

Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster announces focus on commercialization and 2011 investment attraction initiatives

Led by OCRI's global marketing team, industry-driven cluster organizes for growth

OTTAWA ON – Sept 21, 2011 – With 93 companies and institutes in a newly released Capability Directory, an industry-led executive team intent on building commercialization, and participation in national and international medical devices conferences, the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster wants to drive more collaboration among its companies and the more than 20 institutes and research centres located in the region.

Upcoming conferences Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster companies are taking advantage of for investment attraction include AdvaMed 2011, a global medical technology conference taking place in Washington D.C., Sept. 26-28. In cooperation with OCRI Global Marketing and the Medical Devices Innovation Institute (MDI2), members of the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster will also be participating in the 2011 Medical Devices Summit. The summit will focus on creating a national medical devices strategy for Canada.

A strong commercialization example from the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster is eSight Corp. Founded by Ottawa telecom technology veteran Conrad Lewis, eSight is now at the forefront of a market for electronically-assisted vision that the company says will eclipse the multi-billion dollar hearing-aid market in just a few years.

Several Ottawa valley medical institutions have helped eSight with crucial clinical testing. eSight is actively engaging Ottawa-area Ophthalmologists and Optometrists who will recommend ALIVIOS to patients and Low Vision Rehabilitation Therapists.

Early testing of the ALIVIOS prototype at the University of Ottawa Eye Institute at The Ottawa Hospital and at Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, Ont. shows dramatic improvements in key metrics such as contrast sensitivity, facial recognition, and reading speed.

To turn the company's ALIVIOS Intelligent Eyewear from an R&D idea to a commercial product, eSight also tapped into Ottawa's strong executive talent pool. President and CEO Kevin Rankin, worked closely with Mr. Lewis at Newbridge Networks, then went on to found Tropic Networks Inc. Rob Hilkes, VP of Marketing and Business Development has held senior positions in several Ottawa technology firms including MOSAID Technologies Inc., Tundra Semiconductor Corp., and UBM TechInsights. Founding president Dan Mathers, formerly CEO at Icefyre Semiconductor Corp., remains active on eSight's board.

"With close to 100 organizations identified in the 2011 Ottawa Life Science Cluster Capabilities Directory, we know there are many more companies like eSight in our midst, and many more we can grow through increased collaboration with our partners in the region's world class clinical institutions," says Steve West, CEO of Nordion Inc. and Co-chair of the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster. One of Ottawa's most established life sciences companies, Nordion now markets around 40 products to a well-diversified base of over 600 customers in 60 countries around the world.

“OCRI’s Global Marketing team is very pleased to have helped coordinate the efforts of the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster over the past year, to the point where we have a strong industry-led group intent on building more Ottawa-based, global companies,” says Michael Darch, Executive Director, Global Marketing, OCRI.

Joining West on the industry leadership team of the Ottawa Life Sciences Cluster are:

- Co-chair: Sean Tomalty, Plant Director, Abbott Point of Care Inc.
- Ian Curry, President and CEO, DNA Genotek Inc.
- Pierre Charest, Associate Vice-President, Corporate Planning and Policy, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada
- Michael Darch, Managing Director, Global Marketing, OCRI
- Stephen Fanjoy, President, Stephen Fanjoy Management Consulting
- Jeff Smith, President, Allphase Clinical Research Services Inc.
- Duncan Stewart, CEO and Scientific Director, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute; Vice President of Research, The Ottawa Hospital, The Evelyne & Rowell Laishley Chair, Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Ottawa
- Giovanni Vatteri, National Health Practice Leader and Partner, Global Business Services, IBM Canada Ltd.
- Coordination: Karen Robb, Manager, Life Sciences, OCRI

About OCRI:

Leading the way for Ottawa, OCRI is the city’s economic development agency. OCRI is the rallying point to bring business, education, research and talent together to create the winning economic conditions that allow Ottawa’s knowledge-based companies to thrive locally and compete globally. At OCRI we promote sustainable economic development to maintain our high quality of life. For more information on OCRI visit our Web site at www.ocri.ca and for more information on the Ottawa Region please visit www.ottawaregion.com. In 2010, Ottawa was named one of the world’s top seven intelligent communities by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF).

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