Don’t Miss EPA-USDA SBIR Workshop

Are you interested in agricultural or environmental innovation? Are you seeking funding to develop new agricultural or environmental technologies? Well, there is still time to register for the EPA-SBIR Workshop scheduled for March 26, 2009 in the Pioneer Room of the Memorial Union on the Iowa State University Campus from 8:30 am until noon.

Don’t miss this chance to meet on-one-on with EPA SBIR Program Manager Dr. Jim Gallup or USDA SBIR Program Specialist Scott Dockum to get feedback on your research idea and find out more about how to tap into these agencies’ SBIR programs. Get firsthand information about this year’s solicitations and research topics. Learn from SBIR awardees and find out what local support services are available to help you prepare a competitive proposal. Entrepreneurs, university researchers, small technology-based companies, small manufacturers and service providers are encouraged to attend.

There is no charge to participate in the workshop, but advance registration is required and space is filling up fast! A registration form can be downloaded here, or contact Kris Johansen at 515-294-3208; kajo-hans@iastate.edu for additional information.

NIH Conference Registration Open

Registration is now open for the 11th Annual NIH SBIR/STTR Conference that will be held in Omaha June 30-July 1, 2009. In addition, 75 SBIR/STTR awardees and 25 university researchers will be selected to present their non-proprietary research at a special poster session.

Iowa’s NIH SBIR/STTR winners and university researchers are encouraged to submit abstracts for consideration since this will be a great forum for identifying collaboration opportunities and commercialization partnerships. The deadline for abstract submission is April 13, 2009.

Other conference highlights include an “SBIR 101” for those new to the program, one-on-ones with NIH staff, and an in-depth look at the review process. Early bird registration for the conference ends April 15, 2009 and fees are $125. More information is available here.
NSF FY2009 SBIR Solicitation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) issued its FY2010 Phase I SBIR solicitation on March 2, 2009. Note that this solicitation is for SBIR proposals only. The deadline for NSF’s FY2009 Phase I STTR solicitation was February 25, 2009.

All new research topics are being offered for this solicitation, and include a number of subtopics under the areas of Biotech and Chemical Technologies, Educational Applications, Information and Communications Technologies, and Nanotechnology, Advanced Materials and Manufacturing. In addition, NSF has raised the award ceiling for this solicitation to $150,000.

Note that Phase I proposal requirements for NSF differ from other agencies in that proposals must also include a section on commercial potential and that letters of support for the technology are mandatory. Contact with the cognizant program manager is strongly encouraged prior to submitting a proposal.

EPA SBIR Solicitation To Be Released

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to release its FY2009 Phase I SBIR solicitation on or about March 20, 2009. Anticipated research topics for this solicitation include innovation in manufacturing, nanotechnology, green buildings, drinking water and water monitoring, water and wastewater management, control of air pollution, air monitoring and remote sensing, engine and vehicle emissions reduction, animal waste and waste to energy, waste management and monitoring, large-scale disaster debris management, and technology for villages and small communities.

Funding of up to $70,000 for Phase I projects up to 6 months in duration will be available under this solicitation. Applications will be due on or about May 20, 2009. EPA does not use electronic proposal submission; hard copies must be submitted in time for receipt by the proposal deadline.

For more information, see the EPA’s SBIR website.

S.177: New SBIR Reauthorization Bill

S.177, a bill to reauthorize the SBIR program, was introduced in the Senate in early January. Key provisions of this legislation included extending the program until 2022, increasing award levels to $300,000 for Phase I projects and to $2.2 million for Phase II, and incrementally increasing the mandated SBIR set-aside by 2.5% a year until it reaches 10% in 2012. S.177 also calls for the STTR set-aside to increase incrementally each year until it hits 1.0% in 2012. Energy, security, transportation, and water related research are identified as topic areas deserving special consideration.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship committee, where many feel it is unlikely to get much traction because of the large award ceilings and required set-aside. Watch for other SBIR reauthorization bills to be forthcoming. In the meantime, S.177 can be tracked here. 
NIH FOAs for Clean and Renewable Energy

