

Biometrics director seeks to cement government ties

by Jim Fisher

METRO EDITOR

BRIDGEPORT — Clarksburg native Sam Cava takes his role as leader of the government's biometrics testing center very seriously.

Cava realizes that he is in a very unique position — director of a vital government agency that is not located in the heart of Washington, D.C. He is determined to show the Army brass that they made the right choice in moving the Biometrics Fusion Center to the Bridgeport/Clarksburg area.

To that end, Cava this week invited officials from a wide range of government agencies to meet here and discuss how best to conduct biometric testing and evaluation.

"Basically, we're trying to



Cava

reduce duplication by finding out what are the best practices out there," Cava said. "What are others doing in testing and evaluation that we

can use specifically for biometrics?"

The agencies have been working together for a while, Cava said. This week's summit was a chance to formalize those relationships.

"This is not a one-time shot. We plan to have everyone back," he said.

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The Test and Evaluation Biometric Working Group is designed to share all the latest biometrics findings with the entire Department of Defense at the same time, Cava said. One of the goals of the Biometrics Fusion Center is to provide the military with the most up-to-date information on the latest technology.

The easiest way to accomplish that goal, he said, is to involve all relevant agencies, including the military.

"It's always good to have more than one set of eyes on something," he said. "What we're looking for is repeatable, valid processes for testing that can be used here and elsewhere. We want to have everyone on the same page."

Initial charter members of the group include representatives from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics), U.S. Army Evaluation Center, Joint Interoperability Test Command, Information Sys-

tem Engineering Command, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

The Biometrics Fusion Center is in Bridgeport, but is expected to move part of its operation to a new facility in downtown Clarksburg.

A lease for the late Tom Keeley's building at 347 W. Main St. has been in effect since June. The contract is for a three-year lease with two additional one-year options. The annual rent is estimated at \$456,750.

The 29,870-square-foot facility will include a state-

of-the-art demonstration center and a testing and evaluation laboratory space.

A permanent biometrics facility is planned for the FBI complex and projected to begin in 2006. When complete, the permanent site will house 150-175 employees, infuse between \$18 million and \$20 million into the state's economy annually and open the door for new private-sector investments.

Metro Editor Jim Fisher can be reached at 626-1446 or by e-mail at jfisher@exponent-telegram.com