MSTRS Awarded Phase I

Ames-based MSTRS™ Technologies, Inc. has been awarded a Phase I SBIR grant from the National Science Foundation. The funding will be used to support MSTRS’ development of a novel technology to help important crop plants defend themselves against aphid attack.

A previous recipient of Phase I and Phase II SBIR funding from NSF, MSTRS was named a 2007 Tibbetts Awardee, a prestigious national award recognizing excellence in the SBIR programs.

MSTRS develops, manufactures, and sells pheromone-releasing dispensers that modify the behavior of insects that are harmful to crops and gardens. Integrated pest management products currently marketed by MSTRS include MSTRS® ECB for use against the European corn borer, MSTRS®BHFW and MSTRS®SS for cranberry production, and MSTRS®OFM, which restrains the mating of Oriental Fruit Moth adults in peach, nectarines, almonds, and stone fruit orchards. BENALLURE®, ladybug and lacewing attractant dispensers developed by MSTRS, are sold nationally by Gardens Alive. In addition, MSTRS has been selected by the Beijing CDC to provide arbovirus surveillance tools and equipment for closely monitoring potential vector-borne diseases during the 2008 Olympic Games.

For more information about MSTRS, contact Dr. Junwei Zhu via email mstrszhu@gmail.com, or visit: http://www.mstrs.com/index.htm.

EndoMetric Wins Phase I

Iowa State University spin-out EndoMetric, LLC (co-founded by Professors Wallapak Tanapanpong and Johnny Wong of the Department of Computer Science) has been awarded a Phase I STTR grant from the National Science Foundation.

EndoMetric will use the funding to help support its development of software for a quality control system for colonoscopic procedures. While colonoscopy has contributed to a decline in the number of colorectal cancer-related deaths, recent data suggest that there is a significant miss-rate for the detection of polyps and possible cancers. EndoMetric’s current software documents how each procedure is done and whether it is done satisfactorily, thereby enabling automated, objective quality control for colonoscopy. Future software products to assist endoscopists in achieving quality colon examination are underway. Thus, EndoMetric’s products have the potential to improve patient’s care for millions of people undergoing colonoscopy in the US each year.
EPA SBIR Workshop Scheduled

A workshop on the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) SBIR program has been scheduled for March 6, 2008 in the University of Nebraska Alumni Center in Omaha, NE. The workshop will include an overview of the SBIR program and details of the upcoming EPA solicitation presented by Dr. Jim Gallup, EPA SBIR Program Manager. Success stories and grant writing tips will also be featured.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about the EPA SBIR program, which has research topics that 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.

The workshop is being jointly sponsored by the Nebraska Business Development Center and the Iowa State University Office of Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer.

There is no charge to attend the workshop, but registration is required. For registration information, contact Veronica Doga at 402-554-2176; vdoga@mail.unomaha.edu. As part of the registration, you can also schedule ten minutes to visit one-on-one with Dr. Gallup about your research idea.

NIH Omnibus Solicitation to be Released

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) of the Department of Health and Human Services anticipates releasing its 2008 Omnibus SBIR and STTR solicitation on or about January 15, 2008. Participating organizations will include NIH, the Centers for Disease Control, and the Food and Drug Administration.

Closing dates for non-AIDS related topics will be April 5, August 5, and December 5, 2008, while closing dates for AIDS-related topics will be May 7 and September 7, 2008, and January 7, 2009. Note that all applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov, and that proposers must be registered on Grants.gov and the eRA Commons.

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

DoD 2008 STTR Solicitation

The Department of Defense 2008 STTR solicitation will be released January 22, 2008. Proposals will be accepted beginning February 19, and the solicitation will close on March 19, 2007. All proposals must be prepared and submitted electronically through the DoD SBIR/STTR Electronic Web Site (http://www.dodsbir.net/submission/SignIn.asp). Proposers must also be registered in the Central Contractor Registration (http://www.ccr.gov/).

Between January 22 and February 18, 2008 proposers may talk directly with Topic Authors. Direct communication between proposers and Topic Authors is not permitted beginning February 19, 2008. However, proposers may submit written questions regarding solicitation topics through the SBIR/STTR Interactive Topic Information System.

For more information, go to: http://www.acq.osd.mil/osbp/sbir/. To search for topics, see: http://www.dodsbir.net/Topics/Default.asp.
USDA Commercialization Assistance Program

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has partnered with the Larta Institute to develop and implement a Commercialization Assistance Program for Phase II SBIR projects. This pilot program, named USDA-CAP, will begin in January 2008 and is aimed at assisting USDA Phase II awardees in transitioning their product, process or service to the marketplace. The five month-long program will include training seminars, individual mentoring/coaching sessions, exposure to potential partners/investors networks and the development of a customized commercialization plan/roadmap for participating companies’ technologies.

All current Phase II awardees should have received information from the USDA about enrolling in USDA-CAP and the upcoming Commercialization Training Workshop, scheduled for January 29-30 in Washington, DC.

There is no cost to register or participate in USDA-CAP; however, participants are expected to invest the time necessary to take advantage of the mentorship process and the development of a commercialization strategy.

For more information, visit the USDA’s SBIR website or http://www.larta.org/usda/.

NSF to Require CCR Registration

The National Science Foundation has announced that as of January 5, 2008, proposers must be registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR) prior to submitting a proposal. Registration information. Proposers are also encouraged to register early, as the CCR registration process can take up to three business days to complete.

Beginning January 5, 2008, NSF will require proposers to be registered in the CCR

Key Solicitation Dates

- The deadline for AIDS-related topics for NIH SBIR/STTR grant applications is January 7, 2008.
- The DoD SBIR 2008.1 solicitation deadline is January 9, 2008.
- The application deadline for the ED contract solicitation is January 22, 2008.
- The application deadline for the NOAA FY2008 SBIR solicitation is January 23, 2008.
- The closing date for the NIST FY2008 SBIR R solicitation is January 25, 2008.
- The DHS FY08.1 SBIR deadline is February 4, 2008.

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

Iowa State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, sex, marital status, disability, or status as a U.S. Vietnam Era Veteran. Inquiries can be directed to the Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, 3680 Beardshear Hall, (515) 294-7612.

Technology Spotlight

Efficient DNA-Based Viral Gene Silencing Vector System for Soybean Functional Genomics (ISURF #3585)

Virus-induced gene silencing (VIGS) is a new approach is so-called reverse genetics, the expression of a known gene (or sequence) is altered and the resulting effect on phenotype investigated. VIGS is being increasingly used as a reverse genetics tool to study and identify functions of specific plant genes, especially in plants such as soybean that are refractory to other methods, such as transformation. While RNA-based VIGS vectors have been developed for investigating gene functions in soybean, they require in vitro RNA transcription and mechanical inoculation. As a result, these systems are not suitable for high-throughput genomics applications since they can be costly and time consuming.

To overcome these drawbacks, ISU researchers have developed a highly reliable soybean gene expression and silencing vector. This improvement over a previously described system is based on DNA inoculation and uses a Cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMV) promoter driven Bean pod mottle virus (BPMV) vector. Because the BPMV vector is designed to silence multiple genes using a single construct, simultaneous testing of different combinations of genes of homologues to reveal genetic redundancy or different molecular pathways is possible. In addition, the vector can be used in soybean to validate the function of Arabidopsis gene homologues.

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