

# Northrop Grumman opens facility for testing antenna in Linthicum

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Northrop Grumman's Linthicum operation now hosts the world's largest and most precise antenna-testing complex with the unveiling Tuesday of a \$13.7 million facility.

Top company executives said the building and its one-of-a-kind test scanner will be key elements in Northrop Grumman's plans to move back into ground- and ship-based scanning arrays after an absence of nearly two decades.

"It's important because it transitions us from traditional airborne sensor systems ... to very large scanning arrays," said Northrop Grumman CEO Ron Sugar.

The five-story, 16,000-square-foot facility features a 60-foot by 40-foot scanner system in a large, foam-lined anechoic chamber that cuts down on distortions affecting testing results.

The system is mounted on a 28-ton, solid granite foundation for stability, can record 300,000 measurements per second and is

accurate to two-thousandths of an inch, about the diameter of a human hair.

"The big thing about this room is to have a controlled environment," said Robert Royer, director of engineering program management. "This gives us the repeatable, consistent results we need for large antenna systems."

Royer said no other facility like Northrop Grumman's exists or is under development in the world.

The facility would allow Grumman to test and develop large land-based arrays, Sugar said.

Northrop Grumman also looks to acquire contracts including components for the Navy's next-generation cruiser program and retrofitting new scanner technology onto older aircraft, said James Pitts, president of the company's electronic systems sector. Sugar said that sector is the largest of the company's divisions, accounting for about 20 percent of Northrop Grumman's 2006 revenues.

"We're in a whole new ballgame," said Pitts. "This [facility] factors significantly into our move into adjacent markets."

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Ronald D. Sugar, chairman and CEO of Northrop Grumman, unveils the company's new antenna-testing facility in Linthicum on Tuesday. - Chris Ammann/Examiner