



Massachusetts Alliance for Economic Development

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Ambassador A-List New Products & Funding

iRobot Corp. has secured a contract with the **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)**, the central research and development organization for the **Department of Defense**. The **Burlington**-based technology company will develop portable communications relay robots that enable US troops engaged in dense urban environments to rapidly deploy and maintain a communications infrastructure.

Boston-based **Allegro Diagnostics** has secured **\$4 million** in Series-A funding. Allegro Diagnostics specializes in molecular diagnostics for lung cancer and will use the funding to develop and commercialize products based on gene expression technology. This round of funding was led by **Kodiak Venture Partners, Catalyst Health Ventures, and Boston University**.

Lexington-based **BAE Systems** has secured a **\$130 million** contract with the **U.S. Army**. BAE Systems will supply over 3,000 thermal weapon sights per month starting in 2009, which enables soldiers to see objects through smoke, fog or other conditions.

Hydra Biosciences Inc. confirmed **\$34 million** in venture capital funding which brings the total funding to **\$63 million**. Investors include Advanced Technology Ventures, Biogen Idec New Ventures, Lilly Ventures, and Polaris Venture Partners. The **Cambridge**-based biotechnology company plans on moving early stage development of treatments for pain management into clinical testing in the next year.

Luminus Devices Inc. announced the closing of a new round of financing of **\$72 million** led by **Braemar Energy Ventures**. The **Billerica**-based company produces PhlatLight light-emitting diodes, or LEDs, which can be used as components by manufacturers in making high-definition televisions. According to Luminus Devices, PhlatLight LEDs produce superior color in high-definition TVs and digital projection systems while offering an environmentally friendly light source.

Expanding in Massachusetts

Liberty Mutual Group announced plans to establish a customer service center in **Springfield**. The insurance company will occupy **60,000 SF** and employ **300**, with **150** being hired by the year's end. Springfield was noted for its large workforce, concentration of college students, and low office space rental.

The **Irish** medical device company **Creganna** is expanding its **Marlborough** location by **10,000 SF** and increasing their workforce by **20**. The medical device supplier produces low-volume high-quality products for advanced medical systems such as ultrasound and MRI. Creganna selected Marlborough as its first US location a year ago and is currently in the process of expanding its US presence. Officials from Creganna recognized the Massachusetts location as "the hub of the medical industry."

Belgium-based industrial recycling company **Socaplast** will launch a full-scale production facility at its new US headquarters in **Springfield**. The environmentally-friendly company is investing **\$3.4 million** in the facility and is training a workforce of **15**. Socaplast's decision to locate in Springfield signifies the tangible results of increased efforts to market the region to international businesses.

Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in **Needham**, aided by the design expertise of **Steffian Bradley Architects**, has begun a **\$30 million** expansion. The expansion includes a two-story addition of **44,000 feet**. When the project is completed in the fall of 2009, the hospital will have a new emergency room, a state-of-the-art MRI suite, 24 additional in-patient beds, as well as renovations to the existing hospital and the creation of a new front entrance.

The city of **Worcester** celebrated the highly anticipated re-opening of the historic **Hanover Theatre for the Performing Arts**. The **\$31 million** project was a collaborative success between private companies, state, and local government and signifies a significant contribution to the revitalization of downtown Worcester. The theater, which seats 2,300, expects to generate **\$40 million** annually in direct and indirect investments.

Ambassadors @ Work

Massachusetts economic development groups had a strong presence at the **Mass Plastics** show in **Fitchburg** on March 26 and 27. Members of the **Massachusetts Office of Business Development**, the **Massachusetts Alliance for Economic Development** and **MassDevelopment** spoke with many tradeshow attendees on the strengths and advantages of doing business in Massachusetts. Also at the show helping promote Massachusetts were MAED members **Cutler Associates**, **The North Central Massachusetts Economic Development Council** and **Unitil**.

Boosting the Life Sciences

A recent report released by **McKinsey & Co** through the **Mass Insight Corporation** outlined the necessary recommendations to enhance the life science sector in MA. The report notes the creation of a **\$200 million** Translational Medicine Center (TMC) that would capitalize on the state's university knowledge base as well as create jobs. Funding for the TMC include \$50 million from the pending life science investment bill with the remaining \$150 million in funding coming from federal and private sources. To view the complete report click [here](#).

Manufacturing Month

The **Patrick-Murray Administration** focused throughout month of March on the **manufacturing industry** in Massachusetts. Administration staff and industry leaders organized forums and roundtables across the state to discuss ways of protecting and enhancing the fourth largest employment industry sector in the Commonwealth. The manufacturing sector employs approximately **300,000** people with wages around **\$65,000** annually. To see the complete story click [here](#).

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MAED is a private, non-profit partnership of business industry leaders and government dedicated to the economic growth of the Commonwealth.