

Highlights of Economic and Business Growth in the Tampa Bay Region (News Briefs)

TAMPA BAY, Fla., January 10, 2006/PRNewswire/ -- Here are some news briefs concerning the economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

Polyglass Announces Plant Location in Polk County

Polyglass, a manufacturer of specialty roofing materials based in Treviso, Italy, announced in a private meeting with Governor Jeb Bush in Germany, its intentions to purchase a manufacturing facility in Winter Haven. The project is valued at \$10 million and 80 jobs will be created at build-out. Central Florida Development Council officials also met with managers of a recycling company in Italy which provide plastic for the Polyglass manufacturing process. Research is under way to determine if the Italian recycling company will expand into the Florida market to serve Polyglass and other companies. (Contact: Tom Patton, Central Florida Development Council, 863-534-4370, tompattton@cfdc.org)

Tampa Bay RHIO Project Awarded \$467,000 Grant

The Tampa Bay Partnership Regional Research and Education Foundation was awarded a \$467,000 implementation grant from the Florida Health Information Network to encourage the adoption and use of electronic health records in Florida. The Tampa Bay RHIO pilot was chosen because of the strong support from local businesses and health care providers according to Michael Heekin, chairman of the Governor's Health Information Infrastructure Advisory Board. The Pinellas County Health Department also was awarded a planning grant for \$110,985. They are among nine organizations that received a total of more than \$1.5 million in grants from the Governor's Health Information Infrastructure Advisory Board. The grant program, developed by the Agency for Health Care Administration, provides seed money to develop regional health information exchanges and to encourage practitioners to become active users of electronic health records. (Contact: Betty Carlin, Tampa Bay Partnership, 813-878-2208, bcarlin@tampabay.org.)

St. Petersburg Among Leaders in Inner City Job Growth

St. Petersburg, Fla., was among 10 inner cities nationwide whose job growth outpaced that of their metropolitan statistical area (MSAs) according to a recent study by the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC). With more than 34,000 workers at inner city employers, St. Petersburg boasts many successes in Midtown and the greater downtown area which have supported this job growth. (Contact: Robert Danielson, City of St. Petersburg, (727) 893-7467, robert.danielson@stpete.org.)

Medical Manufacturer Expands to Meet Demand

Micron PharmaWorks recently purchased a 19,700-square-foot facility in the West Pasco Industrial Park in Odessa to accommodate growing domestic demand for their product and allow for expansion from 26 employees to 40. Micron PharmaWorks designs, engineers and manufactures blister packaging machinery for the pharmaceutical industry, supplying well-known companies such as Bristol Meyer Squibb and Pfizer in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Micron PharmaWorks is the first domestic company to build and supply blister packaging machines to the U.S. pharmaceutical industry. (Contact: Peter Bucynsky, Mocron PharmaWorks, 813-925-8810, peterb@pharmaworks.com)

Former Citrus Processing Plant Now Home to Thriving New Businesses

In July 2004, the Pasco Beverage Company closed its citrus processing facility in Dade City leaving over 1.3 million square feet vacant space. At its peak, the Pasco Beverage Company was the largest citrus processing plant in the U.S. employing over 600. Today, with the help of entrepreneur Jim Guedry and the formation of the Dade City Business Center, business is thriving again at the site. The former plant has been converted into a bustling industrial park and is now home to 17 new businesses employing over 400 occupying nearly 900,000-square-feet of the former plant. (Contact Joe Kennedy at 352-567-0600, jkennedy@dcbusinesscenter.com.)

Progress Energy Breaks Ground on New Downtown Headquarters

Progress Energy Florida (NYSE: PGN) held a groundbreaking ceremony recently for its new Florida headquarters building, part of a mixed-use project in downtown St. Petersburg. When complete at the end of 2006, the 16-story building at Third Street and First Avenue North will house 510 Progress Energy employees, in addition to retail space and parking. The building will be the first new office complex in downtown St. Petersburg in 15 years. (Contact: Progress Energy Media Relations, 866-520-6397, www.progress-energy.com)

FDA approves the Drug Revlimid: Dr. Alan List is Principal Investigator on Phase I/II Study

In late December, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration granted approval for Revlimid (lenalidomide), a drug to treat a blood disorder, following a study led by Dr. Alan List at H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute. Revlimid is designed to treat patients with transfusion-dependent anemia due to low or intermediate risk myelodysplastic syndromes (MDS) associated with a deletion 5q cytogenetic abnormality with or without additional cytogenetic abnormalities. MDS are a group of hematologic malignancies that affect approximately 300,000 people worldwide. Myelodysplastic syndromes occur when blood cells remain in an immature or "blast" stage within the bone marrow and never develop into mature cells capable of performing their necessary functions. Eventually, the bone marrow may be filled with blast cells suppressing normal cell development. According to the American Cancer Society, 10,000 to 20,000 new cases of MDS are diagnosed each year in the United States, with mean survival rates ranging from approximately six months to six years for the different classifications of MDS. "The clinical data from a Phase II trial of 148 patients demonstrated that Revlimid can reduce or even eliminate the need for transfusions in many patients with del 5q MDS," said Dr. List, Professor of Oncology and Medicine, and Chief Division of Hematologic Malignancies Hematologic Malignancies at H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center, Tampa, Florida, and the study's lead investigator. (Contact Andrea Brunais, Moffitt, 813-632-1478, mediarelations@moffitt.usf.edu.)

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