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Five Maryland University-Based Research Teams Receive Funding from TEDCO to Assess Commercial Viability of New Technologies

The university research teams receive \$75,000 total from TEDCO's TechStart program

COLUMBIA, Md. (Dec. 16, 2008) – **The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO)** announced today that five Maryland university-based research teams have received \$75,000 total in funding. Teams from the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI), Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL), Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and the University of Maryland College Park (UMCP), each received \$15,000 in funding from TEDCO's TechStart program. TechStart helps university-based teams determine the commercial viability of specific technologies, and is designed to increase the number of university startups, elevating Maryland's national standing.

"University-based technology is crucial to Maryland's economy and our state's influence in the national technology arena," said Governor Martin O'Malley. "The TechStart program has been instrumental in facilitating the transfer and commercialization of some of Maryland's most promising university technologies and I look forward to the progress of these five potential companies."

"The TechStart Program provides opportunity and potential for premier technologies developed in Maryland academic research facilities to be commercialized," said Renée Winsky, president and executive director of TEDCO. "TEDCO is proud to support these research teams and hope that their technologies go on to make significant economic development contributions in our state."

TechStart provides funding to university-based teams that must include: an inventor who is willing to assist in evaluating the feasibility of a startup; an experienced entrepreneur who will provide business guidance; and a technology transfer manager. To receive funding, teams must submit a proposal to TEDCO for further evaluation. Recipients receive a maximum of \$15,000 through TechStart, which defrays the costs of evaluating the probability of the startup's opportunity. All universities in Maryland are eligible for funding.

The five university-based research teams that received the funding are as follows:

- Michael Zilliox, Ph.D., biologist at JHU; Rafel Irizarry, Ph.D., biostatistician at JHU; Karen Olson, entrepreneur; and Steve Kubisen, technology transfer manager at JHU, are developing the Gene Expression Barcode which can compare the gene expression patterns of tumor cells to define previously undiscovered subsets in heterogeneous tumor populations. The team received funding to conduct a freedom to operate analysis of key patents, market studies and a business plan.

- Daniel Hahn, optical engineer at APL; Kevin Baldwin, supervisor in the air and missile defense department at APL; Gerard Eldering, founder and president of InnovateTech Ventures; and Heather Curran, technology transfer manager at APL, received funding to further develop a high resolution, digital, 3D scanning technology that quickly acquires the detail and reflectance of an object which can be stored, changed, shared and copied. Funding will also be used to identify markets and a business niche for this technology.
- Greg Payne, Ph.D., scientist at UMBI; Colleen Nye and Loleta Robinson founders of Syan Biosciences; and Jonathan Gottlieb, technology transfer manager at UMBI, are working to commercialize a chitosan chip biosensor technology comprised of a novel material modified from crustacean cells. The technology, developed by Greg Payne and William Bentley, Ph.D., both scientists affiliated with UMBI, UMCP, and University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), can be used to build hand-held protein detectors for scientific research, point-of-care diagnostics and applications in biodefense. Funding will be used to support intellectual property due diligence and to conduct market research.
- Marino diMarzo, Ph.D., engineering professor at UMCP; Phyllis Kolmus and Sherry McCray, graduates of the entrepreneurial ACTiVATE program; and Gayatri Varma, acting director of the office of technology commercialization at UMCP, are working to commercialize the Fire Protection for Vehicles Technology (FPVT) developed by di Marzo. The FPVT technology is a compact nozzle that produces fire-suppressing foam that can be installed in the engine compartment area of a car. The FPVT is designed to deploy on impact releasing nitrogen-based, fire-choking foam which will put out a fire in the vehicle or prevent a fire from starting. Funding will be used to conduct market research and analysis on the Fire Suppression Systems industry and contract legal services to perform a freedom to operate analysis.
- Subroto Chatterjee, Ph.D., professor of pediatrics at JHU; Kollol Pal, CEO of Armani Therapeutics; and Leigh A. Penfield, tech transfer manager at JHU's technology transfer office, the office responsible for technology management, licensing and startups, received funding to further a business focused on developing inhibitors useful in treating cell proliferative disorders. Myocardial infraction and coronary artery disease are often treated by performing a balloon angioplasty. Studies have shown that cells in the vascular wall can proliferate rapidly in response to the injury caused by the angioplasty, leading to a blockage of the blood vessel, or restenosis. Existing FDA-approved drugs for the treatment of restenosis have limitations due to a high degree of clot formation or thrombosis. Funding will be used to develop a strategic plan for the business and perform a freedom to operate analysis.

The Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO), an independent entity, was established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1998 to facilitate the creation of businesses and foster their growth in all regions of the State. TEDCO's role is to be Maryland's leading source of funding for seed capital and entrepreneurial business assistance for the development, transfer and commercialization of technology. TEDCO connects emerging technology companies with federal laboratories, research universities, business incubators and specialized technical assistance. For the fifth consecutive year, TEDCO was recognized as the most active seed/early-stage investor in the nation in the August 2008 issue of Entrepreneur magazine and received the national Excellence in Technology-Based Economic Development award from the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) for the Maryland Technology Transfer Fund (MTTF) program in October 2008. For more information on TEDCO and its programs and resources, visit www.MarylandTEDCO.org.