



For Immediate Release

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**Southern Growth Policies Board Names
TechConnect WV
2010 Innovator Award Winner from West Virginia**

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC – Southern Growth Policies Board is pleased to announce **West Virginia University's TechConnect WV** program as the recipient of its 2010 Innovator Award from West Virginia. The organization brings public and private partners together with a goal of diversifying West Virginia's economy by advancing technology-based economic development.

TechConnect WV began informally five years ago, when several entities involved in research, technology transfer and commercialization joined to assess West Virginia's capacity and explore how other states had made progress in the innovation economy. This loose coalition of universities, foundations, federal labs and economic development organizations quickly saw that the state needed to build infrastructure to support the technology entrepreneur, assist with commercialization and promote economic diversity.

As it matured, **TechConnect WV** achieved non-profit status in 2008 and built a strong coalition of partners, including the West Virginia Development Office. Working with the Battelle Institute, the organization produced a plan for the growing innovation economy in March 2009. The *Blueprint for Technology-Based Economic Development in West Virginia* outlines a series of strategies and actions that are designed to help the state build around its existing strengths to promote economic diversity and create value.

The creation of Innovation Institutes built around two of the four key strengths identified in the Blueprint marks a strong start for the organization. The Advanced Energy Institute and Biometrics Institute are focused on actively building new research and development projects in areas that have clear commercial potential. Directors of each are charged with developing four collaborative efforts this calendar year. In this and all endeavors, the organization's objective is to serve as a forum and facilitator to bring the assets of member entities to the table and join with new partners that can add value.

Innovator Awards are presented annually to one organization in each of Southern Growth's 13 member states in recognition of initiatives that are improving economic opportunities and quality of life in the region. The *2010 Innovator Awards* were chosen from creative initiatives in the region that aim to help communities recover from the recession. One award winner per week will be announced in Southern Growth's e-newsletter, Southern Compass, leading up to an official recognition of all awardees at **Southern Growth's Chairman's Conference, June 7-8, 2010 in Lexington, Kentucky**. For more information on Southern Growth's Innovator Awards program or Chairman's Conference, contact Ted Abernathy, Executive Director, Southern Growth Policies Board, at (919) 941-5145 or tabernathy@southern.org.

About Southern Growth Policies Board

Southern Growth Policies Board is a regional public policy think tank based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. Formed by the region's governors in 1971, Southern Growth Policies Board

develops and advances visionary economic development policies by providing a forum for collaboration among a diverse cross-section of the region's governors, legislators, business and academic leaders and the economic and community development sectors. Southern Growth provides its members, and the region, with authoritative research, discussion forums and pilot projects in the areas of technology and innovation, globalization, workforce development, community development, civic engagement and leadership. To learn more about Southern Growth Policies Board, visit www.southern.org.