Emmyon Awarded Phase I

Coralville-based Emmyon, Inc. has been awarded a Phase I SBIR grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The company will use the funding to determine if two proprietary compounds reduce age-related skeletal muscle atrophy in mice. Age-related skeletal muscle atrophy, also known as sarcopenia, affects approximately 30 million people in the US alone, often leading to weakness, reduced quality of life, falls, fractures, and debilitation that can result in long hospitalizations or nursing home placement. Unfortunately, an effective therapy for age-related skeletal muscle atrophy does not exist.

Emmyon’s proprietary compounds have shown promising results in young mice with skeletal muscle atrophy, and the company’s Phase I work will further characterize the efficacy of these compounds in old mice with age-related skeletal muscle atrophy. These studies will help position the company for Phase II work, which will be aimed at helping human patients. Through these studies, Emmyon hopes to address a significant unmet clinical need and large worldwide market.

For more information about Emmyon, contact: christopher.adams@emmyon.com.

Beyond Phase II Conference Canceled

According to the July 25, 2013 issue of the SBIR Insider, the DoD has cancelled the 2013 Beyond Phase II Conference; previous Beyond Phase II conferences had featured educational and plenary sessions as well as Phase II match-making sessions designed to facilitate one-on-one meetings between small businesses and large organizations based on technology capabilities and needs. The cancellation appears to be in response to restrictions placed on government conferences and travel for Federal employees in reaction to sensationalized reports of alleged excesses at events that are unrelated to the SBIR/STTR programs.
DOT FY13.2 Phase I SBIR Solicitation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) recently opened its FY13.2 SBIR solicitation to accepting proposals. Participating DOT administrations include the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Administration, and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Administration. Topics for this offering include Development of Innovative Welding for High Performance Bridge Steel; Game-based technology and Database to Train Pre-Drivers, Young Drivers, and Older Drivers to Detect Traffic Hazards and Respond Appropriately; Affiliation Strength/Risk Model Development for Motor Carrier Succession; Pipeline Integrity Assessment Using In-Line Inspection; Modeling Cathodic Protection Penetration on New construction Pipelines Incorporating all Types of “Foam” Sack Breakers and Supports; Develop and Demonstrate New Non-Destructive Evaluation Methods to Quantify Remaining Strength of Line Pipe Steel and or Pipeline Fittings.

DOT anticipates make eight awards of up to $150,000 for Phase I projects up to six months in duration under this solicitation. Note that there are DOT-specific application forms that need to be completed and submitted. The application deadline is September 23, 2013, and proposals must be submitted through the DOT’s electronic proposal submission form.

Grants.gov Has New Look

The Grants.gov website recently debuted a new look and feel. Along with the updated look, new training tools are available. A new video that guides applicants on how to register on Grants.gov, find funding opportunities and apply was recently posted, as well as a video on migrating legacy CCR (Central Contractor Registration) accounts or creating new user accounts in the System for Award Management. Since the Grants.gov website is used by many agencies for electronic proposal submission, anyone new to the SBIR/STTR programs or who has not submitted a proposal recently is encouraged to visit the site and review the applicant resources available. Also remember that registration in SAM and in the SBIR.gov Company Registry is required for submitting SBIR/STTR proposals, and applicants should register early to avoid losing a funding opportunity!

Navy Rapid Innovation Fund Broad Agency Announcement

The Department of the Navy (DoN) recently released a Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for its Rapid Innovation Fund (RIF). The goal of this program is to transition innovative technologies that resolve operational challenges or save costs into DoN acquisition programs. There are two phases in the selection process: submission of white papers and full proposal submission. DoN is seeking mature prototypes that will undergo final development, testing, evaluation and integration. Full proposal submission is upon invitation only. Those selected for award may receive up to $3 million in RIF funding with a performance period of up to two years.

