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Photographs available upon request

Pittsfield Secures \$9.7 Million Grant to Build a Life Sciences Innovation Center

PITTSFIELD, MA –Governor Deval Patrick and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) today announced approval of a \$9.7 million capital grant to the City of Pittsfield for construction of a new 20,000 square foot Life Sciences “innovation center” in the William Stanley Business Park. Spearheaded by the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA), the facility will enable shared research, early-stage production and commercialization, and work force training for life science companies and related businesses.

The MLSC award includes \$7,725,000 for building design and construction and \$2 million for equipment, including state of the art tools for precise measurement, precision analysis and microscopy, and rapid 3D prototype printing.

“I am thrilled, because we have been diligently, deliberately and systematically pursuing this fabulous award for more than two years—with support and direction from the PEDA Board, City Hall and MLSC staff,” said Corydon Thurston, PEDA Executive Director. “This is a new and unique economic engine for Pittsfield and the Berkshires, one that provides an exciting opportunity to create jobs by enabling existing businesses and mentoring new startup companies.”

To secure the grant, New England Expansion Strategies (NEES), Westborough, conducted an extensive industry and stakeholder feasibility study. This included outreach to more than 85 external organizations primarily based within Berkshire County and Western Massachusetts. Along with 30 private sector companies, 26 of them in the Berkshires, study contributors included industry trade groups, higher education institutions, hospitals and venture capital firms.

In operation, the innovation center will be a self-sustaining entity with private sector support. It will foster innovation by, and the growth of, existing area companies to spur regional economic expansion, jobs and investment. Primary participants will be small to medium sized manufacturers in life sciences and the field’s supply chain.

The facility will assist start-up businesses by enabling early-stage production and commercialization and by fostering shared research and work force training. The operating budget will be funded through membership, usage fees and rental income from labs, clean rooms and offices. To date, PEDA has secured signed membership commitments from 19 private sector companies and five institutions.

“The PEDA board has been supportive throughout this process because the William Stanley Business Park is an absolutely perfect location for this investment,” said Mick Callahan, PEDA Board Chairman. “This successful collaboration is a fine example of our region working together towards building the foundation for a new economy.”

Along with choosing a formal name for the facility, Thurston said, organizers must now create a new and separate 501c3 nonprofit corporation with its own board of directors, advisory board and staff. The facility’s core membership will be actively involved, he said, and once the corporation is established the group will focus on selecting an architect and planning for groundbreaking. Officials anticipate that construction can begin by the summer of 2015.

“We are especially grateful for the patient and thoughtful guidance of Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister, MLSC president and CEO,” Thurston said, “and for the outstanding work of our consultant Rod Jané, NEES president, who helped develop the sustainable business plan that secured this grant.”

Through the MLSC, Massachusetts is investing \$1 billion over 10 years in the growth of the state’s life sciences supercluster. These investments are being made under the Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative, proposed and signed into law by Governor Patrick. Since 2008, the MLSC has awarded or committed more than \$520 million, including nearly \$400 million to support capital projects, creating over 1.3 million square feet of new educational, research and manufacturing space and thousands of jobs.

PEDA has been aggressively marketing the 52-acre William Stanley Business Park, General Electric Company’s former industrial facility in the heart of the city. With approval of the MLSC grant, the third of a group of nine original parcels is scheduled for development.

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Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA) is a quasi-public agency created by a special act of the Massachusetts State Legislature, for the purpose of receiving and redeveloping approximately 52 acres of General Electric Company’s former industrial facility located in the heart of Pittsfield Massachusetts. For additional information, visit williamstanleybp.com