



Powered by Clickability

State to mark Akron project as 'hub'

Austen institute to gain new offices; location to be announced today

By Rick Armon and Cheryl Powell
Beacon Journal staff writers

Published on Monday, Jul 19, 2010

The Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron is getting a new headquarters.

And the Akron area is being designated by Gov. Ted Strickland as the state's newest "Hub of Innovation and Opportunity."

Local and state officials are expected to make the joint announcements today at a news conference in downtown Akron.

Summit County Executive Russ Pry confirmed that part of the announcement involves a headquarters for the BioInnovation Institute, but he declined to discuss specific details.

The news conference is being held at the county Job and Family Services building on North Main Street. County leaders previously have said the long-term goal is to move the welfare agency out of the building.

In an interview earlier this year, BioInnovation Institute President and Chief Executive Dr. Frank L. Douglas said the organization was having discussions with the mayor and county executive about potential locations for a permanent headquarter.

One of the possibilities he said was being discussed at the time was a county building near Main and Market streets.

Douglas previously said that the BioInnovation Institute plans to house administrative offices and its training, clinical trials and community health improvement centers within the new headquarters. Research laboratories will be placed within the founding partners' institutions.

For now, the institute's administrators are housed in the the United office building at Main and Market streets in downtown Akron.

During today's event, Strickland also is expected to announce the hub designation, which mostly likely will involve biomedical research.

He highlighted the hub concept in his State of the State speech earlier this year, saying that Ohio's largest cities should identify and exploit their economic strengths. As part of the designation, the state is providing \$250,000 in planning money and development assistance.

Strickland already has tabbed Toledo as an official hub for solar energy research, Cleveland for health and technology, Dayton for aerospace; and Cincinnati for marketing.

The Austen BioInnovation Institute launched two years ago, when the city's three hospital systems, the University of Akron and the region's medical school came together for research and economic development.

Akron Children's Hospital, Akron General Health System, Summa Health System, UA and the Northeastern Ohio Universities Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy (NEOUCOM) are partners in the effort to attract more research dollars and spawn new biomedical companies by working together on medical education and research.

The initiative pulls together the university's polymer science research knowledge, the medical college's musculoskeletal expertise and the three hospitals' strengths in orthopedics and other clinical areas.

Within a decade, the Akron-area partnership wants to create 2,400 jobs and attract at least \$50 million worth of investments annually in area medical companies.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation helped jump-start the project in 2008 with a \$20 million grant.

The institute also has secured a combined \$20 million from the five partners, \$10 million from Akron-based FirstEnergy Corp. and about \$9 million from other sources, including the state.

Rick Armon can be reached at 330-996-3569 or rarmon@thebeaconjournal.com. Cheryl Powell can be reached at 330-996-3902 or chpowell@thebeaconjournal.com.

Find this article at:

<http://www.ohio.com/news/98726074.html>

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Copyright © 2008 Ohio.com