



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Contact: Jim Rooney, Associate Director, IEE FirstLink
(412) 624-1118 or jerooney@katz.pitt.edu

U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY TRANSITION TO ESTABLISH AT PITT FIRST NATIONAL CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR FIRST RESPONDER TECHNOLOGIES

Congressman John Murtha announces initial funding of \$1.9 million for new center, which will help meet the technology needs of firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel in post-9/11 world

June 7, 2004 (Pittsburgh) The U.S. Department of Defense's (DoD) Office of Technology Transition will establish the first Department of Defense Technology Transfer and Commercialization National Center of Excellence for First Responder Technologies (NCEFRT) in the University of Pittsburgh's Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence (IEE), U.S. Congressman and Pitt alumnus John Murtha (D-PA12) announced today at a news conference on the Pitt campus.

With initial funding of \$1.9 million, NCEFRT will be housed in IEE's Pantherlab Works (PLW), Pitt's center for the acceleration of technology commercialization in Southwestern Pennsylvania. It will work with research centers at Pitt; 88 DoD research laboratories, including the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio; and regional industry in Western Pennsylvania, all to assist in the commercialization of Pitt and DoD lab research, thereby meeting the technology needs nationally of firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency medical personnel in the post-9/11 world.

A Pitt College of Arts and Sciences graduate whose support was instrumental in obtaining the program for the University of Pittsburgh, Murtha said, "I've been advocating for soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines since I first went to Congress 30 years ago. After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, our nation's first responders—our firefighters, law enforcement officers, and EMTs—proved in a very visible, dramatic way what we've always known: They're heroes, too. And like our military personnel, they need the best available technologies and equipment to be successful. I'm proud to be associated with a center that will support that effort."

"The University of Pittsburgh is truly honored to be chosen as the first campus in the nation to welcome a Department of Defense 'Center of Excellence' of this type," said Pitt Chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg.

--continued--

“While Pitt and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center are established leaders in bioterrorism preparedness, the new center will harness technological innovation to help first responders who risk their lives to protect the public. We are extremely grateful to Congressman John Murtha for his supportive role in further recognizing and developing the expertise that Pitt stands ready to offer our country.”

NCEFRT’s objectives are to increase the rate at which research results in commercially viable products while supporting the growth and competitiveness of U.S. manufacturers and small businesses. NCEFRT will support DoD transition technology from laboratory to market by conducting initial technical reviews, market analysis, and identification of potential industry partners.

The DoD believes that university accelerators are excellent conduits for technology commercialization, because they have a critical grasp of the issues important to the research community, technology development, and intellectual property management, according to Cynthia Gonzales, manager of the DoD’s Office of Technology Transition. The IEE has been providing education, training, and innovative consulting services to small businesses for more than a quarter century, “making the IEE a perfect fit,” Gonzales said. Frederick Winter, dean of the Katz Graduate School, added that “partnering with a business school will ensure that commercialization of federal or university research is integrated with the best practices of today’s successful businesses.”

Winter named IEE Assistant Dean Ann Dugan and IEE Associate Director Jim Rooney as the new center’s leadership team. Rooney stressed the importance of the new center’s agenda by referring to a recent report issued by the Council on Foreign Relations that claims America is “dangerously unprepared” for additional terror attacks. The report contends that the United States must allocate up to \$98 billion to prepare for these potential attacks and that federal, state, and local first responders—nearly three million of them—require associated technologies and significant resource improvements.

First responders are critical to securing our nation’s home front while also providing basic safety to individual citizens, according to Ricardo Negron, chief technology transfer officer of the Air Force Research Laboratory. “We believe this Center of Excellence will greatly enhance efforts to identify dual uses for technologies originally designed for the military to support the vital role of first responders,” Negron added.

About the Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence

Southwestern Pennsylvania entrepreneurs turn to the University of Pittsburgh's Joseph M. Katz School of Business Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence (IEE) for the knowledge and advice their business needs at every step of the business life cycle. The IEE provides educational and consulting services to the business community and molds the research power of the University of Pittsburgh into an energizing force championing innovation. For more information, please call (412) 684-1544.

###