

## Nuclea Biotechnologies' new Bioinformatics and Imaging Center unveiled

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PITTSFIELD -- The life sciences industry is coming closer and closer to establishing a base in Pittsfield, according to local officials.

Officials on Thursday formally announced the establishment of Nuclea Biotechnologies' new Bioinformatics & Imaging Center at the William Stanley Business Park of the Berkshires.

Nuclea, which develops and commercializes diagnostic tests for colon, breast, leukemia and prostate cancer, has relocated its data center from its office on South Street to the new facility, which takes up just more than half of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority's 3,200-square-foot administration building on 81 Kellogg St.

The new facility, which is already up and running, will house 10 Nuclea employees.

Nuclea has extended high-fiber broadband Internet to the site and will use the new facility to begin a bioinformatics research program with the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in North Adams. Bioinformatics is scientific work that draws information about human DNA and protein sequences using computers to analyze biological data.

"We're excited as we begin to truly kickoff what we hope to be the beginning of the life sciences industry in Pittsfield," said PEDA's Executive Director Cory Thurston.

The opening of the facility was characterized as a major step toward PEDA finally obtaining a four-year-old \$6.5 million state earmark for the construction of an incubator building for start-up life sciences companies at the 52-acre site.

PEDA has never received the funding since it was approved in 2008, but the quasi-public agency charged with developing the business park has submitted a proposal to secure the funds from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center.

"This is definitely the first step," said Mayor Daniel L. Bianchi, who is also a PEDA board member.

Bianchi said he hoped the partnership between Nuclea and PEDA would make the Stanley Business Park a "magnet" for attracting life sciences companies to the site, continue to stimulate the city's economy, and create a "real future" for the city's young people.

"Studies indicate that for every one job created in the life sciences industry, three to five ancillary jobs are created," he said. "We want those jobs to be right here in Berkshire County."

The majority of the state's life sciences industry is located in the Boston area.

"Too often in Pittsfield when we hear about life science high-tech jobs we figure that's for someone else," said state Sen. Benjamin B. Downing, D-Pittsfield. "It isn't. You can do it anywhere in Massachusetts."

MCLA President Mary K. Grant said the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center looks for "synergies" that involve both educational and industry components when it examines funding proposals for life sciences projects.

"When you look at the sections of the state that have been successful they've done very well because they have a partnership between education and business," said Grant, who is a former PEDA board member.

"All the pieces are in place now," she said. "It's taking the next steps."

Nuclea, which has offices in both Pittsfield and Worcester, had initially discussed relocating its entire operation to the Stanley Business Park in 2006 when most of the site still belonged to the General Electric Co. and was still undergoing environmental remediation. But that plan fell through.

"I think this project is different," said Nuclea's President and CEO Patrick J. Muraca. "I think we had to prove ourselves a bit. After six years and \$40 million in funding, I think we proved ourselves. I think that's one of the things that's really important here, to prove to PEDDA that we will be able to do this."

"One of the things that we're hoping for is that with the Massachusetts Life Sciences [Center] we can participate in the building of that incubator building," Muraca said, "because we'd like to be able to locate the entire company in the incubator building."

PEDA has subleased 1,700 square feet of its administration building to Nuclea for two years. PEDDA is allowed to sublease space in its 46-year-old headquarters building, but only with GE's approval. Unlike the rest of the business park, PEDDA's 46-year-old administration building is located on a 3.1-acre parcel that GE still owns.

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