

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

TAMPA BAY, Fla., June 25, 2009/PRNewswire/ -- News briefs concerning economic and business growth in the Tampa Bay Region from the Tampa Bay Partnership:

Coca Cola Expansion Adds Jobs in Tampa Bay

The Central Florida Development Council announced the expansion of Coca Cola's Main Street plant in Auburndale with a capital investment of \$70 million and creating 132 new high wage jobs. The producer of Simply Orange juice added three new lines bringing the facility's total to seven production lines. The company now employs 342 in Auburndale. (Contact: Tom Patton, 863-534-4370, tom@cfdc.org)

CoreRx Plans New Jobs, Major Expansion in Tampa Bay

CoreRx Inc., a Tampa-based pharmaceutical company, announced it is creating more than 55 jobs over the next three years as part of an expansion of its pharmaceutical development headquarters in Tampa Bay. The additional new high wage jobs, which will yield average salaries meeting or exceeding 150 percent of the state's average annual wage, make the company eligible for Florida's Qualified Target Industry Tax Refund incentive program. The company is also in the process of purchasing an 80,000 square foot facility in Hillsborough County and investing \$5 million in renovations. CoreRx performs formulation, analysis, clinical manufacturing and other services for the pharmaceutical industry (Contact: Todd Daviau, 813-514-9399, www.corerxpharma.com)

Training Grants Pay Off for Tampa Bay Manufacturers

Thirty-six employees at three Manatee County manufacturing businesses are working smarter after the companies used federal training grants coordinated by the Economic Development Council, Manatee Chamber of Commerce (EDC); Suncoast Workforce Board; and Manatee Community College (MCC). RF Supply Inc. conducted one of the largest training efforts that have been funded by the grants to date. Eaton and Radiant joined forces to train 22 employees in leadership and teamwork skills. By the employers creating a larger group to train, the federal grant was able to cover the full cost, rather than requiring the usual 50 percent match by the employer. The Suncoast Workforce Board helped the companies with the grant paperwork and brought in MCC to provide training at the Lakewood Ranch campus. (Contact: Nancy Engel, 941-748-4842, nengel@manateeedc.com)

USF, Mote Marine Sign Landmark Agreement

The University of South Florida and Mote Marine Laboratory have signed a landmark affiliation agreement that will allow two of the state's leading research institutions to join forces in new science ventures, provide expanded learning programs and create economic development opportunities for the region and state. Mote and USF's College of Marine Science regularly join forces in research on such key Florida issues as red tide, fisheries management, ecotoxicology (the effect of toxic substances on the marine environment) and marine mammal, shark and sea turtle research. The new affiliation agreement expands the formal relationship between the two institutions to include research and technology transfer projects in other disciplines. The most immediate project will be collaboration between USF's Research Park and the Mote Aquaculture Research Park, which will allow USF to integrate new sustainable energy technologies through the Florida Energy Systems Consortium. (Contact: Vickie Chachere, 813-974-6251, vchachere@admin.usf.edu)

Plasma-Therm Opens in Tampa Bay

New business start-up Plasma-Therm, LLC announced the selection of the City of St. Petersburg, Florida for start up operations. The semi-conductor equipment manufacturer secured financing recently for an initial capital investment to purchase the land, building and equipment needed to start operations, and plans to create 70 high-wage jobs in its first year. Future investments are planned for construction and renovations, as well as additional equipment. Plasma-Therm cited the ability to tap into a skilled talent pool available in Pinellas County as the key factor in their location selection. (Contact: Jim Pollock, 727-577-4999, jim.pollock@plasmatherm.com)

Florida High Tech Corridor Launches Virtual Entrepreneur Center

The Florida High Tech Corridor Council recently launched the Virtual Entrepreneur Center (www.flvec.com) as one comprehensive location where entrepreneurs in the 23-county Florida High Tech Corridor can easily find all the information they need to start or grow their company. The site provides the latest information on services available to owners of small businesses categorized locally, regionally and globally. (Contact: Kerry Martin, 407-423-8006, kmartin@thestrategicfirm.com)

Port Manatee Inks Milestone Alliance with Panama Canal

Port Manatee and the Panama Canal Authority created a strategic alliance which benefits shippers utilizing the all water route from Asia to Port Manatee – the closest U.S. port to the canal. The agreement will position Port Manatee to start receiving containerized shipments once an ongoing expansion of the Panama Canal is completed. Port Manatee is the 10th member of an exclusive fraternity of U.S. ports with agreements with the Panama Canal and will be launching a targeted marketing initiative aimed at attracting container lines, third-party logistics providers and distribution center and warehouse developers to and around the port. (Contact: David McDonald, 941-722-6621, www.portmanatee.com)

Environmental Biotech relocates HQ to Tampa Bay

Environmental Biotech International, specializing in drain lines, grease traps and odor control services, has relocated its global headquarters to Bradenton. The firm has about 30 employees and will be hiring to fill positions throughout 2009. (Contact: Aziz Tejpar, 941-358-9112, info@environmentalbiotech.com)

Career Academy Program Accelerates Earning Degrees, Job Credentials

Tampa Bay high school students at Wiregrass Ranch Information Technology Academy can now earn between nine and 21 college credit hours toward computer networking or web design degrees or certificate programs at Pasco-Hernando Community College (PHCC). An agreement between the Pasco County School District and PHCC allows students to satisfy high school diploma requirements while earning free college credits. The Career Pathways Consortium plans to develop at least one Career Academy at every Hernando and Pasco County high school. (Contact: Mary Rongey, 727-816-3118, rongeym@phcc.edu).

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