

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

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SENATE BILL 347*

Short Title: Southern Appalachian Science & Tech. Funds. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Apodaca.

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

March 3, 2005

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIAN
2 SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CENTER (SASTC) LOCATED IN POLK
3 COUNTY.
4

5 Whereas, North Carolina's mountain counties have undergone significant
6 economic upheaval due to the decline of the region's traditional manufacturing
7 industries; and

8 Whereas, Polk County is among the many counties in North Carolina that
9 have lost jobs as a result of textile mill closings; and

10 Whereas, the region's future economic vitality relies on its ability to spawn,
11 foster, and attract entrepreneurial ventures in emerging technologies and scientific
12 disciplines; and

13 Whereas, the ability of North Carolina's academic institutions west of the
14 Research Triangle to conduct effective and successful technology maturation and
15 commercialization remains limited by lack of resources and barriers to collaboration;
16 and

17 Whereas, North Carolina's Rural Internet Access Authority provided e-Polk a
18 grant in the amount of \$375,000 for the installation of OC12-capacity Internet
19 infrastructure access critical to the economic development of the area; and

20 Whereas, now that Polk County has world-class Internet capacity in place, a
21 local group of visionaries has created The Southern Appalachian Science & Technology
22 Center (SASTC) to build upon the foresight of the State and bring new jobs to the area;
23 and

24 Whereas, SASTC has a multipurpose vision for supporting innovation, the
25 management of intellectual property, and commercialization of technology in a variety
26 of cutting-edge fields including nanotechnology, bioscience, and materials science; and

27 Whereas, SASTC was incorporated as a nonprofit on October 24, 2003, with
28 bylaws specifying that a plan be developed for financial self-sufficiency through
29 membership support and the commercialization of intellectual property; and

1 Whereas, Polk County, the Town of Tryon, and Advantage West have all
2 provided support in the form of financial assistance or in-kind services for SASTC's
3 initial strategic planning efforts; and

4 Whereas, SASTC is uniquely positioned to coordinate interagency
5 cooperation, and the geography of Polk County is very advantageous relative to
6 universities in the eight State regions already conducting technology research, many of
7 which already have a relationship with SASTC; and

8 Whereas, through its collaboration with Western Carolina University, the
9 University of North Carolina at Asheville, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte,
10 and other institutions from the Piedmont and Triad areas, Western North Carolina will
11 benefit economically from SASTC's efforts; and

12 Whereas, SASTC has emerged as a leading scientific visualization entity in
13 the southeast and through its efforts has created the premier applied visualization
14 conference (AppliedVis 2005) in the southeast; and

15 Whereas, SASTC intends to establish a strategic alliance with the National
16 High Performance Computing Center and work closely with participating community
17 colleges and universities to create a Scientific Visualization High Performance
18 Computing Center within the SASTC facility; and

19 Whereas, SASTC proposes to join with the Visualization Grid Initiative of
20 the University of North Carolina at Asheville and the University of North Carolina at
21 Charlotte research centers; and

22 Whereas, the special benefits of visualization are not currently available to
23 small- and medium-size companies because of cost and system complexities; and

24 Whereas, SASTC plans to provide the expertise of visualization to small- and
25 medium-size companies in the area to give these businesses the edge in a very
26 competitive environment; and

27 Whereas, SASTC holds substantial and compelling promise for the economic
28 reinvention and growth of North Carolina's mountain region; Now, therefore,
29 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

30 **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to The Southern
31 Appalachian Science & Technology Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization located in
32 Polk County, the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the
33 2005-2006 fiscal year for operating expenses. These funds shall serve as matching funds
34 and leverage to secure targeted additional support from federal agencies and private
35 foundations to advance the SASTC vision.

36 **SECTION 2.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2005.