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Thousands of Jobs Could Be the Result of Research District Deal

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Richland -- It's official. Tri-Cities Research District leaders have signed a deal that could lead to thousands of new jobs in the area.

The agreement allows for the creation of a master plan for hundreds of acres of land in North Richland. Development on-site is expected to act as a magnet for high paying jobs, diversify the economy, and bring in retail and recreation. Those working on the plan have helped develop major corporate campuses, like the Nike project in Portland.

Stefee Knudsen with tva architects (company logo is in lower case font) in Portland, who is working on the master plan said Friday, "We hope to bring together the best ideas for creating a truly sustainable environment out of this research district. We've got some pretty audacious goals and we're trying to see where they fall within the practical and the visionary."

Knudsen said there is room on the land for 3 million square feet of office space. Already, Solaris, one of the groups behind the vision, plans to take up a million feet of it. A Solaris spokesman, when asked how many jobs might be created once development is totally complete on the land, surprised reporters by saying he believed it could sustain as many as fifteen to 20 thousand new jobs.

Solaris, Battelle, and the Port of Benton are the major drivers behind the vision.

The master plan is expected to be complete in August. It will be used as a tool to recruit business to locate on-site.

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