

## HERMITAGE

# Feds give another \$100,000 for center

Sharon-Herald – Wednesday, August 04, 2010  
By Joe Pinchot, *Herald Staff Writer*

The federal tap continues to pour money on LindenPointe with the awarding of a \$100,000 grant for testing equipment in the tech center under construction there.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, D-3rd District, Erie, presented a ceremonial check Tuesday from the Appalachian Regional Commission, an arm of the U.S. Department of Commerce, to city officials. The city is putting up another \$100,000 for the equipment, said City Manager Gary P. Hinkson.

The 15,000-square-foot tech center will be a business incubator and testing laboratory for high-tech companies. It is being funded by a \$4.2 million federal grant and a \$1.5 million state grant.

The federal government previously put in \$800,000 toward construction of the training and workforce development building next door to where the tech center is being built in the LindenPointe technical business park, South Hermitage Road. City officials want the tech center's five to seven incubator suites occupied by businesses in the so-called STEM industries — science, technology, engineering and math — and could include software makers, electronics manufacturers and biological research firms.

Rep. Dahlkemper called the tech center an “invaluable resource” for the county, and praised the potential for helping manufacturing companies develop. “We have to make things in this country,” Rep. Dahlkemper said. “We have to support businesses that want to make things.”

Assistant City Manager Gary M. Gulla said the city plans to buy equipment such as an oscilloscope, function generator, multimeter, network analyzer, computer-aided- drafting design stations, microscope, X-ray machine and parametric analyzer. Officials relied on recommendations from Novocell Semiconductor, Hermitage; Cattron Group Inc., Sharpsville; Wintronics, Sharon; and Pine Instruments, Pine Township, in choosing the equipment, which Gulla said will help businesses in designing their products, testing their efficiency and making sure they meet specifications.

This equipment is expensive — about \$40,000 for an Xray machine or \$30,000 for a CAD design station — often too costly for startup companies, Gulla said. The particular equipment eyed by city officials can be used by a number of different types of companies, Gulla said.

The equipment likely will be bought in the second quarter of next year, and the list of pieces could change, Gulla said.

Incubator companies will be able to use the equipment free of charge, while outside firms and trainers will be charged a fee, Gulla said.



Jason Kapusta/Herald

**Ciera Flickinger watches as a robot she programmed with Lauren Bell navigates a maze during a robotics class which is part of the Hermitage School District Summer Academy. The class was held at the training building in LindenPointe in Hermitage, where U.S. Rep. Kathy Dahlkemper, D-3rd District, Erie, on Tuesday presented a \$100,000 federal grant for testing lab equipment at a tech center being built there.**