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### 6/8/2007 TOLEDO BUSINESS LINK SPECIAL REPORT Plan to transform regional economy

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Transforming the regional economy from manufacturing-based into a diverse knowledge-based economy is the primary goal of the Northwest Ohio Science and Technology Corridor.

The corridor's mission is to facilitate economic development by leveraging the assets of higher education to transform and improve the economy and quality of life in Northwest Ohio through business, educational, governmental and regional partnerships.

"Toledo's current economic infrastructure is geared largely toward a manufacturing economy. We need to develop a new economic infrastructure geared toward a knowledge-based economy by leveraging our considerable university assets," said Dan Johnson, chairman of the board of directors for the Science and Technology Corridor.

The corridor is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization closely aligned and integrated with academic institutions and economic development sources in the Northwest Ohio region.

That region contains significant assets in research, technology, education, workforce and infrastructure required for transforming and expanding its economy, Johnson said.

Johnson is also president emeritus and distinguished professor of public policy and economic development at UT.

"The contributions of the University to the economic development of the region involves our commitment through workforce development, discovery in research, transfer to commercialization and development with the incubator process," said Lloyd Jacobs, president of UT.

"We are actively reorganizing the concept and work of the Science and Technology Corridor and reconsidering the distribution of that work," Jacobs said, indicating that the Regional Growth Partnership could become more involved in its operation.

Regionally, the corridor intends to link the expanding science and technology assets of the area's colleges and universities to develop greater economic diversity. It encourages companies



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within the region to capitalize on the discoveries, innovations, and talent in the region's academic research facilities.

"We think research is important to the entire region. We have made a major effort to invest in research programs that will benefit the economy and society in the community and Toledo region," Frank Calzonetti, vice president for research development at UT, said.



#### **Collaboration**

More than \$100 million in research funding is spent at the academic institutions in the region and the amount is growing each year. More than 20,000 students, one-fifth of the total enrolled in higher education, are engaged in scientific study and research.

Two major public research universities, BGSU and UT, are within a 20-mile radius with seven other major research universities within a 120-mile radius. Land located near university research facilities is available for development.

"We are leveraging the \$100 million of research brought in each year by our institutions of higher education in northwest Ohio to strengthen our regional economy," Johnson said. "The level of collaboration is so important when we leverage these assets."

More than 25 advanced research centers and institutes involved in alternative energies and fuel, biomedicine and pharmacology, engineering and science are located within the region.

The region also includes a major medical school and three of Ohio's largest health care systems.

"The corridor provides a way to diversify and stabilize our region's economy," said Steven Weathers, president and CEO of the Regional Growth Partnership. "I see it as the branding of an area like Silicon Valley where we can bring together all the components of economic development within Northwest Ohio, becoming a center of innovative technology in addition to automotive manufacturing."

The Toledo region offers a top transportation hub for air, sea, rail, ground and other infrastructure to serve national and international distribution chains.

The corridor is developing links and collaboration for new industries to create global science and technology business opportunities.

"We've had conversations with 25 companies that came to us expressing interest in the corridor's science and technical arena, specifically in the alternative energy, health and medical, software and transportation fields," Johnson said.

Johnson said Toledo was identified with Austin, Texas, Boston and the Silicon Valley region in California in an article about America's clean tech clusters.

"Venture Capitals: Which city or state will emerge as the Silicon Valley of clean technology?" was published in the May 26 edition of The Economist.

"The University of Toledo's researchers in photovoltaics, alternative energy and others working to disseminate information on the latest developments in emerging technologies made this possible," Johnson said about the article.

"Our task is to continue to provide the strongest possible support for this globally important field of 'clean technology.' We have an opportunity to be a global leader in alternative energy and I believe that we should aggressively go for it," Johnson said.

#### **Expanded corridor**

"We need to more clearly define the geographic boundaries of the corridor," Jacobs said.

Geographically, Johnson thinks the corridor could extend from Ann Arbor and Detroit south along I-75 to Findlay with Toledo and UT in the center.

The expanded corridor would include more than 16 public and private institutions of higher education with combined budgets of

\$1.25 billion and 100,000 students. In addition to BGSU, UT and Owens Community College, the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, University of Detroit Mercy, Wayne State University and University of Findlay would be included.

Johnson wants to leverage those assets by capturing the economic benefit from those colleges and universities, the knowledge of the faculty and students, funding, research and technology. The region needs to attract investment from companies that will reap value from partnering with the colleges and universities.

The corridor provides collaboration for new and existing industries to expand across borders and oceans, creating global science and technology-based business opportunities through the Office of Global Initiatives at UT.

"Higher education takes the lead and promotes economic development and not the other way around," said Bob Cryan, executive director of the Office of Global Initiatives.

"We attract foreign scholars to come here to learn and become researchers who contribute to technology for the region's economy. It's an incubator in itself. We need that globalizing of our region."

The enrollment of international students is an economic issue as well as an academic one. Cryan said those students bring money into the economy while attending school and later contribute to economic development through research and technology conducted at institutions of higher education.

"We need to capture the economic impact of those funds and talent so it stays here to help the regional economy grow," Johnson said.

Cryan also serves as the CEO of the Strategic Education & Economic Development Corporation (SEED) which was created by UT, BGSU, local governments and businesses. SEED is a nonprofit organization charged with helping Toledo area companies to sell their products and services around the world.

SEED already helped one local firm, Unique Tool and Manufacturing Company of Temperance, Mich., to find opportunities for new business in China.

Last week, The Greater Toledo Offices in Shanghai and Beijing, operated by SEED, hosted the Toledo area's representatives in China and several high-ranking Chinese economic development officials. The visitors were recognized at a reception May 29.

Cryan led a delegation of BGSU and UT faculty members that departed for China June 2. He intended to introduce them to academic partners connecting with universities in China that are compatible for exchange programs and students. Cryan said SEED will open offices in other locations around the world to help Toledo companies prosper globally.