

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2005**

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**SENATE DRS85089-LG-98A\* (02/24)**

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

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Sponsors: Senator Apodaca.

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Referred to:

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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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22           Whereas, SASTC proposes to join with the Visualization Grid Initiative of  
23 the University of North Carolina at Asheville and the University of North Carolina at  
24 Charlotte research centers; and

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

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

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

33           **SECTION 1.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to The Southern  
34 Appalachian Science & Technology Center, Inc., a nonprofit organization located in  
35 Polk County, the sum of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) for the  
36 2005-2006 fiscal year for operating expenses. These funds shall serve as matching funds  
37 and leverage to secure targeted additional support from federal agencies and private  
38 foundations to advance the SASTC vision.

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