

Project: Technology Based Economic Development Center

Brief Description: Given the fact that the economy is in the worst condition since the Great Depression the state of Montana has an exceptional opportunity to grow technology based businesses that will be critical players in contributing to economic recovery through developing a knowledge-based economy. Montana State University and the MSU-Foundation in concert with the City of Bozeman and Gallatin County propose to develop a cohesive center that will provide business development and business assistance to high tech companies. We envision such development and assistance as being instrumental in starting up new businesses as well as providing assistance that will help technology based businesses succeed and grow. While we envision a significant number of new companies starting up based on MSU research and development, we also anticipate a number of additional new start-up companies and early stage companies locating at the center because of the programs provided by the Center. This type of technology-based program is critically needed now more than every before

Executive Summary: The funding will support infrastructure development for the center as well as programmatic support for enhancing the likelihood that companies located at the center will be successful. Examples of high tech businesses that could be developed in Montana include companies focused on: medical and agricultural biotechnology, biomedical sciences, optical sciences, thermal biology, information technology as well as businesses focused on new approaches for addressing energy issues. Montana State University has a number of licensed technologies in these areas and has significantly expanded its research programs in these areas.

This center will provide a first-rate value proposition for companies who would locate in the center. We envision a comprehensive set of programs aimed at launching, nurturing and enhancing the success of the companies located in the center. This is not a real estate proposition whereby companies locate in the center based on subsidized rents. Rather companies are attracted to the center because of the value proposition offered by the comprehensive programs that will be offered by the center including:

- Access to state-of-the-art information technology and telecommunications including broadband service.
- Business assistance that may be provided by MSU faculty and students, private or public consultants and successful business people.
- Financial assistance by providing access to a network of potential investors including banks, venture capital, and angel investors.
- Personnel assistance through group sessions including various seminars focused on human resource issues.
- Formal and informal training opportunities including presentations by MSU faculty, other local high tech companies, service providers etc.
- Partnerships with MSU including access to equipment and labs as well as potential faculty collaborators on STTR and SBIR proposals.
- Networking opportunities with employees of other high tech businesses in Montana and the region as well as with MSU faculty and students.
- Access to MSU resources including the library, the fitness center and food services.
- Access to services such as use of conference rooms, teleconferencing facilities, photocopying, etc.
- Importantly, the center will include all of the business assistance programs already provided by the Montana Manufacturing Extension Center, Tech Link, MilTech and TechRanch, as well as the MSU College of Business Entrepreneurship Center. We anticipate that locating these important economic assistance organizations in a single, high-profile location will significantly increase their already substantial impact.

Congressional Action Needed: MSU is requesting a \$5 million appropriation to assist in making this center a reality. The total project cost is \$11 million. Additional sources of funds we will pursue include \$3 million from regional EDA funds, and an additional \$3 million from non-federal sources to match the regional EDA grant.

Importance to the U.S. and Montana: Successful businesses which emerge from this Center have the option to locate anywhere in Montana, thereby spreading the economic expansion statewide. This Center will also be a model for similar centers in other Montana locations with linkages between the centers creating synergy for enhanced statewide economic development. In addition this business development center would be a great asset to Montana State University's educational enterprise by providing internship opportunities for students while at the university and high-paying job opportunities for MSU students when they graduate. Providing high paying technology jobs will not only increase per capita incomes in the state it will also help to occlude the brain drain that occurs when our technologically well-educated students have to leave the state in order to find employment.

Contacts: Thomas J. McCoy, Vice President for Research, (406) 994-2891 and Dave Dooley, Provost, (406) 994-4371