

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONNECT's MOST INNOVATIVE NEW PRODUCT "MIP" AWARDS
OPENS 2011 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

SAN DIEGO, CA - July 11, 2011 – The CONNECT MIP Awards opens its call for nominations today. The competition recognizes the most innovative new products launched in San Diego, California, one of the country's largest innovation hotspots.

In its 24th year, the CONNECT MIP Awards is one of the country's major innovation award competitions. The awards focus on the largest innovation clusters in the San Diego region: Action and Sport Technologies, Aerospace and Security Technologies, Clean Technology, Communications and IT, Hardware and General Technology, Life Sciences – Diagnostic and Research Tools, Life Science – Medical Products and Software.

"These awards highlight San Diego's top innovations by showcasing the best new locally-developed products," said CONNECT CEO, Duane Roth. "The products developed here have made a substantial impact, not only in San Diego, but worldwide - from inexpensive energy alternatives to lifesaving medical devices. We look forward to celebrating San Diego's newest contributions to innovation at the CONNECT MIP Awards."

Nominations will be accepted until September 2, and to be eligible, the product must have been introduced between March 2010 and September 2011, generated revenue from sales and be a first time nominee. CONNECT receives more than 100 product submissions for this event each year.

Past winners have included pioneering growth companies such as Biomatrix, ElliptiGO and Legend3D as well as multi-national corporations including FICO, Intuit, Life Technologies, Qualcomm and WD-40.

Twenty four finalists will be selected and honored at a special judges' reception. They will all have the opportunity to display their innovations at the CONNECT MIP awards luncheon to be held December 9th at the Hilton La Jolla Torrey Pines. There the final eight winners will be announced before an audience of more than 800 of the region's top business leaders, researchers and capital providers.

For eligibility criteria and the online nomination form, please visit:

<http://www.connect.org/programs/most-innovative-products-award/nominate/>

CONNECT has assisted in the formation and development of more than 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 commercialization of innovative products in high technology and life sciences. The program has been modeled in more than 50 regions around the world – most recently in Bogota, Columbia and Saudi Arabia. The key to our success

over the past 25 years has been the unique "culture of collaboration" between industry, capital sources, professional service providers and research organizations. CONNECT has been recognized by *Time, Inc.* and *Entrepreneur* magazines and was recently awarded the 2010 Innovation in Economic Development Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce for creation of Regional Innovation Clusters.

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