



INNOVATION PARK

A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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NEWS

TALLAHASSEE'S INNOVATION PARK CELEBRATES SUCCESS OF TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM

Tallahassee – Four years ago, the Leon County Research and Development Authority (LCRDA) created a grant program at Innovation Park that targeted Tallahassee area entrepreneurs looking to start technology related companies; the results are exceeding all expectations. Nearly a dozen grants have been awarded to scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs who are achieving unprecedented commercial and business success.

The Technology Commercialization Grant Program was created to promote the development of technology into products or services for commercialization to enhance the local economy. The grants, which can run up to \$15,000, signify not only a service provided by a research park and its governing body, but an investment in the community's economy.

Economic development has been the goal of the LCRDA, which has governed Innovation Park since it was established nearly 30 years ago. The LCRDA seeks to fulfill the mission of Innovation Park by promoting scientific research and development activities while fostering the economic development and broadening the economic base of Leon County.

"We are proud to enable these entrepreneurs and researchers to attain their goals," says LCRDA Chairman Tom Barron. "The Technology Commercialization Grant Program is a unique opportunity for individuals to get to the next level with their product idea or service. The incubator and partnerships with universities work with the grant program to provide the perfect atmosphere for start-up technology companies."

Emerging companies in fields like radio frequency, robotics, computer software and super conducting magnets have all won Technology Commercialization Grants. Entrepreneurs as well as individuals from local businesses, universities and research laboratories are all eligible to win the grants which are awarded on a competitive basis.



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Todd Franklin, president of Comm-Engines, Inc., won a \$15,000 grant in 2007 for his design of an anti-theft device for small retailers. Franklin used the grant for mechanical design and prototyping, a manufacturing test station and Web site upgrades. Unlike large-scale, expensive anti-theft systems found in large retailers Franklin's device uses radio frequency technology to make the systems more affordable.

"The Technology Commercialization Grant was the first major grant award for Comm-Engines," says Franklin. "Winning the \$15,000 has put Comm-Engines in a position to go after larger grants and more funding that will continue to propel us toward our end goal of mass production and increased sales."

After winning the grant, Comm-Engines became a tenant in the Incubator at Innovation Park. The incubator is a public partnership between the Florida A&M University Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Innovation Park and Leon County to grow technology businesses. Franklin says his experience with Innovation Park is like "hitting the jackpot."

"I won a Technology Commercialization Grant, I'm in an office space that is much larger than my garage, I'm getting free support from the SBDC and I am a stone's throw from two major research universities. What more could I ask for to help me grow my business?" says Franklin.

Together the grant program, the incubator and the connection to the major research universities has turned Innovation Park into an environment where research and innovation are fostered at every turn.

To learn more about the Technology Commercialization Grant Program, the Incubator at Innovation Park and Innovation Park please visit www.innovation-park.com or call Linda Nicholzen, Innovation Park's executive director at (850) 575-0343.

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