

TECHNOLOGY

SPECIAL REPORT

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INSIDE



MORE SCORES

Biotech experts want more successes like Scripps

PAGE 12



GO TEAM

Businesses, government, educator, philanthropists, join forces for development

PAGE 14



Cooking up collaboration

Script written for Scripps arrival

BY SUSAN LADIKA



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PAGE 14



LEARN, EARN

Med-tech firms, tech schools get their rankings

PAGES 15, 16



NEXT WEEK

Hitting the 'Links' could get entirely new meaning

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE



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The state is "struggling with the image of Florida as being for agriculture and tourism. The greatest thing the Scripps project can do on a national level is to at least get people to question their perceptions," said Guy Hagen, an expert in high-tech economic development and founder of the firm Innovation Insight.



Hagen

Last month, the Florida Legislature approved a deal to spend \$310 million, plus accrued interest, to bring a branch of the world's largest private research center to south Florida. Scripps, based in La Jolla, Calif., is to use the money to pay for things like lab equipment and staff salaries, and is required to hire 545 employees within seven years. But the state hopes the deal will lead to the spinoff of thousands of new jobs.

Local experts are hoping the Tampa Bay area will reap at least some of those rewards.

"I think anything Florida does to improve the visibility of the medical sector and help convey Florida is already a major player in the life science sector would be good for all of us," said Geary Havran, president of NDH Medical Inc. in St. Petersburg and head of the Florida Medical Manufacturers' Consortium.

The Tampa Bay area can boast of strong research programs already in place at the University of South Florida and the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute. For this fiscal year alone, USF received \$254.8 million in state and federal funding for research, the second-highest amount of all universities in the state, said Rod Casto, the school's associate vice president for economic development.

The Bay area also is home to more than 200 medical product industries, according to a study conducted last year by USF's Center for Economic Development Research.

About two-thirds are medical device manufacturers, with the remainder divided between biotech and pharmaceutical firms. Together, they accounted for more than 10,000 jobs local-

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"We, of course, will be looking for ways to collaborate with" Scripps, said Paul Sanberg, chairman of Saneron CCEL Therapeutics Inc., a Tampa company focusing on stem cell therapy to treat stroke, spinal cord injuries and other medical conditions.

He said the Scripps program "will bring lots of new science, (and) lots of new ways of doing business" to the state.

In addition, Scripps is used to spinning out intellectual property and spinning off companies for economic development, Sanberg said.

While Sanberg expects companies to concentrate around Scripps in south Florida, he thinks the entire state can benefit.

Tampa Bay area companies aren't expected to pack up and move south to Palm Beach County, where biotech is not well developed.

Instead, Randy Simmons, chairman of the Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce's Committee of 100, predicts Scripps will have to "rely on the existing infrastructure and talent pool throughout the state."

Bay area officials don't believe the distance to



See SCRIPPS, page 12

SCRIPPS: *Leader says it's time to put Bay area's biotechnology into high gear*

FROM PAGE II

Palm Beach County will deter collaboration.

Simmons, who recently went on a fact-finding mission to California, said biotech is concentrated in both San Diego and northern California.

"There are no barriers," he said. "There is an enormous amount of collaboration."

Mike Poland, head of the Gulf Coast Life Sciences Initiative, which works to speed the development of the area's life sciences industry, said the state must rise above its historical parochialism and territorialism.

But in efforts to lure investors to the Bay area, "I'd rather have the venture capitalists in Palm Beach, trying to get them

over to Tampa, than have the venture capitalists in Boston, and try to get them down to Tampa."

More must be done to develop infrastructure to support biotech companies and to bolster USF's Research Park, where groundbreaking for two new buildings is scheduled for January, Poland said.

So far, development of the biotech industry in the Bay area has been done at a "methodical, steady pace," Poland said. "We need to accelerate that, or we will be left behind."



Poland