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GOED Knowledge Fund project at University of Nevada, Reno key to three company expansions and job creation

*Nevada Center for Applied Research enables substantial growth of technology companies
Bioelectronica, NexTech Batteries, and LactaLogics while attracting \$43 million in investments*

CARSON CITY, Nev. – Since 2015, the Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) has made a \$6.2 million investment in the University of Nevada, Reno's (UNR) [Nevada Center for Applied Research](#) (NCAR). During the past four years, NCAR has engaged with more than 110 companies and agencies with the following results:

- \$20 million in venture capital investment earned by NCAR-affiliated companies,
- More than 90 jobs created by NCAR-affiliated companies,
- \$23.6 million in grants, contracts, investments, gifts, and agreements generated to the University,
- 13 companies currently working on campus.

“The ultimate benefit for the state's economy is the strengthening and growth of companies through innovation leading to the creation of high paying and sustainable jobs of the future for Nevadans,” said Governor Steve Sisolak.

After a period of successful business incubation, three technology companies that were incubated in NCAR have emerged as viable companies and have outgrown their operation at NCAR. The three new companies that had chosen to locate laboratory R&D operations at UNR are [Bioelectronica](#), [NexTech Batteries](#) and [LactaLogics](#). Each conducted its business-startup operations in on-campus laboratory space managed by NCAR, which has been receiving financial support from GOED since 2015. They have relocated all or some operations to private, commercial space, two of them – Bioelectronica and NexTech Batteries – remain in northern Nevada and continue to do work with NCAR through a fee-for-service agreement.

“UNR has been supporting GOED's vision for the creation of Applied Research Centers at Nevada's research universities of which NCAR is a formidable and leading example,” said Michael Brown, GOED executive director. “NCAR is providing highly innovative fast-growing companies an access

point to the university and its resources for instance faculty expertise, intellectual capital (IP), critical equipment, infrastructure like the Living Lab, and vital laboratory space for their development. NCAR is providing businesses with a safe zone to foster their growth as well as offering innovation on demand.”

Jonathan Hull, co-founder of Bioelectronica said NCAR was an attractive place for him to incubate and then scale up. Bioelectronica grew from two employees to 12 while based in the NCAR-managed labs and continues to operate in Reno.

“We started with a single lab bench and grew from there. Most of our hires have been from the University. The proximity made it easy and they are talented employees,” Hull said. “We want to be part of putting Reno on the map for Biotech. It’s about fostering an ecosystem that can help build this sector.”

After achieving entrepreneurial success in California’s Silicon Valley and contributing to the next generation of DNA sequencing, Roger Chen joined with Hull to found Bioelectronica, where the team is inventing new tools to accelerate drug discovery. The interdisciplinary team uses computer vision, biochemical reagents, and consumer electronics to build its Hypercell® platform. In January 2020, the Society for Laboratory Automation and Screening selected Bioelectronica’s Hypercell technology platform as the most innovative new product from around the globe.

NexTech Batteries grew from two employees to 14. Headquartered in Carson City, NexTech is developing next-generation technologies for lithium sulfur batteries, based on licensed technologies developed through a cooperative research agreement with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

LactaLogics grew from two employees to nine. The company has relocated to Florida, growing into a 64,000 square foot facility where it continues high-quality laboratory and manufacturing operations of human milk-based biopharmaceuticals and medical foods for neonates. LactaLogics is currently conducting clinical trials.

The new companies working in the NCAR-managed labs include [Ethox Chemicals](#), an established company based in North Carolina that has chosen to locate R&D operations in NCAR, and two startup businesses from out-of-state, Disruptor Scientific LLC and rBio.

Director Carlos Cardillo describes NCAR as following a triple-helix model as it benefits and collaborates across academia, industry, and government. Cardillo has been invited to numerous conferences in the U.S. and abroad to explain the NCAR concept and outcomes, and other universities have visited campus to see the unique program in action. NCAR was named a national finalist for the University Economic Development Association’s 2019 Award of Excellence and Cardillo received the University’s 2020 Foundation Innovation Impact Award.

“NCAR is enhancing faculty success and competitiveness, regional and international collaboration, and connections between industry and workforce development,” said Mridul Gautam, UNR vice president for research and innovation. “We are very appreciative of the regional collaboration and GOED support that has allowed for this to happen.”

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About the Governor’s Office of Economic Development

Created during the 2011 session of the Nevada Legislature, the [Governor’s Office of Economic Development](#) is the result of a collaborative effort between the Nevada Legislature and the Governor’s Office to restructure economic development in the state. GOED’s role is to promote a robust, diversified and prosperous economy in Nevada, to stimulate business expansion and retention, encourage entrepreneurial enterprise, attract new businesses and facilitate community development. More information on the Governor’s Office of Economic Development can be viewed at diversifynevada.com.