



## BioScience and eBizCT Clusters Announce Plans for Growth

Corporate leaders from the BioScience Cluster and eBizCT presented proposals for strengthening their members' competitive positions at the Oct. 11 meeting of the Governor's Council on Economic Competitiveness and Technology.

The BioScience Cluster's presentation was made by Co-Chairs George M. Milne, Jr., Ph.D., president, Central Research Division, Pfizer, Inc.; and Harry H. Penner Jr., president and CEO of Neurogen Corp.

They recommended several initiatives to address obstacles to the cluster's growth, including the expansion of Connecticut Innovations' Bioscience Facilities Fund; a campaign to raise public awareness of BioScience's presence and potential in Connecticut; formation of educational partnerships for workforce development; and more aggressive recruiting of bioscience professionals and companies into the state.

eBizCT's presentation was made by Elaine Pullen, chairperson of the Connecticut Technology Council and president of Trident, an ITW Company; and Louis Hernandez, a CTC board member and CEO of Open Solutions. They said Connecticut's software/IT industry must achieve national visibility in order to grow. Increasing the state's presence on the national scene, they said, will increase opportunities for Connecticut high-tech firms to attract venture capital, recruit quality people and be accepted as a viable partner by other companies in the industry.

The cluster is planning research and a marketing campaign targeted at people in positions to influence perceptions about Connecticut as a desirable location for high-tech companies.

## ACM Reports First-Year Results

Aerospace Components Manufacturers (ACM) celebrated its first year of operation in July. The group has concentrated its efforts in four key areas: Lean Production Practices; Workforce Development; Consolidated Purchasing; and Promotion and Marketing. In funding activities in these areas, ACM members leveraged \$452,000 of their own funds against \$285,000 in support from both the Department of Economic and Community Development and the Department of Labor.

In the Lean Production Practices area alone, ACM created a Progressive Manufacturing Team with members from 13 Connecticut companies to oversee and manage an aggressive program of high-level training and peer-to-peer mentoring.

The group also developed a unique working relationship with the world-renowned Shingijustu group of Japan (originally formed as the Toyota Lean Production system) to conduct in-plant lean manufacturing events at ACM member companies.

As of June 1, 70 lean production training events had been held at ACM member companies with more than 500 employees participating. The programs focused on the elimination of unneeded processes, improved product flow, creation of efficient work cells, reducing rework and scrap, improving product quality and shortening product lead-times.

The results are impressive: lead-time was reduced by 80 percent; process steps decreased by 50 percent; delivery time improved 100 percent; defects and rework dropped 50 percent; and energy consumption was lowered 16 percent.

## Stamford Chamber Helps Launch IT Business Training Network

Five Stamford information technology firms, under the direction of the Stamford Chamber of Commerce, joined forces to form the "2000 IT Training Network," the state's newest Business Training Network.

With help from a \$10,000 grant from DECD, 2000 IT Training Network will work with the Stamford Public Schools' new Academy for Information Technology, as well as with local colleges, universities and proprietary schools to improve information technology curricula and help ensure a supply of graduates with the skills necessary to enter the IT workforce. The group will also focus on ongoing training for current employees.

Connecticut Business Training Networks were created as a result of recommendations developed by corporate leaders involved in Connecticut's industry cluster initiative. Since the program began in July 1999, 45 Connecticut companies have formed eight networks aimed at addressing their common workforce needs.

## Connecticut Inner City 10 Draws Strong Response

Fifty inner-city companies have been nominated for the *Connecticut Inner City 10* awards program launched by Governor John G. Rowland in September. Companies were nominated by field staff from the Department of Economic and Community Development, the Minority Suppliers Development Council, financial institutions and others. The majority of the candidates have completed the steps necessary to become official candidates.

The *Connecticut Inner City 10* awards program is a part Governor Rowland's \$5 million statewide business strategy to promote inner-city revitalization. Each year, the program will identify and celebrate the 10 fastest-growing businesses in Connecticut's inner cities.

Nominees represent a broad range of businesses - from employment staffing services to telecommunications to retail to manufacturing - and come from communities across the state.

The *Connecticut Inner City 10* is modeled after the Initiative for a Competitive Inner City (ICIC) and *Inc. Magazine's* Inner City 100, a national competition that showcases the 100 fastest-growing companies in America's inner cities. As with the Inner City 100, PricewaterhouseCoopers will provide independent financial analysis leading to the selection of the winning companies in Connecticut. Winners will be announced in February and will also become candidates for the ICIC/*Inc. Magazine* Inner City 100, which will announce results in April.



## Inner City Executive Education Program Piloted at Yale

Corporate, civic and community leaders who developed Connecticut's Inner City Business Strategy recommended that inner-city CEOs have the opportunity to take part in executive leadership programs to give them the advanced skills necessary for continued success. With its strong commitment to inner-city entrepreneurial growth, Fleet Bank invested \$50,000 to make the Inner City Executive Education Program a reality.

Hitesh "Max" Kothari, chief executive officer of Hartford-based Star Hardware, was the first executive selected to participate in such a program. A winner of the 2000 ICIC/*Inc. Magazine* Inner City 100, Star Hardware also is a candidate for the new *Connecticut Inner City 10*.

From Oct. 16 to 20, Max took part in the Leadership and Team Effectiveness program at the Yale School of Management, led by professor Victor Vroom. Senior-level managers from a variety of corporations throughout Connecticut, the United States and three foreign countries attended the workshop.

The focus of the Yale Leadership and Team Effectiveness program is to help managers and executives identify and increase their leadership and interpersonal skills in the workplace. Data on each participant's leadership style was analyzed and collected through a number of methods, including active participation feedback, small group exercises and computer analysis.

Max says his experience will help him take his business to the next level. "A small business owner wears so many different hats, that it's often hard to see the big picture necessary for growing a successful business under any conditions - but even more so in the city," he said. "I would strongly recommend that other inner-city entrepreneurs be given the opportunity to participate in the Executive Education Program."

Max also recommended offering workshops in such areas as ecommerce and strategic alliances.

## Contact

For more information on Connecticut's Competitiveness Strategy, visit [www.decd.org](http://www.decd.org) or [www.cerc.com](http://www.cerc.com) and click on the Industry Clusters icon.

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