

Highlights of Economic and Business Growth in the Tampa Bay Region

TAMPA BAY, Fla., November 29, 2006/PRNewswire/ -- News briefs concerning the economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

USF To Create Biomedical Center of Excellence

The University of South Florida was awarded \$8 million by state officials to create the Florida Center of Excellence for Biomolecular Identification and Targeted Therapeutics. The state award will be combined with \$39 million from the City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida High Tech Corridor Council, and USF for a total investment of \$47 million to create a center that will develop technologies to respond to and treat biological threats and then translate these technologies into commercial products which will benefit the environment and public health. Also involved is Biovest International, a Worcester, MA, biotech company that hopes to cooperate on research and development efforts with the new USF center. USF projects that the return on investment to the region includes creation of 400 new biotechnology jobs, \$84 million in direct wages and an estimated economic impact of over \$188 million. (Contact: Lara Wade, USF, 813 974 9060, lwade@admin.usf.edu.)

Progressive Insurance To Add 300 Workers At Tampa Bay Call Center

The Progressive Group of Insurance Companies announced plans to add 300 jobs at its call center in Riverview. The auto insurance giant said it is filling 80 positions now, and plans to hire an additional 220 employees during the next year. Recruiting manager Lynley Williams said the company decided to expand in the Tampa Bay area because the four-building campus is already established, has the infrastructure, and has room to accommodate additional workers. The Riverview call center is the company's second-largest call center and home to nearly half of Progressive's more than 4,000 Florida employees. (Contact: Kathy Bell, 440-395-0898, [Katherine M Bell@progressive.com](mailto:Katherine_M_Bell@progressive.com))

Tampa Bay labor market is hot, hot, hot

According to a new five-year survey of employment trends conducted by Bizjournals, Florida is home to five of the 10 hottest labor markets in America. The Sarasota-Bradenton market is ranked fourth in the entire country, with a five-year growth rate of 26.8 percent. The number one hot labor market in the country is Cape Coral-Fort Myers, with 32.5 percent growth over five years. Other Florida cities in the top ten: Orlando (ranked 5th), Lakeland (7th), Miami-Fort Lauderdale (10th). For more information about the communities of Tampa Bay, visit www.TampaBay.org. (Contact: Jennifer Taylor, Tampa Bay Partnership, 813-872-2809, jtaylor@tampabay.org.)

New World Headquarters for Quadrant Software

Quadrant Software, an international software company specializing in Paperless Process Management solutions, recently moved into a 10,000 square foot, \$2 million facility in Telecom Park, which will serve as a permanent home for their World Headquarters. Quadrant Software's CEO and Co-Founder Gary Langton said, "Moving our World Headquarters to Tampa was a great decision. Not only are we planning to triple the number

of employees we currently have, but Tampa serves as a great gateway to Latin America - a market we hope to penetrate in the future." The international technology company announced the relocation of its World Headquarters from Taunton, Massachusetts to the Tampa Bay area last summer after receiving tax incentives under Florida's Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund (QTI) program. Since their arrival, the company has already created 14 high paying jobs, and donated over 150 volunteer hours to local nonprofits. The company expects to add 26 additional jobs in the next three years. (Contact: Sandra Ordonez, 813-963-2300 ext. 324, sordonez@quadrantsoftware.com.)

Publix Ranked Among "World's Most Respected Companies"

Publix Super Markets Inc., headquartered in Lakeland, FL, was recently ranked among "The World's Most Respected Companies" – ranking at #102. The Reputation Institute, a New York consulting firm, surveyed 30,000 people around the world and ranked 600 of the largest companies worldwide in the Global RepTrak™ Pulse survey. Companies were rated by consumers in their home country and the ranking was a measure of corporate reputation calculated by averaging perceptions of trust, esteem, admiration, and good feeling obtained from a representative sample of local respondents who were familiar with the company. Publix, whose slogan is "Where shopping is a pleasure," recently reported a strong third quarter 2006 with profits up 26.3 percent, while sales rose 7.2 percent in the same period. Publix's \$252.9 million profit for the quarter was up from \$200.3 million a year ago. (Contact: Maria Brous, Publix, 863-688-1188 ext. 55339, maria.brous@publix.com.)

Tampa Bay Technology Forum's Selects Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year

Serial entrepreneur Kurt Long, founder and CEO of security software and solutions provider EpicTide (www.epictide.com), was chosen as Entrepreneurial Leader of the Year at the Tampa Bay Technology Forum's Industry Achievement Awards Gala, an annual celebration of excellence and leadership of technology companies and individuals in the Bay area. Over 400 TBTF members and guests attended the 3rd Annual event. Jimmy Wales, founder of Wikipedia (www.wikipedia.com), was presented with TBTF's inaugural Visionary Achievement Award for the extraordinary success and influence of his online, peer authored and produced encyclopedia. (Contact: Michelle Bauer, TBTF, 727-510-2524, mbauer@sextantmarketing.com.)

Economic Development Corporation to Lead Sarasota Film Industry Expansion

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County (EDC) will lead efforts to expand the film industry's presence and investment in the community through a new Film and Entertainment Office that will be managed by the EDC. A national search is under way for a film commissioner. "We are excited about the prospects of fostering growth among Sarasota County's own film-related companies, as well as encouraging production companies to select our community as a location for motion picture and other film, television, or video production," said Kathy Baylis, EDC president. The new office will receive startup funds from Sarasota County Government. (Contact: Kathy Baylis, 941-309-1200, ext. 200, kbaylis@edcsarasotacounty.com)

Earlier detection, targeted cancer therapy focus of nanotechnology collaboration between Moffitt, USF

By 2020 it is projected there will be 16.5 million new cancer cases, 3.8 million in the United States, according to the World Health Organization. With such a global concern, researchers and the medical society are turning to the littlest details, sweating the smallest stuff and finding exceptional potential with nanotechnology. H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, the University of South Florida College of Medicine and the USF Nanomaterials and Nanomanufacturing Research Center (NNRC) have been collaborating for several years to develop and apply nanotechnology to treating cancer. On December 8, the collaboration will host the region's first conference on nanotechnology advances in disease detection and therapy. Open to the public, this conference will feature local and national experts in the field, including Dr. Robert Blumenthal from the National Cancer Institute and Nanobiosym, Inc. Founder, Dr. Anita Goel. The program will begin at 8 a.m. at the Vincent A. Stabile Research building at Moffitt. (Contact Stephanie Medley, 813-974-8570, smedley@health.usf.edu.)

Florida High Tech Corridor Celebrates 10th Anniversary

In a short 10 years, the Florida High Tech Corridor Council has become a national model for high tech economic development. This year the program passed the \$150 million mark in research funding - used for 715 research projects between more than 250 companies and the three universities that make up the Florida High Tech Corridor -- University of South Florida, University of Central Florida and University of Florida. Find collaboration and connections at www.floridahightech.com. (Contact: Randy Berridge, 407-562-1282, randy.berridge@floridahightech.com.)

Downtown Residential Growth

Downtown Tampa continues to witness investment in residential development with more than \$750 million in construction over the past 18 months resulting in an additional 1,823 units recently completed or under construction. It is projected that downtown Tampa will quadruple its current residential population of 600 by the end of 2008 to 2,400 residents. Drawing residents to downtown is a growth in cultural attractions with three new museums planned, along with development of a new Riverwalk on the waterfront and addition of a new K-8 urban campus public school for downtown workers. (Contact: Paul Ayres, 813-221-3686, payres@tpadowntown.com.)

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