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**Auburn team takes first place and \$100,000 prize
at business plan competition
Huntsville teams capture second and third**

AUBURN, Ala. – OcuMedic, an ophthalmic drug delivery company, captured the \$100,000 prize in the first Alabama Launchpad business plan competition, held on the Auburn University campus on May 21.

OcuMedic, led by Dr. Mark Byrne, an assistant professor of chemical engineering at Auburn University, developed a proprietary, patent-pending technology that enables patients to receive time-release eye medication for conditions such as allergy, infection and inflammation through contact lenses. Byrne's partner in the competition was his brother, Paul Byrne.

The technology is an improvement over traditional eye drops, which are hindered by poor patient compliance, high or insufficient dosages, irritation, side effects, and the fact that some drugs cannot be used when wearing contact lenses.

Two teams from Huntsville captured the second and third place cash prizes of \$50,000 and \$25,000 - Halo Research and IntelCell, both with team leaders from the University of Alabama in Huntsville.

"These three teams rose from a very competitive pool of more than 60 applicants," said Glenn Kinstler, Alabama Launchpad director. "We are confident that these teams will find further success as they move forward with their technologies. We are most pleased with the level of competition we've seen in our inaugural year, and are already looking forward to even greater participation next year."

The three winning teams emerged from a field of eight finalists who competed in front of judges during the final round of competition held at the Dixon Conference Center on the campus of Auburn University. The competition began with a call for entries in Oct. 2006, and progressed through four phases of competition, including the final.

"At its heart, this competition is an economic development catalyst," said James P. Hayes, president of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama, a founding sponsor. "We know that the talent and expertise for innovative technologies can be found in our educational institutions. This competition is a driver to pull these technologies into the spotlight and to jump-start their funding, so we can support job creation in emerging technologies in this state at the base level."

Huntsville-based Halo Research took second-place for their wearable health monitoring and emergency contact system. Halo's products are designed to address healthcare concerns of independently living elderly adults by automatically detecting serious health concerns, such as a fall, and remotely notifying designated caregivers.

The team is led by Chris Otto, a recent Master of Science graduate from the UAH department of electrical and computer engineering. Teammates are: Chirag Patel, who holds a B.S. in computer engineering from UAH; and Dr. Brent Wren, UAH director of graduate programs and associate professor of marketing.

IntelCell placed third in the competition with a new cell culture platform to modernize research techniques for cell and tissue growth. The company's first product, Cell Drive™, will attempt to replace traditional cell culture equipment, such as the Petri dish, with a precision cell growth system that increases experimental control, improves sterility, provides digitization of data and methods, and reduces human error and labor costs.

The team is led by Aaron Hammons, who earned his Master of Science in management of technology and a B.S. in biochemistry from UAH; Tod Opichka, M.S. in management of technology and B.S. biochemistry, UAH; Micah Harvey, who is pursuing a M.S. in mechanical engineering at UAH; Jim Anderson, a research associate at UAH; and Dr. Amy Bishop, current assistant professor of biology, UAH.

Four executives from the entrepreneurial community judged the final teams: William Brooke, Executive Vice President & Managing Partner, Harbert Management Corporation, Venture Capital; Monroe Lanier III, Vice President, Hickory Venture Group; Dr. James Combs, Associate Professor of Management, Florida State University College of Business; and David Gray, President and CEO, DAXKO Software.

Teams were judged on five equally weighted criteria:

- Value Proposition - What problem or unmet need does this idea address? Is it attractive? Does the team/proposal make a strong case?
- Market Opportunity -Is the market real? Is it large enough? Is it growing? What about competition?
- Management Team – Is this group capable of leading this company? Are future needs addressed?
- Financial Information - Are the revenue projections realistic? Are cost projections realistic? Is the level or profitability attractive?
- Presentation - Was the presentation clear and articulated well? Did the speaker address all of the critical issues? Did the presenter make a strong case for their business idea?

Alabama Launchpad

Where Business Ideas Take Off!

About Alabama Launchpad

Alabama Launchpad was formed in 2006 by founding partners Alabama A&M University, Alabama State University, Auburn University, The University of Alabama, the University of Alabama at Birmingham, the University of Alabama at Huntsville, and the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama. The goals of Alabama Launchpad are to provide seed financing to high growth businesses on an annual basis, to create a statewide event that brings together various regional and technology-based interests, and to market and promote the economic opportunities for technology development in Alabama. Alabama Launchpad will provide seed financing to technology and high-growth businesses with three cash prizes to be awarded annually. More information at www.alabamalaunchpad.com).

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2007 Alabama Launchpad Finalists

(listed in alphabetical order)

- **AT Biosciences, LLC. (UAH):** Team is led by Dr. Jason Feng, a research professor in the Department of Biological Science. AT Biosciences has developed molecular biomarkers for academic research and clinical diagnosis using a new patent-pending technology.
- **Distributed Carpet Nylon Recycling (Auburn):** Team is led by Dr. Paul Swamidass, a professor of Management at the Auburn University College of Business. The company has developed a patented chemical process for recovery and recycling of nylon from waste carpet.
- **Facilitaire (UAB):** Team is led by Mr. Ron Baldwin, a 2005 graduate of the Master of Science in Electrical Engineering Program. Facilitaire uses prototyped tools for improving communications between IT professionals and business managers using a pay-for-use online platform.
- **Halo Research (UAH):** Team is led by Mr. Chris Otto, a recent Master of Science graduate from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering. Halo Research has developed a wearable health monitoring system that uses wireless technology to monitor health and lifestyle of elderly.
- **Intelligent Cellular Systems (UAH):** Team is led by Mr. Aaron Hammons, a recent graduate of UAH. The company has developed a compact, precision cell-culture system that provides greater experimental control, and reduces human error and costs.
- **Ocumedic (Auburn):** Team is led by Dr. Mark Byrne, Assistant Professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering. Ocumedic is a drug delivery company with a proprietary, patent-pending technology that creates therapeutic contact lenses for treatment of ocular diseases.
- **Physician Innovations (UAB):** Team is led by Mr. Marc Krawitz, an alumnus of the UAB Master of Business Administration Program. The company is a systems integration firm specializing in Electronic Medical Record (EMR) solutions for smaller medical facilities.
- **Q-Track (UAH):** Team is led by Mr. Jerome Gabig. Mr. James Fluhler, a current student at UAH, is also on the team. Q-Track uses patented wireless technology using near-field electromagnetic ranging to track people and physical assets indoors on a real-time basis.

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