Questions regarding the BAA must be submitted by August 28, 2013, and white paper submissions close on September 30, 2013. DoN funds available for award are $45-65 million, and there is a source selection preference for technologies from small businesses. More information is available on FedBizOpps.
Key Solicitation Dates

- The standard deadlines for non-AIDS related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR applications are August 5 and December 5, 2013.
- The deadline for EPA’s 2013 Phase I SBIR solicitation is August 13, 2013.
- The deadline for AIDS related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR applications is September 7, 2013.
- The deadline for DOE’s FY2014 Phase I Release 1 SBIR/STTR solicitation is October 15, 2013.
- The deadline for DOT’s FY13.2 Phase I SBIR solicitation is September 23, 2013.
- The deadline for DoD’s SBIR 2013.3 Phase I solicitation is September 25, 2013.
- The deadline for DoD’s STTR 2013.B Phase I solicitation is September 25, 2013.
- The deadline for USDA’s FY2014 Phase I SBIR solicitation is September 26, 2013.

Note that the deadline for letters of intent is September 3, 2013.

- The deadline for DOT’s FY13.2 Phase I SBIR solicitation is September 23, 2013.
- The deadline for DoD’s SBIR 2013.3 Phase I solicitation is September 25, 2013.
- The deadline for USDA’s FY2014 Phase I SBIR solicitation is September 26, 2013.

NIH Niche Assessment Program

NIH has indicated that its 2013 Niche Assessment Program (NAP) for its SBIR Phase I awardees will be made available soon. NIH has contracted with Foresight Science and Technology to perform Technology Niche Analyses (TNA™) for 50 NIH SBIR Phase I awardees on a first-come, first served basis. Note that only SBIR but not STTR awardees are eligible to participate.

NIH FOA

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently issued a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) for Developing a Point-of-Care Device for the Diagnosis of Sickle Cell Anemia in Low Resource Settings. Under RFA-HL-14-010, NIH is seeking SBIR applications for proposals to develop a point of care (POC) device for the diagnosis of sickle cell disease (SCD) in infants and young children in low-income and low-resource settings; the aim of this program is to provide rapid diagnosis of SCD in children so that they may receive appropriate therapy to reduce the risk of future complications. Note that this FOA lists specific requirements for an appropriate POC device.

NHLBI anticipates that up to 6 awards (Phase I and Fast-Track) under this announcement will be made in FY2014, and up to 3 Phase II awards will be made in FY2015. Budgets of up to $225,000 total costs per year may be requested for Phase I and budgets of up to $500,000 total costs per year may be requested for Phase II.
A Biochip for Lens-less, Image-sensor-less Locomotion Tracking of Microscopic Nematodes

The nematode Caenorhabditis elegans is a well researched model organism for the study of neural development, cellular differentiation, and genetic analysis. C. elegans is also used as a model for biomedical and environmental toxicology. A variety of approaches have been implemented for studying nematodes, and C. elegans in particular, including microfluidic approaches and optical imaging technologies (such as a benchtop microscope with a digital camera and tracking software program). However, these approaches can be relatively high cost, have a large footprint, and may have a limited field of view, making quantitative measurements on large numbers of nematodes at a single organism resolution unwieldy. To overcome these drawbacks, ISU researchers have developed a micro-electro-fluidic device that can be used to track the locomotion of nematodes. The basis of the device consists of a microelectrode grid formed by intersecting arrays of microelectrodes. A microfluidic chamber is encased by the microelectrode arrays and can contain a sample fluid of choice. Movement of a nematode in the chamber between the microelectrode arrays can be detected as a change in the electrical resistance at their points of intersection. An electronic readout circuit addresses all detection units in the device, so that the entire electrical resistance profile of the microelectrode grid can be ascertained, and the locomotion of the nematode determined without using lenses or image sensors. The locomotion pattern of the nematode is reconstructed using imaging processing tools and a worm tracking program. Since this device does not require sophisticated high-resolution instrumentation for performing simultaneous monitoring of organisms in multi-well plates, it provides a convenient way for conducting whole-animal assays in a variety of microenvironments.

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