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Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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GOV. BLAGOJEVICH ANNOUNCES \$215,000 TO TWO BIO-TECH COMPANIES IN SUPPORT OF HOMELAND SECURITY PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

Innovative Product Grants Will Help Create 15 New Jobs and Advance the Production of Groundbreaking New Technology

CHICAGO – Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich today announced \$215,000 in *Opportunity Returns* funding to two high-tech companies to increase commercialization efforts and enhance homeland security product offerings, helping to create 15 new jobs over the next two years. This funding is being provided through the Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program administered by Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO) Homeland Security Market Development (HSMD) bureau. IPG is the nation's first state-funded grant program focused on developing products to meet homeland security needs.

“The key to advancing Illinois in the global economy is to encourage innovation through investment and supporting the development of new and existing technologies that will create a safer, cleaner, healthier and more efficient world. The investments in these two emerging companies demonstrate our continued commitment to help Illinois businesses meet the ongoing challenges in the homeland security industry and create high-paying, high-tech jobs,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

The following companies are receiving grants:

Advanced Diamond Technologies (ADT), a spinoff from Argonne National Laboratory and headquartered in Champaign with facilities at Argonne, is developing a form of ultrananocrystalline diamond, known as UNCDTM, as a platform material for biomedical, telecommunication and energy-related applications. The \$140,000 IPG grant allows ADT to create 10 new jobs and begin mass production and commercialization of nanoprobes made from UNCD for biomolecular imaging and biomanufacturing of sensors to detect weaponized pathogens such as anthrax.

UNCD nanoprobes are superior to silicon-based probes because they conduct electricity better and do not wear out as quickly. This allows for much improved resolution and higher detection limits than other available scanning methods. Frost & Sullivan recently honored ADT's UNCD with its 2006 Product Innovation of the Year Award for diamond films.

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“We want to thank Gov. Blagojevich for helping ADT break new ground by advancing this new diamond technology that was both invented and is being commercialized in Illinois,” said ADT President Neil Kane. “We are a proud participant in the IPG Program and look forward to working with the State to meet its growing homeland security needs by developing innovative new products to protect our nation’s security.”

“We must continue to look for innovative ways to expand our economy and put more people to work. By investing in an emerging company like ADT, Gov. Blagojevich is providing the critical resources that will help it reach new customers, create more jobs and help make our country safer,” State Senator A.J. Wilhelmi (D-Joliet) said.

“This important investment is going to help ADT open up new markets and create better jobs. By investing in companies that are investing in Illinois, we are helping more and more high-tech companies grow across the region,” State Rep. Naomi Jakobsson (D-Champaign) said.

Bio-Imaging Research (BIR), a Lincolnshire-based developer and manufacturer of specialized imaging systems for medical, industrial and security users. BIR will use the \$75,000 IPG award to create 5 new jobs and accelerate technical enhancements and establish additional production capacity for its IntellX product, a high energy X-ray scanning system currently being used by the US Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Inspections Service. IntellX uses a high energy X-ray source with a BIR proprietary detection system to create a photo like image of a container’s contents, without any need to open the container.

“We are pleased to participate in Gov. Blagojevich’s IPG program and look forward to helping the State of Illinois become the top supplier of products for the homeland security market. It is programs like the IPG that are helping to position Illinois as an environment focused on being at the leading edge of scientific innovation and technology development,” BIR General Manager, Security Division, Kevin Igielski said.

“In order to continue boosting the economy, we must help our growing companies identify new markets and opportunities to continue advancing technologies and turning them into successful products in the marketplace. Gov. Blagojevich and I are committed to making investments like these that help make us secure and create more good jobs,” State Senator Terry Link (D-Lake Bluff) said.

“Illinois continues to extend its leadership position in the homeland security industry, in large part because of Gov. Blagojevich’s commitment to helping companies meet the ongoing challenges and opportunities within this key sector. This investment in these tech-based firms is another example of our efforts to support innovation that will result in more good jobs,” State Rep. Kathleen Ryg (D-Vernon Hills) said.

DCEO’s Innovative Product Grant (IPG) Program was created to accelerate the commercialization, improvement, and production of goods and services with an application in homeland security and other sectors. IPG funds are intended to help create jobs and increase economic activity in Illinois, while strengthening the state’s competitive position as a leader in science and technology innovation.

“In just a short period of time, Gov. Blagojevich’s IPG Program has already made an immediate and lasting contribution to the homeland security industry by providing almost \$4 million in working capital to businesses to accelerate the commercialization of new and innovative homeland security products and services. ADT and BIR are great examples of Illinois companies that are supplying the nation with products that contribute to the improvement of our national security, while creating more good jobs here at home,” DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

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DCEO's Homeland Security Market Development bureau is focused on supporting businesses engaged in the homeland security industry, and the bureau offers a variety of investment tools designed to help existing Illinois companies expand operations and utilize available state and federal programs and services. For more information on HSMD, visit www.hsmd.illinois.gov.

Gov. Blagojevich recently announced that Illinois added more new jobs than any other state in July. In July, Illinois led the nation in monthly job growth by creating 31,100 new jobs. This is the second time this year Illinois has created more new jobs than any other state, which has never happened before in recorded history. Illinois also led the nation in job growth in April. The total number of new jobs created this year is 76,400, which is the best start to a year since 1998 and best in the Midwest. Since January 2004, Illinois has gained more than 151,000 new jobs, which is also best in the Midwest.

Last week, it was announced the Illinois unemployment rate dropped to 4.4 percent, which is its lowest level since October 2000. It has remained at or below the national rate for five consecutive months, which is the first time this has happened in seven years. The state has dropped below the national unemployment rate for the third time this year, which is the first time this has occurred in eight years. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Illinois Department of Employment Security compiled these statistics.

Site Selection Magazine also ranked the Chicagoland area the top metro region for new and expanded corporate facilities in 2005, while Illinois was ranked third in the nation. *Business Facilities Magazine* named Illinois the top state for biotech growth last year.

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