



Campus News

Home &gt; Campus News &gt; USF Poly sees nothing but Blue Skies

## USF Poly sees nothing but Blue Skies

June 24, 2009

Lakeland, Fla.

### NEWS DELIVERED

[Subscribe to eNews](#)

### RELATED INFO

[USF Poly / Blue Sky Business Incubators](#)
[About Steve Budd](#)
[About Marshall Goodman](#)

Late yesterday, as violent thunderstorms doused central Florida yet again, Marshall Goodman sent a tweet: "No need to worry about the rain, Central Florida. Blue Sky is coming soon!"

[Goodman](#), VP and CEO of the University of South Florida Polytechnic, announced today that USFP's business incubation facilities will be named Blue Sky. Earlier this year the [Central Florida Development Council](#) invested \$700,000 toward the construction of an incubation facility on the new I-4 campus, expected to open in 2012. In the meantime, however, the community will be served by at least two incubation facilities: one in Lakeland and one in Winter Haven, dubbed Blue Sky West and Blue Sky East, respectively.

Blue Sky West will be a 6,428 square-foot location at [116 S. Kentucky Ave. in Lakeland](#). Blue Sky East will open at [199 Ave. B NW in Winter Haven](#) with 3,000 square feet. USFP officials expect both facilities to open in early fall 2009.

A tweet refers to a post on [Twitter](#), the popular social networking site. Goodman used the relatively new technology, as well as his personal Facebook page, to tease online followers not about the weather but about economic development in central Florida.

The Blue Sky facilities will be the first public business technology incubators in Polk County. They will focus on attracting and nurturing entrepreneurial businesses by creating a place where USF Poly faculty, staff and students can work with businesses to develop innovative technology.

"This is an important step for our region, as we cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation," says Goodman.

"These facilities will provide opportunities for a wide range of enterprises. Some will be raw start-ups, and some will be more advanced. Regardless of the stage, Blue Sky represents an opportunity to thrive."

According to Goodman, "The story of innovation is the story of entrepreneurship, and entrepreneurship is all about calculated risk. That is the principle upon which we'll base Blue Sky. We will provide a climate to nurture innovation.

"This is a huge opportunity, not only for entrepreneurs but also for investors. We hope it will bring to this area more technology-oriented businesses with the potential for growth and new jobs"

Initially, USF Poly will seek information technology companies interested in software, networking and developing specific IT projects.

"We have felt for the past five years at least that an incubator is integral to this region's long-term economic success," says Tom Patton, executive director of the [Central Florida Development Council](#), which has donated a total of \$1 million to the USF Poly incubator concept. In addition to the \$700,000 for construction on the new campus, CFDC donated \$300,000 for current operation of Blue Sky. USF Poly has pledged to match those operating funds to provide \$600,000 to fund Blue Sky.

The \$700,000 for construction will be used to apply for state matching funds and in pursuit of an Economic Development Administration grant. According to Patton, the long-term goal is a technology park that develops around the incubator at the heart of [Florida's High Tech Corridor](#).

"This is a major step forward in developing and growing our technology incubator," says [Steve Budd](#), USFP's program director for entrepreneurship and venture planning. "It will become a living, learning laboratory for interdisciplinary and applied research, education and training that directly impacts technology commercialization and business development.

"Our incubator will be a focal point where the university's academic development and our community's economic development will blend and synergize to create a win-win for all stakeholders -- the business community, our students, our faculty, and many others. I believe that this is where the magic happens, where we will create high-tech, high-wage jobs."

There are 7,000 incubators and counting around the globe, and they create jobs, grow companies and help technology evolve. President Obama has pledged \$250 million a year in federal funds to seed a regional network of such organizations--an effort aimed at growing jobs and innovation.

"This is the first time in the U.S. that a new administration has made this kind of commitment to innovation, entrepreneurs and technology," says Dinah Adkins, president and CEO of the [National Business Incubation Association](#). "This is the first time we've had a presidential administration that wants to invest in this."

The U.S. [Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration](#) says business incubators provide communities with significantly greater results at less cost than do any other type of public works infrastructure project.

A recent [study](#) conducted for the U.S. Economic Development Administration showed that business incubators provide communities with significantly greater results at less cost than do any other type of public works infrastructure project. In the study of the economic impacts and federal costs of EDA construction program investments, researchers found that business incubators are the most effective means of creating jobs - more effective than roads and bridges, industrial parks, commercial buildings, and sewer and water projects. In fact, incubators provide up to 20 times more jobs than community infrastructure projects (for example, water and sewer projects) at a cost of \$144 to \$216 per job compared with \$2,920 to \$6,872 for the latter, the report notes.

"Business incubators are critical components of the nation's entrepreneurial support infrastructure and the only public works projects that were designed entirely as job generators," says Adkins. "The jobs created by incubators aren't one-time construction jobs, but enduring, high-paying positions that contribute to community and U.S. global competitiveness."

Business incubation programs provide entrepreneurs with a guiding hand to help them turn their ideas into viable businesses. Many thousands more jobs have been created by companies that have graduated from these programs and now operate self-sufficiently in their communities. For more information about business incubation and the EDA study, visit [www.nbia.org/works](http://www.nbia.org/works).

For more information on Blue Sky see [poly.usf.edu/BlueSky](http://poly.usf.edu/BlueSky).

*For more information contact Thomas Hagerty 863.667.7077, [thagerty@poly.usf.edu](mailto:thagerty@poly.usf.edu)*

University of South Florida Polytechnic, A Member of the USF System  
3433 Winter Lake Road, Lakeland, FL 33803  
863.667.7000 - Toll Free within Florida 800.USF.5636 | [info@poly.usf.edu](mailto:info@poly.usf.edu)  
© 2009 University of South Florida Polytechnic. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#)

[New Campus](#) | [Campus Map](#) | [USF System](#)  
[Emergency Preparedness](#)  
[Feedback](#) | [Site Map](#)  
[Library](#) | [Blackboard](#) | [OASIS](#) | [myPoly](#)