



# Eastern-in-the-News



## GOVERNOR BREAKS GROUND AT MOOREFIELD'S NEW MILITARY READINESS CENTER

**Moorefield — 3/22** — A friendly crowd of some 100 citizens from Hardy County and the surrounding area — including local residents, national guardspersons, city, county and state officials, and staff and students from Eastern WV Community and Technical College, who hosted the event — applauded Governor Earl Ray Tomblin and several other speakers who visited the South Branch Valley last Monday to break symbolic ground on the new Moorefield Armed Forces Readiness Center.

The dedication ceremony offered a glimpse of the constructive civic achievement that is possible through political cooperation, as in virtual unison the speakers paid tribute to the Guard's efforts statewide and around the world, and chalked in the outlines of the new, spacious and versatile facility already under construction.

"This project started with General Alien Tackett, and under his tutelage General Jimmy Hoyer is doing a fantastic job," the governor said, paying tribute to those in the Guard whose efforts he felt have served as the undertaking's driving force.

"Also, I would like to recognize Roy Harper, Chair of the Hardy County Rural Development Authority (RDA); Dr. Chuck Terrell, president of Eastern WV Community and Technical College; and the whole group all working together to make this new facility that we're getting ready to break ground on today a reality," Tomblin emphasized. "I know that this is going to be a great facility that we can all be very proud of."



**Shovels Up!** An energetic team of official groundbreakers put elbows and shoulders to the task Monday at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Moorefield Armed Forces Readiness Center on the campus of Eastern WV Community and Technical College. The new facility, already under construction, will house the West Virginia Army National Guard 157th Military Police Unit.

Rising on the western ridge of Eastern's campus overlooking Corridor H, the 58,520 square foot facility will house the West Virginia Army National Guard 157th Military Police Unit. "This represents a crucial upgrade as our national guard leaders and members continue rising to meet new demands," noted Senator Jay Rockefeller in a letter read at the event by Brigadier General David Buckalew.

#### **\$20.5-Million**

"WV's National Guard is, simply put, second to none, as it serves critical missions at home and abroad, and its role continues to evolve — whether on the ground overseas defending our nation, or responding swiftly to natural disasters here at home," said Buckalew, a longtime veteran of the Moorefield unit and the newly appointed Director of Staff for the West Virginia National Guard Joint Diversity Executive Council (WVJDEC).

"So that's why we must do everything we can to give you the facilities and resources you need to do a good job at the high standards you set for yourselves. And this facility is a big piece of that effort." Rockefeller joined with the late Senator Robert C. Byrd, and his successor, Joe Manchin, III, to steer some \$20.5-million in federal funds towards the project, which benefited from bi-partisan support in Congress.

"This center will provide a model for the continued cooperation between the National Guard and its host communities across the state," noted Chris Strovel, delivering remarks on behalf of Congresswoman Shelly Moore Capito.

Besides supporting the Guard's service missions, said Strovel, who serves as Capito's Eastern Panhandle Field Representative, "it will provide a home for Hardy County's 9-1-1 service, auxiliary space for Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, and an Assembly Hall for National Guard and public events."

#### **Architectural Blending**



According to a release from the Hardy County RDA, the architectural design includes a very conscious desire "to complement the historical architecture of the area" and blend with the styles and "elements of the recently constructed Eastern West Virginia Community & Technical College to create" a whole campus atmosphere.

The design layout features a "skylight-covered main entry for the Guard and includes the recruiting, family support and administrative areas." And for the sake of both security and convenience, it provides "a separate entrance and parking lot" for the public use areas "that includes access to the 911 center, the assembly Hall and the classrooms."

