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University breaks ground on Research Innovation Center, Biotech Business Incubator on Foothills Campus

December 10, 2008

Colorado State University will celebrate the beginning of construction on the university's Research Innovation Center from 1:30-3 p.m. **Wednesday, Dec. 17**, in the **West Ballroom** of the Lory Student Center.

The 72,000-square-foot, \$53 million facility will be the latest addition to Colorado State's Infectious Disease Research Center. It will be located in the Judson Harper Research Complex on the university's Foothills Research Campus.

Infectious disease research hub on Foothills Campus

The center will provide a hub for university scientists and students to partner with businesses to develop new products to treat and diagnose infectious diseases. The center will support research efforts of the university's Infectious Disease Supercluster and technology transfer through MicroRx, the non-profit arm of the Supercluster devoted to helping research discoveries become products in the marketplace.

"This new addition to the university's cache of state-of-the-art facilities, world-recognized scientists and cutting-edge educational programs furthers our ability to make a real difference in the lives of people and animals suffering from infectious diseases while providing students with an exceptional education with real-world experience," said Bill Farland, vice president for Research at Colorado State.

"Partnerships with businesses in biotechnology will empower our collective knowledge, creativity and discoveries into meaningful products in the world's marketplace. This center will provide space for the university's professors and students to work side-by-side with businesses in making this difference."

Expected to be completed in April 2010

The three-story building is expected to be completed in April 2010. Research at the center will involve faculty and students as well as startup companies and other private-sector scientists. The top floor will serve as a biotechnology incubator, fostering startup companies that will help translate university research into new products that address unmet medical needs. The facility will be built to standards that allow scientists to produce vaccines against infectious diseases for human clinical studies.

"Colorado State University has long been a leader in the field of infectious disease. This facility will provide leading scientists in infectious disease research with an enhanced ability to leverage their discoveries into real-world tests, vaccines and medicines that fight infectious diseases," said Dr. Lance Perryman, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and acting provost.

The Research Innovation Center will be an addition to CSU's 38,000 square foot Rocky Mountain Regional Biocontainment Laboratory, completed on the Foothills Campus in October 2007. Research began in RBL in March. The building was constructed with a \$30 million grant from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Disease.

The RBL formally received "select agent" research approval this spring from the U.S. Centers for Disease



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Control and Prevention to begin studying highly regulated bioterrorism agents. CSU's laboratory was the first of the 13 Regional Biocontainment Laboratories and two National Biocontainment Laboratories funded by the NIH around the nation to receive select agent approval. The laboratory provides the university with a safe space to research ways to protect the United States from bioterrorism and emerging diseases such as avian influenza.

First-of-its-kind undertaking for CSU

"The Research Innovation Center is a first-of-its-kind undertaking for CSU and will be a catalyst for bioscience economic development in Northern Colorado, extending the reach of CSU's land-grant mission," said Terry Opgenorth, chief operating officer for MicroRx.

The university is among the world's leaders in researching West Nile virus, drug-resistant tuberculosis, yellow fever, dengue, hantavirus, plague, tularemia and other infectious diseases.

MicroRx, unveiled in February, is the first of the university's non-profit enterprises associated with each Supercluster. MicroRx is a division of CSU Ventures Inc., which strategically partners with industry, investors, government agencies, non-profit organizations and the public to rapidly develop products based on Colorado State's infectious disease research. This mission is driven by the belief that rapidly moving products to market is the most effective way to leverage university research for the benefit of humankind.

The university's academic Infectious Disease Supercluster includes 12 smaller clusters devoted to maximizing collaboration across the university related to specific topics or diseases. For example, the clusters include scientists from various colleges across the university who work together on a single issue. Within the infectious disease Supercluster, smaller clusters focus on classes of viruses that cause diseases, different kinds of infectious bacteria and even ethics around infectious disease research issues.

Students involved in innovative research projects

Colorado State University students also are involved in the research projects; about half the undergraduate students in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology and Pathology conduct research in laboratories as part of educational training. The department is part of the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences and is the primary department on campus anchored in the facility.

Superclusters are alliances of academic researchers, economists and business experts that encourage collaboration and bridge the vastly different worlds of business and academia. In the last few years, Colorado State has received millions of dollars in grants for infectious disease research, including research in the Infectious Disease Supercluster.

Colorado State's Supercluster enterprises focus on research areas where the university has demonstrated international prominence and where a potential for growth is evident. Many research universities have technology transfer programs, which guide scientists through the process of patenting and other complexities encountered in delivering discoveries to the global market. Colorado State's Superclusters model is unique in its multidisciplinary structure, enabling groundbreaking research to move to market more quickly by mimicking business practices.

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