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## A&M International Business Ties

### ... Texas A&M, Research Valley stand to benefit from agreements.

By: Kelli Levey, Texas A&M News & Information Services - November 05, 2010



(10/29/2010) - College Station— Texas A&M University and the entire Research Valley stand to benefit from agreements The Texas A&M University System's Office of Technology Commercialization struck this week with Belgium-based

businesses, several officials involved in the partnerships announced Friday.

Trade delegation representatives from the Wallonia Foreign Trade and Investment Agency (AWEX), an agency of the Walloon government in the southern region of Belgium, met this week with representatives from the Texas A&M System, Texas A&M and the Research Valley Partnership.

Representatives from 17 Belgian companies visited the Texas A&M campus this week as part of the delegation, and several events Friday culminated their week of tours and trade talks. Some even visited with students in a Mays Business School course taught by Brett Cornwell, associate vice chancellor for technology commercialization for the A&M System.

One of Friday's events was the announcement of a multi-million-dollar regional contract with Belgian high-tech optical company AMOS to locate its first U.S. office in College Station. The company is known for its creative research and development solutions for satellites, the International Space Station and some of the leading ground-based telescopes, and has been working closely with astronomers from Texas A&M.

Nicholas B. Suntzeff, professor of physics and astronomy at Texas A&M, director of the Texas A&M Astronomy Program and a member of the George P. and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Institute of Fundamental Physics and Astronomy called the decision by AMOS to expand into this area of Texas "a testament to the high quality of the engineering students and faculty at Texas A&M and to the strength of the Munneryn Astronomical Laboratory."

Darren L. DePoy, a Texas A&M physics professor who works in the astronomical instrumentation lab, called the partnership "a natural collaboration." He said such collaborations will propel the Research Valley to become known as the Innovation Capital of Texas.

"AMOS is a cutting-edge company that builds precision instruments and tools used in the astronomy industry, and we build things to put on those instruments," he said. "Our lab has been in existence for two years, and I think it reflects well on our program to have this partnership."

Another of Friday's events was a ribbon-cutting for the Research Valley Partnership's International Gateway, an office suite that will serve as a launching pad for international businesses. The suite has office space, a conference room and a web-based voice mail system that can be accessed worldwide. Organizers said they hope to open a satellite office within a year.

"This is not an office solution, not a real estate solution, it's a corporate solution," said Todd McDaniel, Research Valley Partnership president/CEO. "It's a landing zone, a gateway to future endeavors."

Also, a letter of intent was signed to form a joint partnership between data mining company PEPITe and the A&M System, with a target date of January for the company to open locally.

Philippe LaChapelle, director of business development and partnerships for AWEX, lauded the A&M System's "invaluable support and commitment to transform innovation into real, large-scale business" in the various endeavors.

He also said the business climate in this area is very attractive to businesses in his country. "Friendship is an element you didn't mention, but it's very important to us in Wallonia," he said.

About research at Texas A&M University: As one of the world's leading research institutions, Texas A&M is in the vanguard in making significant contributions to the storehouse of knowledge, including that of science and technology. Research conducted at Texas A&M represents an annual investment of more than \$582 million, which ranks third nationally for universities without a medical school, and underwrites approximately 3,500 sponsored

projects. That research creates new knowledge that provides basic, fundamental and applied contributions resulting in many cases in economic benefits to the state, nation and world.

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