

New Site to Significantly Enhance Developmental Testing Capability

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PATUXENT RIVER, MD — Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) spoke this morning at a dedication ceremony for the new Aircraft Prototype Facility (APF) at Patuxent Naval Air Station, for which Rep. Hoyer helped secure \$17.9 million in federal funds within the FY2008 military construction appropriations bill. The new APF will further enhance testing capabilities to streamline the pre-production process and elevate Pax River’s role in the supporting the warfighter. Below are his remarks as prepared for delivery:

“Admiral Gaddis, we were together here in February of 2009 when we broke ground for this new facility. Surely you and others remember that morning – not only for importance of what we did. But, if you’re like me, you’ll remember how bitter cold it was that day. With sub-freezing winds blowing in off the Chesapeake Bay, we somehow broke ground here without breaking the shovels!

“Today - a very much warmer day – we gather again, but this field has been transformed. Today, we mark the dedication of the aircraft prototype facility – the APF. Even with all the critical work going on here at Pax, it is important that we pause to mark the significance of this facility opening.

“In my opinion, not since the opening of the large chamber, have we inaugurated a facility that is as strategically important to us as this one. The work done at the APF will be vital to our national security needs, far into the future.

“Pax is the Defense Departments Center of Excellence for fixed- and rotary-winged aircraft, such as the F/A-18 Super Hornet, Joint Strike Fighter, the P-8, the V-22, BAMS, and many other important programs. But this new facility broadens the reach of Pax River’s mission to support the warfighters.

“The APF will soon become a leader in rapid prototyping and quick response efforts. The co-location with ACETEF and the Atlantic Test Range means development and testing in a battle-space environment, all in a very short timeframe.

“This is a very powerful concept for everything from materials to sensors to airframe modifications at all classification levels.

“Prototyping is the key – it reduces the risk aspects of systems acquisition and is a powerful tool for making engineering changes to systems under development before the program is passed on to a contractor for production.

“Opening the APF meets some of the principal goals of secretary gates and this administration: to maximize value for the taxpayer and – most importantly – to get needed technology to those who are in harms’ way, faster.

“The opening of PAX river in 1943 marked a major milestone for naval aviation, and since then, we have achieved many others: opening the test pilot school, building the Atlantic Test Range, bringing ACETEF on line, adding the small and then large anechoic chambers, and so many other important capabilities.

“I have been present for the addition of over \$1 billion of new investment here at PAX in just the past decade and a half, joining with you to build and dedicate so many important facilities.

“Today’s opening marks another major milestone for Pax River’s capability – one that will play a pivotal and transformational role for PAX River’s mission.

“APF ensures that whether the platform is manned or unmanned, ground, air, or sea based, a one of a kind modification for a specific mission, or the prototype for thousands to follow, we are quickly producing what is needed and adding great value to the acquisition process.

“These facilities don’t just happen – they only become a reality with great energy and determination.

“The APF has been the passion of principally one man – Dr. Joe Hoeg. Dr. Hoeg has worked to see this day for over a decade and I know he is one proud man today – as well he should be.

“It was his vision and his drive that helped to get us to this dedication today, and Joe, I join with all of your colleagues in thanking you for your commitment to do what is right for our country – not just today, but throughout your entire career.

“And I want to congratulate Chad Miller for assembling a strong team to meet the challenges of this cutting-edge facility.

“I wish you Godspeed as you launch Pax River’s next strategic capability to support this great nation of ours.”

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