

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2005**

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**HOUSE BILL 562\***

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

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Sponsors: Representative Walend.

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Referred to: Appropriations.

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March 10, 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.