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The city of Woburn has been designated a Platinum Community

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The City of Woburn has been designated a Platinum Community, the top-ranking award as part of the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council's BioReady Community Campaign, conducted with the support of MassEcon and regional organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

The distinction places Woburn in a leading economic role, along with cities such as Boston and Cambridge, as a municipality working to increasingly adopt local policies that greatly ease the pathway for renovation and new construction of biotech laboratories and manufacturing facilities.

"The city of Woburn is proud to have earned the Massachusetts Biotechnology Council's highest rating. This special distinction highlights Woburn's ongoing efforts to attract and retain innovative, quality biotechnology companies," said mayor Scott Galvin. "It also delivers new opportunities to attract the kinds of companies that deliver solid, well-paying jobs to the area."

The Massachusetts Biotechnology Council (MassBio), along with partner organizations, began the BioReady Communities Campaign in 2008. MassBio, the nation's oldest biotechnology trade association, is a nonprofit organization that represents and provides services and support for the Massachusetts biotechnology industry. Founded in 1985, MassBio is committed to advancing the development of critical new science, technology and medicines that benefit people worldwide.

"As a Platinum Community in the BioReady Campaign," mayor Galvin said, "Woburn will continue its commitment to smart economic planning by working to attract more biotechnology companies to locate here, along the state's technology highway at the crossroads of Route 93 and 95."

As part of the BioReady Campaign, the Biotech Council has developed ratings for municipalities that fill out a survey related to its zoning practices and infrastructure capacity. Municipalities are ranked on a scale of bronze, silver, gold or platinum. The Biotech Council uses these guidelines and ratings system to help biotechnology companies find the most appropriate destinations in Massachusetts. To date, there are 69 BioReady rated communities in Massachusetts. The city is one of less than two dozen of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth to earn the platinum distinction.

Since the beginning of the program, MassBio has conducted regional seminars throughout Massachusetts to provide local officials with information about the biotechnology industry, as well as guidance on positioning a municipality as a destination for biotech laboratories and manufacturing facilities.

Cummings Properties has long been supportive of the biotech industry, providing a range of laboratory spaces from 700 s/f "incubators" for early stage companies to 100,000 s/f facilities for major corporations. The commercial real estate firm just recently completed building out brand new incubator labs at an Emerging Technology Center in West Cummings Park.

According to Cummings president and CEO Dennis Clarke, "More and more biotech firms are realizing the benefits of locating in Woburn. The straightforward permitting process, a strategic

location at I-95 and I-93, first-class research facilities, and affordable lease rates make it an attractive alternative to Cambridge and Boston."

"Both the Commonwealth and the Massachusetts Biotech Council have invested significant time and resources in attracting and retaining biotech firms. The city of Woburn, by engaging in smart marketing to raise its own visibility, has leveraged these efforts and positioned itself as a leader in responsible economic development," said Clarke.

A Sampling of Woburn

Biotech Firms

In 2005, after conducting an international search, Biovex selected Woburn for its headquarters location. Its potential treatment for people with advanced melanoma is currently in a phase III, FDA-approved clinical trial. The firm's cutting-edge research attracted the attention of pharmaceutical industry giant Amgen, which acquired Biovex in early 2011. Amgen is located at 8 Cabot Rd.

Helping physicians treat patients with infectious diseases more quickly, AdvanDx develops diagnostic tests that produce results in hours instead of days. A client of Cummings Properties since 2005, the international company started in a small lab of fewer than 1,000 square feet, and has expanded over the years to its current 12,000 s/f headquarters at TradeCenter 128.

PathoGenetix is also focused on diagnostics, creating technology that will identify thousands of bacteria strains in three hours with just one test. Located in Woburn for approximately eight years, the company expects its product will have applications in genomics research and food and product safety testing, among other areas.

Gentest Corporation moved to Henshaw Street in 1998 and, just three years later, got noticed and acquired by global medical technology giant BD Biosciences. The Woburn location now operates as part of the firm's Discovery Labware division.

Just last month, Woburn firm Pluromed received FDA approval for LeGoo, a gel used to temporarily stop blood flow during surgery. The growing company aims to make medical procedures safer, more effective, and less costly.

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