



Partners in Bioscience Growth

## **\$4.85 Million Dedicated to Growth in Human Health, Biomaterials Sectors** *KBA Board Also Re-elects Officers at Annual Meeting*

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Kansas researchers and businesses continue to make strong advances in the human health and biomaterials sectors. And with support from the Kansas Bioscience Authority, their technology and products are poised to receive a \$4.85 million boost.

At its annual meeting in Overland Park today, the authority announced the following investments to improve premature infant health; tackle heart failure; decrease deadly childhood dehydration; and develop environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic:

- **KC BioMediX** of De Soto will receive an equity investment of \$400,000 to commercialize technologies developed at the University of Kansas for the care of infants born prematurely. The company's FDA-approved device, the NTrainer System, uses state-of-the-art hardware and software to treat preemies who have difficulty feeding orally so they can quickly gain strength and grow. This award follows a \$150,000 KBA investment last fall and is part of a \$4 million round of company financing.
- Lenexa, Kan.-based **VasoGenix Pharmaceuticals** was approved to receive \$200,000 for the development of its patented controlled release drug treatment for heart failure, a disease that affects 5 million people and 550,000 new patients annually. The company is completing pre-clinical studies of its treatment that uses a molecule with a history of safe use in humans and which aims to improve human health while reducing re-hospitalization costs by \$6 billion per year. The company will match KBA funding with private investment.
- **Ventria Bioscience** of Junction City has received a \$3.75 million convertible note as part of a \$7.5 million financing plan to expand operations, including an increase in employment and expanded production capacity in Kansas. The financing will help the company prepare for the commercial launch of its pediatric health product, which was clinically shown to shorten the duration of acute childhood diarrhea, the second leading killer of children under the age of 5, claiming 2 million lives annually on a global basis. The company's patented protein expression technology, ExpressTec, is highly efficient and uses rice as a biological factory to produce protein-based products for human health and nutrition.
- **MGP Ingredients**, Atchison, Kan., will receive \$500,000 to develop and further commercialize biobased, biodegradable resins to economically replace plastic. The biobased resin can be used for products such as disposable cutlery, DVD cases, and bottle caps — and is biodegradable. The project is expected to create 54 jobs, with \$9.9 million in capital investment to build production capacity in Onaga, Kan.

KBA president Tom Thornton noted that the investments represented the state's comprehensive approach to bioscience.

“By supporting the growth of companies large and small, established and new, in Kansas' areas of particular bioscience expertise, we help create a sustainable and vibrant industry that can continue tackling global challenges,” he said.

In other business at its annual meeting, the KBA re-elected directors **Sandra Lawrence** as chairwoman; **Bill Sanford** as vice chairman; and **Ed McKechnie** as secretary and treasurer. Lawrence is executive vice president and chief financial officer of Children's Mercy Hospitals & Clinics. Sanford is chairman of Symark, LLC, and McKechnie is executive vice president and chief commercial officer of Watco Companies.

“Under Sandra, Bill, and Ed's dedicated stewardship, the board of directors continues to make enormous contributions to the success of the Kansas Bioscience Authority and the state's bioscience economy,” Thornton said. “We greatly appreciate their service and the expertise they bring as we translate Kansas' resources and strengths into national bioscience leadership.”

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#### *About the KBA*

The Kansas Bioscience Authority is a \$581-million initiative created by the Kansas Economic Growth Act of 2004 to expand the state's world-class research capacity and bioscience clusters; support the growth of bioscience startups; and stimulate bioscience business expansion and attraction.

Approved investments are subject to final agreements between the KBA and investees.

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