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Hundreds attend military construction summit

By: Elise Roberts

GREENSBORO – Members of the Department of Defense are reaching out to North Carolina business owners.

Hundreds of government officials met with construction owners and other business leaders for the fourth annual North Carolina Military Construction Summit.

"We started with a 150 people three years ago and today's summit has 650 people," said Will Austin, director of the North Carolina Military Foundation.

The annual summit, also known as MILCON, hopes to further stimulate the military's \$23 billion economic impact on the state.

"This year, there is hundreds of millions of dollars of workload in North Carolina. We'll see that again in fiscal year 10 and fiscal year 11," said Austin. "A lot of contractors in North Carolina have experience building dormitories for the university system, so what we are finding is that we have very capable contractors that have past performance in other areas of the construction industry that apply directly to the needs of the military."

Leaders say for the past four years the summit has been instrumental building relationships, bridging the gap between the private sector and the military.

"We're so busy, we can't always connect all the contractors and attending events like this is a big help in getting our soldiers and our airmen support," said Col. Edward Kertis.

Kertis, with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, says his division spends \$3 billion to \$4 billion a year on military construction projects. Next year, the district will spend millions more rebuilding barracks at camp Lejeune.

"It's just gotten to be that time in the life cycle of our facilities that they need to be replaced and we are at that point in our nation's history where we are going to do it," said Kertis.

It's just one reason why contractors, subcontractors and suppliers from around the state hope the MILCON summit will bring them one step closer to sealing the deal on new partnerships with the federal government.

The North Carolina Military Business Center and the North Carolina Military Foundation co-hosted the summit.

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