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Ulster gets armor biz

By Paul Brooks

Times Herald-Record

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Kingston - Soldiers in Iraq might someday owe their lives to new anti-bullet and anti-bomb armor made in Kingston.

A phalanx of government officials, including Gov. George Pataki, packed City Hall yesterday to announce a new company's plans to construct a 58,000-square-foot building in the city's business park. Total company investment: \$20 million.

The company is Armor Dynamics Inc. of Stone Ridge. Stone Ridge residents David Warren and Wayne Schaeffer are two of the company's partners.

The company hopes its revolutionary material will create 570 jobs here in the next five years. Blue-collar jobs will pay \$14 a hour, Warren said. The company will need engineers, managers and research and design experts as well.

But first they have to nail some sales, Schaeffer said.

The potential is there. The key is MagmaCore, the guts of all the company's products. MagmaCore uses the scientific theories of Buckminster Fuller of "Bucky balls" fame. The result is a futuristic material reminiscent of an egg carton sandwiched between layers of plastic.

As Warren explained in a June 2005 Washington Monthly article, MagmaCore uses a bullet or bomb fragment's own energy against it. The metal melts from the friction created.

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Hardened steel can withstand only about 12 bullet hits in the same area before it is pierced. Warren said he pumped 135 bullets into the Magmacore panel for the article. None penetrated all the way.

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To top it off, the material is lighter.

The company already molds the material into bombproof garbage cans that city subway systems can use. Armor Dynamics has a bulletproof shield for police and emergency workers. Designers are working on more effective and lighter-weight bulletproof vests and military vehicles.

Armor has been a constant problem in Iraq.

"We need to start educating a lot of these people who have the ability to make the decision ... to not keep on putting heavier steel on our vehicles," Warren said.

Representatives of Armor Dynamics are in Iraq negotiating for a way to help integrate the company's new armor on military vehicles, Warren said.

Schaeffer sees a major shift in armor in the future. "This is a brand-new concept. We are the tip of the iceberg," he said.

The economic incentive package the city and state assembled cemented the deal. "Why go anywhere else?" Warren said.

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