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Report cites PNNL as model for economic development

The Department of Commerce has selected the Department of Energy's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory as a national model for technology-based economic development. The recognition came in report issued Nov. 20, 2003, by the department's Office of Technology Policy.

Of 300 national laboratories, "Partners on a Mission: Federal Laboratory Practices Contributing to Economic Development" singles out seven best-practices federal labs, including PNNL, and two programs for providing regions with access to federally funded technologies and facilities.

The report praised PNNL's

- technology assistance to more than 550 firms
- marketing assistance programs involving MBA students at Washington State University
- local incubators with whom PNNL partners
- programs and online tools to help entrepreneurs find equity capital and other sources of funding, make business connections, and stay informed about tech-based business development
- partnerships with local and state economic development organizations, tech advocacy groups, and equity capital networks.

"Labs serve as unique and effective partners by bringing unique and hard-to-duplicate facilities, longstanding relationships with the most innovative companies, highly educated experts, and a Congressional mandate to promote tech transfer," said Bruce Mehlman, Assistant Secretary for Technology Policy at the Commerce Department.

Gary Spanner, who manages PNNL's Economic Development Office, said he was "very gratified and flattered" by the recognition from the Commerce Department. "A big reason PNNL's economic development programs are effective is that we design them to target specific needs in the community and region," he said.

The other federal labs named as exemplary were the Air Force Research Laboratory in Ohio; the Communications Electronic Command Research, Development, and Engineering Center in New Jersey; Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico; the NASA Glenn Research Center in Ohio; the Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division and the Naval Air Systems Command in Maryland; and Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico. Two programs cited as models were TechLink, operated by Montana State University, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Management Services, Inc., Maine.

The Commerce Department report also raised continuing issues such as bridging the "valley of death" (the gap between research and commercial application) and making more resources available for agencies and labs to support economic development.

The report is available at <http://www.technology.gov/reports/TechPolicy/Partners-2003.pdf>.
PNNL's economic development programs are described at <http://www.pnl.gov/edo>.

Pacific Northwest National Laboratory is a DOE Office of Science research center operated by Battelle. With an annual business volume of more than \$600 million, PNNL provides science and technology to government and industry that addresses some of the nation's most pressing challenges in national security, energy, and environmental quality. PNNL's Economic Development Office makes federally funded technology resources available to the private sector to diversify the economy and create jobs.

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