

For Immediate Release

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**TECHCOLUMBUS ANNOUNCES \$22 MILLION INITIATIVE
FOR TECHNOLOGY ENTREPRENEURS AND INNOVATORS
IN 15-COUNTY CENTRAL OHIO REGION**

(July 24, 2007 - Columbus, OH) Entrepreneurs with tech-based innovations within Central Ohio's 15-county region are encouraged to apply for a share of competitive funding and mentoring assistance made available through TechColumbus and the Ohio Entrepreneurial Signature Program (ESP). The ESP is an initiative of Ohio's Third Frontier Project.

"The Entrepreneurial Signature Program allows us to help catalyze the technology-based business development opportunities we believe strengthen our region as a whole," said Ted Ford, president and CEO of TechColumbus. "We encourage local entrepreneurs with promising technology innovations with the potential of commercialization to provide to us a summary of their opportunity and apply for funding and other assistance."

TechColumbus worked with public and private partners through the 15-county Central Ohio region to raise \$7.5 million. By securing these matching funds, TechColumbus was able to obtain the state's \$15 million contribution.

The ESP is designed to advance the development of technology-based companies in the region by providing a systematic method for identifying promising technologies and promising innovations; providing business management oversight emerging companies need for sustainable growth; and connecting technology entrepreneurs with access to early-stage capital. The program also provides coaching, mentoring, educational and market access to the most promising new companies, technologies or processes with targeted business development services. The 15-county region served by the ESP includes Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Hocking, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Perry, Pickaway, Ross and Union counties.

Entrepreneurs interested in applying for funding through the ESP must first prepare and submit an executive summary of the opportunity, typically no longer than two to three pages, as well as an online application. A member of the TechColumbus team will contact applicants within three business days to discuss next steps.

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About TechColumbus

TechColumbus is a professional non-profit advocacy organization for tech-based economic development in Central Ohio. Part of its mission is to create a strong tech economy built on a connected technology workforce in support of a diverse, dynamic technology business community. Representing a regional consortium that spans 15 counties, TechColumbus serves the Central Ohio region as a gathering place to exchange ideas and innovations. It's also an open forum for dialogue, professional development, education and outreach in support of entrepreneurship and economic development. For more information, visit www.techcolumbus.org.

CENTRAL OHIO ENTREPRENEURSHIP SIGNATURE PROGRAM (ESP) FAST FACTS

What is ESP?

ESP is designed to advance the development of technology-based companies in the 15-county region by providing a systematic method for identifying promising technologies and promising innovations; providing business management oversight emerging companies need for sustainable growth; and connecting technology entrepreneurs with access to early-stage capital. ESP is an initiative of Ohio's Third Frontier Project.

What counties make up the 15-county-region served by ESP?

- Delaware
- Fairfield
- Fayette
- Franklin
- Hocking
- Knox
- Licking
- Logan
- Madison
- Marion
- Morrow
- Perry
- Pickaway
- Ross
- Union

Who administers ESP?

TechColumbus is responsible for the execution of the program on behalf of our partners and the innovators, entrepreneurs, educators, and researchers in the

15-county region. The tasks and activities that together comprise this program include:

- Regional outreach and marketing to identify potential new companies;
- Working with regional research partners to spin out new startups from their labs;
- Helping young companies tap into federal grants and other sources of federal support;
- Providing grants to entrepreneurs and researchers to allow them to test new ideas for companies;
- Helping new companies with the business planning and other assistance needed to build successful enterprises;
- Hiring business experts in information technology, healthcare innovation, and related fields, as well as recruiting resident entrepreneurs to lead new and young companies in the region;
- Creating a team of experts in funding and funds management to manage and invest the new early stage funding under the ESP

How is ESP funded?

TechColumbus partnered with public and private entities through the 15-county Central Ohio region to raise \$7.5 million. By securing these matching funds, TechColumbus was able to obtain a \$15 million contribution from the state.

What services are offered through ESP?

ESP offers a variety of services, including:

- Market research and competitive analysis
- Competitive positioning and pricing strategies
- Strategic planning and business plan development
- Product development planning
- Marketing and sales programming
- Supplier, customer and strategic partnership agreements
- Executive and high-demand skill set recruiting

Who are partners of ESP?

Ohio TechAngels Funds
Nationwide
OhioHealth
Village of New Albany
City of Dublin
OSU
Huntington Bank
CCRI
NCT Ventures
City of Columbus
Columbus Chamber
City of Upper Arlington
Greif

SWACO
Franklin County
OMERIS
Ohio IT Alliance
Central Ohio SBDC

How do applicants seek ESP funding and/or mentoring assistance?

Entrepreneurs interested in applying for ESP assistance must first prepare and submit an executive summary of the opportunity, typically no longer than two to three pages, as well as an online application. A member of the TechColumbus team will contact applicants within three business days to discuss next steps. More detailed information about the Central Ohio ESP application process is available at www.techcolumbus.org.