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Touchstone a Model For 'New Economy'

Economic development based on new technology got a bad name when the so-called "dot-com crash" occurred. Thoughtful investors saw it coming. They pointed out that an economy without a strong manufacturing base simply isn't viable in the long term.

That certainly is true — but a local company, Touchstone Research Laboratory — is providing a model for growth by combining manufacturing with high-technology work.

In an early Christmas present to the valley, Touchstone announced this month that a new facility to manufacture CFOAM will be built beside Touchstone's building at Triadelphia. The new facility involves a partnership among Touchstone, the U.S. Department of Defense, the state of

West Virginia and the Regional Economic Development Partnership. It is expected that about 30 jobs will be created by the manufacturing facility.

CFOAM is a high-technology material developed by Touchstone, which has been working on the product since 1998. The material's components include coal, and it has shown promise for a variety of uses — including some in the military.

Touchstone, founded by Elizabeth Kraftician and Brian Joseph, for several years has been a model for how research — technology — can be put to practical use. As such, the company is helping to lead the Ohio Valley in a realistic approach to the "new economy." We hope CFOAM is just the tip of the iceberg in that regard.