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CONNECT Opens DC Office
New Voice Will Represent Innovators

SAN DIEGO, California (February 8, 2010) – CONNECT, regarded as the world's most successful regional program linking inventors and entrepreneurs with the resources they need for success, today announced that it is opening an office in Washington, DC to ensure that there is a strong link between the San Diego innovation community and the federal government.

Says Duane Roth, CEO, CONNECT, "There is no substitute for "being there". Whether we're talking about informal discussions on policy development or last minute amendments it's critical that CONNECT be part of the process to explain the impact on innovation from a research institution and small business perspective. To do that, the CONNECT Board of Directors supported the establishment of a Washington office to provide a consistent presence and close relationships with legislative offices and Administration officials."

Currently more than 70% of funding for innovation in San Diego is coming from the federal government. But there are no organizations in DC dedicated to representing the unique interests and needs of the innovator. To remedy this situation CONNECT CEO Duane Roth is working with a search committee to hire a full-time Washington-based advocate to represent the San Diego innovation community.

The focus of the CONNECT Washington DC initiative will be built on five policy pylons, each largely controlled by the federal government. They are:

- 1). intellectual property and trade/ anti-trust
- 2). research funding (NIH, NSF, DARPA, DOE, etc)
- 3). regulation (FDA, EPA, FTC, etc.)
- 4). investment capital (SBIR/STTR, SBIC, tax policy, etc)
- 5). workforce development (visas)

According to Jonathan Ortman, a senior fellow at the Kauffman Foundation, a think tank dedicated to advancing entrepreneurship, "Evidence shows entrepreneurs have not had an influence on economic policy that is measurable to their role as drivers of economic growth...a recent Kauffman Foundation survey of entrepreneurs revealed that quite a portion of entrepreneurs (53%) believe that the stimulus package has hurt entrepreneurial activity."

Says Roth, "CONNECT has a 25 year history of supporting innovators and has been involved in policy issues since inception. That gives us a deep understanding of the needs and interests of researchers, early and growth stage companies."

The CONNECT policy committee, chaired by Rob McCray of the WLSA, has broad representation including the life sciences and technology industries and trade organizations. In addition the research institutes and finance providers are also members of the Committee.

CONNECT policy staffer Jessie Womble will be located in DC for the next six months to set up the DC office and establish a consistent CONNECT presence on the Hill. The office will be located at the University of California Washington Center. Once the CONNECT DC advocate is in place Womble will return to San Diego to coordinate the Policy Committee.

About CONNECT

The CONNECT Foundation and Association are non-profit organizations dedicated to creating and sustaining the growth of innovative technology and life science businesses in San Diego. Founded in 1985, CONNECT has assisted in the formation and development of over 2,000 companies and is widely regarded as the world's most successful regional program linking inventors and entrepreneurs with the resources they need for success.

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