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Sen. Dorgan's Red River Valley Research Corridor Partners with Cleantech Open to Encourage Competition in North Dakota

Partnership empowers North Dakota entrepreneurs to compete for \$250,000 in investment and services to further clean technology development

MINNEAPOLIS - April 6, 2010: The Red River Valley Research Corridor and Cleantech Open have joined forces to find, fund and foster the most promising clean technology companies in North Dakota. The goal for the organizations is to assist entrepreneurs with big ideas that address the most urgent energy, environmental and economic challenges.

As a program partner, the Red River Valley Research Corridor will provide program support and assistance to the North Central region of Cleantech Open.

Created by Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) in 2002 to generate more research funding in North Dakota, the Red River Valley Research Corridor will help Cleantech Open expand into the state. Resources will include support for business mentoring, green brand building, program collaboration, developing channels to funding and recruiting judges for the seven-state regional competition.

"I'm pleased to see that the Red River Valley Research Corridor is a partner in this important project, which will serve to highlight and promote exciting new clean, high-tech activities in our state," Sen. Dorgan said. "It's another example of the Research Corridor's commitment to making our state a widely recognized hub for cutting-edge research, development and commercialization."

North Dakota is among seven states in the Cleantech Open North Central region, a new region launched in 2010, which also includes Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

"We're grateful to have Senator Dorgan and the Red River Valley Research Corridor as partners," said Justin Kaster, regional director, Cleantech Open North Central. "The program would not be possible without the generous support of our national and regional sponsors, business partners and volunteers."

By joining forces, Cleantech Open and the Red River Valley Research Corridor will be able to better assist early stage start-ups in North Dakota to compete in six Cleantech Open categories – renewable energy, transportation, smart power and storage, energy efficiency, green building, and air/water/waste – for a chance to win \$250,000 in investment and services.

For more information visit www.cleantechopen.com or www.theresearchcorridor.com.

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About The Cleantech Open

The Cleantech Open is a catalyst for cleantech innovation. A non-profit organization founded in 2006, it provides today's clean tech innovators with the tools, training and connections they need to become tomorrow's viable clean tech businesses. The core of the Cleantech Open is an annual national business competition, supported by expert volunteers and mentors, that provides entrepreneurs with the crucial business training, services and insights they need to successfully go to market. The Cleantech Open, in combination with MIT's Ignite Clean Energy/Cleantech Open Northeast, has assisted companies in raising over \$240M in funding and has over 400 alumni companies. Fueled by a network of more than 700 volunteers and sponsors, the Cleantech Open unites the public and private sectors in a shared vision for making America's clean tech sector a thriving economic engine. Past alumni successes include Adura Technologies, Cool Earth Solar, EcoFactor and GreenVolts. For more information, visit www.cleantechopen.com or email at nc_info@cleantechopen.com, and follow @cleantechopen on Twitter.

About The Red River Valley Research Corridor

As a senior member of the U.S. Senate's Appropriations Committee, Sen. Dorgan has worked vigorously to increase high-tech research, development and commercialization in North Dakota. He has directed nearly \$700 million in federal investments to Red River Valley Research Corridor activities since 2002.

In early 2002, Sen. Dorgan convened a meeting with the presidents of North Dakota state universities and colleges to propose a bold new program to draw millions of federal research dollars to North Dakota. Sen. Dorgan started a process that has stimulated a cycle of federal research and economic development in the state and is helping to develop its major universities into world-class research institutions, as well as to bring high-tech industries to the state.

In December 2006, a North Dakota State University researcher released an economic impact study of the Research Corridor showing the growth of the high-tech industry in North Dakota since its conception in 2002. The report said the Research Corridor initiative had generated \$759 million in positive economic impact and added 10,600 jobs to the regional economy.

In June 2008 a study released by the Milken Institute, a nationally recognized, independent economic think-tank, showed that the North Dakota research industry is the fastest-growing in the nation.

Senator Dorgan also established the Red River Research Corridor Coordinating Center to coordinate the region's science and technology-based development strategy. The Center works to acquire federal research funding, provides basic infrastructure support, identifies gaps in technology infrastructure and works to fill them. The Center provides links among state colleges and universities, commercialization teams and business investment capital, and markets the state's research and technology assets outside the region.

Dr. Delore Zimmerman, president and CEO of Praxis Strategy Group in Grand Forks and Fargo was named to serve as the Coordinator. Zimmerman has over twenty five years experience working with companies in technology and information industries, universities and local development groups. Since co-founding Praxis in 1994 the company has been awarded nine Small Business Innovation Research Awards.

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