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## Memorandum

To: Leon County Board of County Commissioners  
From: Ronald J. Miller, Jr., Executive Director  
Date: January 26, 2015  
Subject: Leon County Research & Development Authority Status Update

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### **Introduction:**

The Leon County Research and Development Authority (the Authority) was created by the Leon County Board of County Commissioners pursuant to County Ordinance No. 80-68 in accordance with Section 159.703, Florida Statutes. The mission of the Authority is to work in affiliation with Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee Community College to promote scientific research and development activities, and economic development to broaden the economic base of Leon County. The Authority is a dependent special district managed by an 11 member Board (*expanded from 9 in 2014*) of Governors with two staff—an Executive Director, and an Executive Assistant.

The Authority manages Innovation Park which is comprised of 208 acres of land leased by the Authority and the Universities from the State Internal Improvement Trust Fund, and 17 facilities, 5 of which are owned by the Authority. The research and development park in Southwest Tallahassee is occupied by approximately 50 organizations employing 1900 employees. The Park has approximately 44 acres of developable land remaining. The Authority also owns undeveloped land in an 11.9 acre tract adjacent to the Park, and another 18.3 acre tract on nearby Eisenhower Street.

### **2014 Highlights:**

- On November 12, 2013, the Authority entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Florida State University and Florida A&M University (the Universities) which outlines a restructuring plan, and establishes a framework for the continued operation of the Park. **The Authority completed the land and building transactions, and began the transition of operations on March 18, 2014.** The Authority transferred to the Universities ownership of the Shaw, Sliger and Centennial buildings and related improvements and fixtures, as well as the leasehold interest in 96 gross acres of developed and undeveloped land (34 developable acres). In exchange, the Authority received from the Universities control of the leasehold interest and related subleases in the Johnson building, and the retirement of bonds associated with the Centennial Building.

- Applied for a \$500,000 Economic Development Administration grant, with FSU's Office of Research as a co-applicant, to fund planning and design of a wet lab business incubator to be developed by LCRDA—award notification pending.
- Reacquired 2.5 acres of State leased land for future development in the park.
- Hosted another successful Elevator Pitch Night at the Goodwood Conference Center where we awarded \$30,000 in technology commercialization grants, chosen from 18 applications, to:
  - General Capacitor International: Focused on development, manufacturing and sales of a lithium-ion super capacitor designed for rapid energy storage and delivery.
  - ReclaimRx: Its covalent labeling kit will allow for routine use of high resolution mass spectrometry analysis of protein interactions and structure changes in ways that are currently limited to a few specialized labs with large budgets.
- Hosted three EDC Research & Engineering Roundtables:
  - March: Building the Technology Commercialization Pipeline
  - September: Robotics Education & Engineering in Tallahassee/Leon County
  - November: LCRDA Technology Commercialization Grant participant company experiences
- Awarded 10 scholarships to startups to allow them to participate in the EDC's Entrepreneurial Excellence Program at no cost.
- Since fiscal year 2009-10, the Authority has had five consecutive unqualified opinions on audited financial statements, and four consecutive years without any material weaknesses in internal controls, or management comments from independent auditors.
- Completed Business Incubation Management Certificate Program

**Goals for 2015:**

- Finalize negotiation of National Park Service lease in Johnson Building increasing rents by \$100,000 per year; begin work to expand tenant lease space.
- Conduct a feasibility study for development of a wet lab business incubator (consultant contract award pending); based on results and available funding, continue project planning and design.
- Hire an architect to create a plan to redevelop vacant space in the Collins Building.
- Revise Innovation Park Covenants & Restrictions.
- Develop "Rock Star Researcher" marketing materials to be used in attracting R&D focused companies to Leon County.
- Develop a mobile app to engage Innovation Park tenants.
- Continue existing programs: Technology Commercialization Grant, EEP Scholarships, and Research & Engineering Roundtables.