

A three-year project to transform Rutgers University's footprint in New Brunswick officially broke ground today, part of a \$330 million effort that will fully connect the College Avenue campus and create its first new academic building in 50 years.

Spearheaded by the nonprofit New Brunswick Development Corp., the plan also calls for new housing for 1,000 students, an honors college and a 25,000-square-foot outdoor plaza. The 200,000-square-foot academic building will anchor the development, opening in 2016 on land long owned by the New Brunswick Theological Seminary.

The project drew Gov. Chris Christie, university leaders and other public officials to the seminary site today for a ceremony to kick off construction.

And a makeover for the campus couldn't be more timely, they said, with the completion of a sweeping statewide higher education reorganization and Rutgers recent entrance to the Big Ten conference.

"New Brunswick is poised to take its rightful place among great American college towns," said Christopher Paladino, Devco's president, pointing to place such as Madison, Wis.; Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Columbus, Ohio.

The project is possible largely because the theological institution sold a 5-acre piece of its historic property to Devco, allowing the seminary to end up with new facilities of its own nearby. It's a deal Paladino said was 150 years in the making, as Rutgers has long coveted the hilltop property owned by the seminary, which sits in the middle of the College Avenue campus.

Work on the seminary portion began last month, calling for 30,000-square-foot central building with a chapel, classrooms and offices. Rutgers President Robert Barchi, who took over the post last year, said "we pride ourselves on being one of the oldest universities in the nation, but that doesn't necessarily mean having only the oldest buildings. We have to grow with the nation and with intellectual strength and development — and with the times," Barchi said. "And this marks a major step forward."

The greater College Avenue redevelopment project was unveiled last summer to great fanfare. Parts of the project are set for completion in each of the next three years. Funding for the project is coming from several sources, including a \$33 million Urban Transit Hub tax credit from the state that has helped leverage \$295 million in private-sector financing, according to Devco's website. The project was one of the last to benefit from the tax credit program before a sweeping incentives overhaul that Christie signed into law on Thursday.

The College Avenue redevelopment also received a \$55 million grant from state funds.

Concord Engineering is providing LEED Fundamental and Enhanced Commissioning Services for the three new buildings being developed by DEVCO as part of the Public Partnership Program (3P). The three new buildings include the Academic Building, Honors College and Lot 8. The commissioning scope for the project includes; HVAC and building controls, building envelope, domestic hot water systems, day-lighting and lighting controls, standby generator and automatic transfer switch, and main electrical switchgear.