Those added benefits that will flow to Eastern's students and staff represent only one side of the partnership promise, and locating the Guard facility right alongside the local community and technical college seemed purposed to fulfill that pledge: "Nothing happens without partnership and vision, and I just want to reinforce that this wouldn't be going on today if not for the vision of [Major General] Allen Tackett and Robert C. Byrd, who turned the National Guard into a 21st century organization," said Major General James A. Hoyer, Adjutant General, West Virginia, who provides overall supervision and management of day-to-day operations for the West Virginia Army and Air National Guard's more than 6,000 citizen soldiers and airmen.

"And had it not been for the vision of folks like Governor Tomblin, Delegate Harold Michael, and Senators Walt Helmick and Bob Williams, to give the National Guard that tuition reimbursement money," Hoyer emphasized, "so our men and women could attend college and technical school."

### **The Cutting Edge**

Thanking the new Governor for his leadership, Hoyer pointed to a movement that Tomblin spearheaded while still a member of the legislature, "one I think that General Tackett and I will remember the most — the effort back in 1995, when you, and [Senator] Oshel Craigo, and other members of the legislature gave us the opportunity to put men and women in school and create a group of critical thinkers that are going to lead this nation to the next level of greatness.

"Seventy-eight percent of the men and women in the WV National Guard today either have a technical trade skill or a college degree, or are working on a technical trade skill or a college degree. And having this new Readiness Center here in this setting," Hoyer said, sweeping his arm around the vista of Eastern's campus, "is truly another step in keeping us at the cutting edge that our nation right now needs for a cost-effective, timely capability that the National Guard provides."

For his part, the Governor left little doubt that he believes the Readiness Center will provide a valuable return on the investment. "The men and women in uniform are right there and working together with Homeland Security people, and the Dept of Highways, and Soil Conservation," the Governor emphasized, evoking the courageous rescue work he had "witnessed first-hand during some of the worst devastation caused by Mother Nature to our beautiful state, the floods and tornado of the last two weeks" in West Virginia's southern counties.

"It's like a well-oiled machine, the way they respond and leave their everyday jobs to come out and help West Virginians with their needs," Tomblin said. "And not only to West Virginia — but to people around the globe."

### **Added Community Value**

Standing in for Senator Manchin, his Regional Coordinator, Peggy C. Hawse, also congratulated "our Guard for being the best in the nation. I thank you for your unwavering service and selfless efforts to protect our homeland, and I know that you are not the only ones who make sacrifices in your daily lives to answer the call of duty. The families and loved ones also make sacrifices, and I sincerely appreciate their efforts as well.

"This new facility will enhance your strong capabilities and ensure many successful missions well into the future," Hawse asserted, proclaiming the Senator's remarks. "I know well that the community will also benefit greatly from today's announcement. The Guard provides training and education that offers the state an excellent, motivated workforce.

"There are so many ways that the Guard adds value to West Virginia, and this dedication allows us to showcase them," she said.

“These things don’t fall out of the sky,” noted Harold Michael, the retiring 12-term delegate from District 47. Referring to a long-nurtured alliance among General Tackett, Senator Byrd, and Earl Ray Tomblin, “over the years that has developed into a partnership that has brought billions of dollars to West Virginia,” Michael pointed out. “The Governor knows when a project is worthy and needs to be done, and he commits to it. And we find the money and we get it done.”

Several of the speakers listed additional individuals they deemed essential to the achievement of this partnership project, including Moorefield Mayor Gary Stalnaker; Major General Melvin L. Burch, Assistant Adjutant General for Installations and Homeland Defense, West Virginia National Guard; and “Jimmy Hoyer — these guys have all been very instrumental,” Michael said.

For more information about Eastern’s financial aid opportunities, programs of study, workforce training and community education, call toll free: 877-982-2322; or check the College’s website: “[www.eastern.wvnet.edu](http://www.eastern.wvnet.edu)”.

Serving the residents of Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Mineral, Pendleton and Tucker counties, Eastern West Virginia Community and Technical College, fully accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, is a comprehensive and equal opportunity community and technical college bringing the resources and assets of Education That Works to the families, communities and employers of the Potomac Highlands.