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Davis Announces Ft. Wayne as State's Newest Certified Technology Park

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — The link between Indiana's world-class education system and its rapidly growing advanced technology industry has grown even stronger with the designation of Fort Wayne as the state's fourth Certified Technology Park.

Lt. Gov. Kathy Davis today announced that the city of Fort Wayne's new Innovation Center has been awarded the status.

"This is outstanding news for the city of Fort Wayne and for the state of Indiana," said Davis, who leads the state's economic development efforts as director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. "As a state, we have worked hard to encourage more partnerships between our top-notch universities and our local job-creating industries."

A result of 2002's tax restructuring legislation, the new Certified Technology Park program encourages the location of high-technology businesses within areas identified by local redevelopment commissions. Portions of tax revenues generated by tenants are reinvested into the park and used for improvements, operation and maintenance of facilities, payment of interest and principal on bonds and other business-generating activities.

"The fact that the Northeast Indiana Innovation Center has earned the status as the State's fourth Certified Technology Park means more high quality jobs for this region," said Mayor Graham Richard. "Through the committed partnerships that have made NIIC possible, we are going to see even greater achievements for our community,"

The city of Ft. Wayne has partnered with both Indiana University/Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) and Ivy Tech State College to further the objective of building technology-based entrepreneurship throughout the city. Both partnerships will involve a combination of faculty and student involvement with companies located in the Park.

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"The Certified Technology Park status is a reflection on the importance of the connections and linkages that need to be made between higher education and incubators," stated NIIC CEO Karl Lapan. "The synergy created through these unique educational collaborations will create exciting new jobs, industries, and markets that will open doors to dynamic possibilities for our region."

Any city, town or county with a redevelopment commission is eligible to have an area designated as a Certified Technology Park if certain requirements are met, including:

- Demonstrating the significant support of a research university;
- A commitment to the commercialization of products;
- Access and utilization of public and private resources in the park;
- The existence of, or proposed development of, a business incubator; and
- The development of a business plan or the assurance that the park will be used for high-technology business activity.

In addition, a firm commitment must be shown from at least one business primarily engaged in a high-technology activity creating a significant number of jobs that will locate within the park.

In Ft. Wayne's case, Aptera Software, Inc. has shown such a commitment. Admitted to the Innovation Center in February 2003, Aptera creates software applications that help businesses operate more efficiently. The company serves a host of industries, including manufacturing, healthcare, marketing and customer service.

"Mayor Richard's Economic Development Action Plan in 2000 had as one of its primary goals an increased focus on high growth businesses," said City of Fort Wayne Economic Development Director Karen Goldner. "NIIC's focus on Information technology and biomedical research and development are prime examples of just the type of high growth companies we want to encourage."

NIIC is a not-for-profit company that was formed in 2001 to create a high-technology business incubator serving entrepreneurs and new businesses in northeast Indiana. Soon, construction will begin on a new 42,000 square-foot facility located close to the Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) campus. The new building will be specially designed to foster the growth of biomedical and information technology jobs in the region.

For more information on Indiana Certified Technology Parks and other community development efforts, please call the Indiana Department of Commerce's Development Finance Office at 317.232.8898 or visit the Commerce Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

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