Yes—you read it correctly: the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has recently issued two Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) for clean and renewable energy as a result of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. Under PA-09-100 and PA-09-101, NIH is seeking SBIR and STTR proposals, respectively, for a very broad range of technologies for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Examples research topics that NIH indicates are of interest includes, but is not limited to, metabolic engineering, technologies to optimize battery usage and/or energy consumption by medical devices and equipment, remote diagnostics and medical care, technologies for improving large bioreactors for pharmaceutical manufacturing, production of human biologicals in plants, robotics and computer assisted surgery, mathematical and computer modeling of biological systems, and information systems to coordinate patient management.

Many opportunities exist for companies outside of the biotechnology and pharmaceutical arenas under this announcement, so small businesses that have never considered applying to NIH before are encouraged to look at these announcements.

These funding opportunities following the standard submission deadlines of April 5, August 5, and December 5, as well as the statutory guidelines of $100,000 for Phase I and $750,000 for Phase II.

For more information on the NIH SBIR/STTR program, see: http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/sbir.htm.

SBIR Gateway Offers DoD STTR Partnering Service

The SBIR Gateway has recently made a free partnering service available for the current DoD STTR FY09.A solicitation.

This trial service allows universities, federally funded research and development centers (FFDRCs), and other qualifying non-profit research organizations to review the topic offerings, check topics of interest, and fill out a contact information form. Small businesses seeking research partners can in turn query their topics of interest and identify what research organizations may be interested in partnering.

Completing the form and searching for partners is quick and easy. Anyone interested in this solicitation is encouraged to visit the partnering link at: http://www.zyn.com/sbir/sttr_partnering.htm.

Note that the SBIR Gateway is offering this service independently of the DoD.

Key Solicitation Dates

- The next deadline for submission of white papers to NIST’s TIP program is March 9, 2009.
- The deadline for non-AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is April 5, 2009.
- The deadline for DHS’s DNDO FY09.1 Phase I SBIR solicitation is April 6, 2009.
- The deadline for the DOT’s FY2009-01 Phase I SBIR solicitation is April 15, 2009.
- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is May 7, 2009.
- The deadline for the EPA’s Phase I SBIR solicitation will be on or about May 21, 2009.

For more information on these solicitations, visit: www.sbir.gov
Technology Spotlight

Fiber Optics Microscopy for Magnetic Materials (ISURF #3622)

A number of techniques have been used to image magnetic domain structures, including Lorentz-mode transmission electron microscopy, neutron scattering, electron microscopy with polarization analysis, and transmission X-ray microscopy. While highly effective for imaging magnetic properties, these methods suffer from the drawbacks that they require high ultraviolet light, careful sample preparation, and expensive electron or X-ray optics. Magnetic force microscopy has also been used to image stray fields of magnetic samples, but its utility for soft magnetic materials is limited because of the high field gradient required for the magnetic probe used. To overcome these drawbacks, ISU researchers have developed a fiber optics microscopy method for magnetic materials that enables fiber-based one and two-dimensional scanning, domain profiling, and domain measurement. Because no magnetic probe is required, this approach can be used for samples immersed in a magnetic field; in addition, the nonmagnetic nature of the measurement does not perturb the magnetic domains of the material. As a result, dynamic imaging of magneto-optical samples is possible.

For more information on this and other technologies available for licensing, go to: www.techtransfer.iastate.edu.

About OIPTT:

OIPTT was formed in 1990 to provide support services to the university community in matters related to intellectual property, to be the first contact related to new innovations, and to market the innovations and negotiate the agreements for transfer of the technology for the Iowa State University Research Foundation’s signature. OIPTT reports to the office of the Vice Provost for Research.

OIPTT’s mission is to serve the university as the primary resource for intellectual property and related matters and facilitate the disclosure and utilization of university innovations for the benefit of society, the university and its faculty and staff, and contribute to economic development in Iowa when possible.

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