

## **Highlights of Economic and High Tech Growth in the Tampa Bay Region (Shorts)**

TAMPA BAY, Fla., April 17, 2003/PRNewswire/ -- Here are some shorts concerning the economic and high tech growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

### **Florida High Tech Corridor Launches HomeBase 21**

The Florida High Tech Corridor and the Tampa Bay Partnership have created a new technology directory — HomeBase21 — which specifically targets purchasers of both homeland security related products and services and offers a business-to-business listing service for virtually all of the technology industry sectors within the 21 county Corridor. This directory serves as a one-stop source for governmental organizations seeking homeland security products and services, as well as companies seeking high tech products in general, along the Florida High Tech Corridor. (Contact: Stacy Hayden, Curley & Pynn, 407-423-8006.)

### **New Water Desalination Plant Largest in North America**

The Tampa Bay area's population of nearly two million people is tapping a new source of drinking water - the bay itself. The nation's first sea water desalination plant and the largest reverse osmosis seawater desalination facility in North America was built to be a primary source of drinking water for Tampa, St. Petersburg, New Port Richey and surrounding cities. The \$110 million plant is expected to generate 25 million gallons a day, or 10 percent of the area's drinking water and will be. The plant's construction is expected to add \$482 million in economic activity to the Tampa Bay region in the next 30 years. (Contact: Michelle Klase Robinson, Tampa Bay Water, 727-796-2355.)

### **USF Center for Biological Defense Secures Bioterrorism Grant**

The Center for Biological Defense at the University of South Florida was awarded by the Florida Department of Health Office of Public Preparedness with a \$323,600 contract to expand its training of police officers, firefighters and others likely to initially respond to a bioterrorism threat. The award will help teach these first responders how to best collect suspicious samples of biological agents, assess their threat and properly transport the samples to the laboratory. The USF contract is part of \$6 million earmarked by the department for statewide bioterrorism education and training. Funded by the U.S. Department of Defense since October 2000, the center conducts research and provides training aimed at protecting the nation from the threat of bioterrorism. (Contact: USF Center for Biological Defense, 813-974-6663.)

## **Region's Tech Future to be Examined at Town Hall Meeting**

On Tuesday April 29, USF President Judy Genshaft and UCF President John Hitt will join a panel of technology leaders from Tampa Bay and Orlando at Tampa Bay Technology Forum's (TBTF) Tech Future Town Hall Meeting. This event will explore how the region can cultivate its technology community and achieve greater success as a center of technology entrepreneurship and innovation. Discussion topics will include the role that Florida's universities will play in the future of Florida's technology economy; how can the university and business communities can overcome the challenges in their cultural differences and collaborate effectively; and what the region can do to strengthen Florida's tech companies and promote their success. For more information visit [www.tbtf.org](http://www.tbtf.org). Contact: Michelle Bauer, 727-510-2524.

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