



Stem cell commercialization center in Detroit aims to create jobs

By **Sven Gustafson**

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A new stem cell commercialization center is set to open in Detroit's **TechTown** incubator as early as July and is seeking federal grants to bring new high-tech jobs to the city.



"Direct jobs will be laboratory technicians, perhaps a scientist eventually, an administrator and all of the things that you need to run a lab and a business," center director James Eliason **told The South End**, Wayne State University's student newspaper.

The center, **announced by Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano** in February, **received \$750,000** from the county for construction and recently awarded \$4.1 million by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the build-out of 15,000 square feet of wet labs.

When completed, the Wayne County Stem Cell Commercialization Center will be available to university researchers and for-profit biotech startups around the state.

Eliason, the former chief scientific officer for **Asterand**, a biotech firm also located in TechTown, said another \$2 million to \$3 million is needed to equip the laboratories.

"We have a company that has already applied for some grants for doing some development to take ideas and make them into commercial products," Eliason said. "So this company, if it gets grants, will hire people and generate money.

"Some of these, if they have good ideas and make good products, will be spun out into new companies. Each of these new companies will hire more people."

Detroit will host the **World Stem Cell Summit** Oct. 4-6, 2010.

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