

# SITE NEWS

**NORTHROP GRUMMAN**  
*Integrated Systems*

- Bethpage -

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## Long Island Aerospace Icon to Pass the Torch to an Offspring

A major focal point of the aerospace industry on Long Island has always been Bethpage, at least according to former Grumman and now Northrop Grumman employees. A symbol of that, since the late 1950's, is the "blue ball" atop Building 5.

The future of the "blue ball" has been of concern to us, since Northrop Grumman is turning that building back to the U.S. Navy as the company modernizes buildings it owns in the Bethpage complex. Airborne Early Warning and Electronic Warfare Systems, the largest Northrop Grumman company unit on Long Island, has wanted to keep the icon. However, because it will no longer occupy the building, the question was: "how?"

The answer is: replicate.

"Because of its age, construction and condition, moving it is not an option. And the building it sits on will not be ours, so we can't maintain it there ourselves. But, we came up with an alternative," said Phil Teel, our vice president for Airborne Early Warning and Electronic Warfare Systems. "We're going to build another one on top of our headquarters building. It will be a new ball but it will maintain the heritage of which we are so proud."

The company had solicited rigging companies to see if it would be possible to move the ball. That, however, turned out to be a chancy option at best because of the age, construction and condition of the fiberglass enclosure. It was built for radar development work in 1958, used briefly for that and again briefly for the Lunar Module program but mostly unused during its 43 years.

Instead, a new ball will be put atop Building 25, painted in the company colors with the company logo and lighted so that it will be visible at night. The old ball will remain atop Building 5, which will be turned back to the Navy on January 1. The ball will be repainted during the next two weeks before the company vacates the building. We are expected to unveil the new ball some time during the first half of next year.

### ***AEW & EW Systems Communications***

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