USGS building will be the third of five planned state-of-the-art buildings containing over 300,000 square feet of office and wet lab space. The park's 62,000 square-foot first building has been leased by the information technology firm RWD Technologies since 2001. The second building, a 60,000-square-foot multi-tenant building, is fully leased with tenants including The NASA Goddard Earth Sciences and Technology Center, software maker BD Metrics Inc., healthcare communications and technology firm Physicians Practice, Inc., the Erickson School of Aging Studies at UMBC, the engineering/design firm Edwards & Kelcey, and UMBC's Alex. Brown Center for Entrepreneurship.

UMBC began planning for a new research and technology park in the early 1990s, based on the success of other U.S. parks and the vision of the late Michael Hooker, UMBC president from 1986-1992. To date, UMBC's research park and technology incubator have received public and private sector funding from the Maryland Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO), the State of Maryland, the City of Baltimore, Baltimore County, the U.S. Department of Commerce, The Abell Foundation, and the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO.) bwtech@UMBC is part of Baltimore County's Southwest Enterprise Zone, making companies moving to the park eligible for credits on real property and income taxes, as well as credits for job creation.