

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Contact: Kelley Denny or Lynn Seay  
412-918-0094 [kdenny@prwerks.com](mailto:kdenny@prwerks.com)

## **FirstLink Spins-Out to Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation**

AUGUST 22, 2007, Pittsburgh, PA – Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation (Gateways), a leading business accelerator, today announced that it has become the new host for the FirstLink technology transfer program, which has been successfully spun-out of the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence (IEE). FirstLink uses its expertise to match technologies created in Department of Defense laboratories with private industry to make these technologies available to firefighters, law enforcement and emergency medical personnel and other "first responders."

"The needs of our firefighters, law enforcement and emergency medical personnel have changed dramatically in the post-9/11 and post-Katrina world," said Robert Meeder, president of Gateways. "The team of four University employees has already grown to seven, and will expand to ten in the near future. Now is the optimal time for us to work to expand the scope of the program."

Ann Dugan, assistant dean and executive director of the IEE, commented, "The Institute for Entrepreneurial Excellence recently completed its third successful year of the novel FirstLink program. It feels good to be able to practice internally what we preach to our entrepreneurial clients, which is to be innovative and consider novel options for growing the business. We believe the spin-out of FirstLink will position it for exceptional growth and continued success."

FirstLink's success lies in its access to labs and ability to serve as a point of entry to the Department of Defense, allowing private industry to tap inventions being created for military use and bring these technologies to life outside the military. This includes providing counsel on business issues and the technology transfer process, knowledge of federal funding opportunities, technical reviews, market, and identification of partnerships that drive success.

Susan Zelicoff, marketing director for FirstLink, added, "With initial success under our belt, we saw the potential to reach beyond the region, touching fire, police and EMT solution providers on a national playing field. That shift from regional to national focus has led to an operational changing of the guard from the University of Pittsburgh to Gateways."

In 2006, for example, FirstLink collaborated with the Naval Surface Warfare Center to bridge the use of a threat containment technology to NABCO, the world leader in the design, development and manufacture of vessels that contain explosives, protecting people and property. As a result of the match of technologies, NABCO has a new design that will assist in safely shuttling away unattended packages at airports nationwide without having to evacuate an airport terminal or halt operations. The use of

this technology has the ability to help save municipalities and the airline industry millions of dollars, while increasing the safety of the public.

Cynthia Gonsalves, deputy director of the Department of Defense, Office of Technology Transition, said, "I am excited about the transition of FirstLink. As the leader of technology transfer for our Defense laboratories, I have seen FirstLink provide a valuable extension to the technology transfer services conducted by our Defense laboratories and other partners when it comes to converting our ideas, patents and assets into meaningful outcomes."

#### **ABOUT FIRSTLINK**

FirstLink helps the Department of Defense connect with companies and investors to commercialize technologies for emergency and security sectors, and has a niche in meeting the needs of our nation's First Responders, which include fire, police and EMTs. FirstLink was established by the Department of Defense (DoD) as the country's first National Center of Excellence for First Responder Technologies through a Partnership Intermediary Agreement with the [United States Department of Defense Office of Technology Transition](#) and the [Air Force Research Laboratory \(AFRL\)](#).

FirstLink's mission is to increase the rate at which technologies are commercialized and transferred to the market place, where they can be applied to emergency and security needs through the private sector. FirstLink supports the transfer of DoD technology and the leveraging of DoD expertise, facilities and equipment by conducting initial technical reviews, market analyses, and identification of potential research and business partners. The FirstLink team includes program director Jim Rooney, marketing director Susan Zelicoff and program consultants Allen Jones and Reeg Allen. For more information, please visit <http://DODFirstLink.com>.

#### **ABOUT PITTSBURGH GATEWAYS**

**Pittsburgh Gateways Corporation** (Gateways) is a business accelerator with the mission of generating new business growth. Utilizing a proven process, Gateways partners with leading academic and research institutions to establish and develop Centers of Technology and to effectively connect these institutions and Centers with industry. Our team also helps to commercialize technologies related to these Centers and industry in various ways, including through the creation of new businesses and the transfer and application of technology to existing companies. For more information, please visit [www.pghgateways.org](http://www.pghgateways.org)

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