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## **CONNECT Announces Five New Initiatives in Support of the San Diego Innovation Economy**

*New initiatives include full time Washington, D.C. advocate, and pursuit of new funding model to accelerate investments in early stage technology and life science start-ups*

SAN DIEGO – CONNECT, the architect of San Diego’s innovation economy, today announced a major expansion to address the challenges and opportunities to commercialize early stage San Diego technology innovations. These initiatives include:

- Pursuing new early stage funding models to address the “valley of death,” including federal investment programs;
- Staffing a full time advocacy presence in Washington, D.C.;
- Accelerating the growth of San Diego high growth clusters including wireless health, contract services, sports innovation, cyber security and autonomous robotics;
- Supporting the creation of new research institutes and attracting talented research faculty; and
- Creating a Regional Intellectual Property and Seed Fund Loan Program

“San Diego is a world leader in creating life saving drugs, advanced wireless communications, bio fuels, defense and security systems and more. But the crisis in venture funding and collapse of the IPO market has put our innovation engine at risk. We are committed to ensuring that San Diego researchers and start-ups have the resources to be an engine of economic growth for the region,” said CONNECT Chief Executive Officer, Duane Roth.

Venture capital investment during the first quarter of 2009 fell in San Diego to the lowest level in 12 years, a decrease of 57% from the immediately preceding quarter and a decrease of 80% from the first quarter of 2008 according to the PricewaterhouseCoopers/National Venture Capital Association MoneyTree™ quarterly report. While signs of investor confidence in new companies are beginning to emerge in the initial public offerings (IPO) market, this follows an 89% drop in IPO activity in 2008 compared to 2007 levels on a dollar basis, according to Thomson Reuters data.

San Diego venture and technology veteran Moya Gollaher has been recruited as Executive Vice President by CONNECT to lead the expansion, including fundraising and program development for the new initiatives. Gollaher was previously a Principal with Enterprise Partners Venture Capital, where she was responsible for marketing and business development. Enterprise has helped build over 150 Southern California companies and put over \$1.1 billion to work.

“For the past 25 years, CONNECT has delivered business creation and development programs to link San Diego’s life sciences and technology innovators with the resources they need for commercial success. These new programs we are announcing today look to improve the pace and scope of innovation commercialization in our region,” said Roth.

In 2008, there were almost 300 technology start-ups launched in the San Diego region and 66 were formed in the first quarter of 2009, according to the CONNECT Innovation Report, a quarterly research report that measures the health of San Diego’s innovation economy. Research data shows that after participating in Springboard, CONNECT's business creation and development program, start-ups contribute \$3 million per year to the San Diego economy, increase full time hiring by 77% and part time hiring by 246%.

#### ***About CONNECT***

CONNECT is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining the growth of innovative technology and life science businesses in San Diego. Since 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. CONNECT focuses on research institution support, business creation and development, entrepreneurial learning, access to capital, public policy advocacy, awards, recognition and networking. More than 25 countries and regions have adopted the CONNECT model, including the U.K, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Australia, and China. For more information, please visit [www.connect.org](http://www.connect.org)

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