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VIRGINIA BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PARK

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Virginia Biotechnology Research Park

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Altria Makes Lab Equipment Donation to Virginia Biotechnology Research Park's Shared Lab

-Invests Over \$26,000 Worth of Equipment to the Innovation Ecosystem-

RICHMOND - Altria's Center for Research and Technology made a significant donation valued at over \$26,000 of lab equipment to the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park's Shared Lab, investing in the biotechnology startups in the Park and the Richmond region. This follows on a previous donation to the Research Park by Altria allowing for the opening of the Shared Lab.

The Shared Lab opened in the fall of 2014 and is currently home to two startup biotechnology companies, in addition to use by resident companies in the Research Park. Bench space is available at daily and monthly rates – allowing researchers to rent space on an as-needed basis at a below-market rate. With this most recent donation, the Shared Lab is further equipped to handle a variety of testing needs and is better able to serve the life sciences community in the Richmond region.

Speaking about the donation, Dr. James Strickland, Vice President for Product, Design, and Technology, Smokeless Tobacco, Altria Client Services and a member of The Innovation Council of the Biotechnology Research Park, said, "A vibrant Virginia Biotechnology Research Park is good for the Commonwealth and our company. We hope our donation to the community laboratory supports innovation efforts in the Richmond area for years to come."

The donation of the additional equipment will allow startup biotechnology companies in the Research Park to take advantage of equipment they would otherwise be unable to afford.

"We appreciate the continued generosity and contribution from Altria in promoting the research and development activity in the Research Park. This additional lab equipment for the

shared lab will decrease business costs by increasing efficiency, allowing for improved process times and additional testing for our start-up companies as well as a place where our researchers are collaborating and learning from each other,” said Carrie Roth, President and CEO of the Research Park.

Krisan Singh, Operations Manager with Research Park company Nutriati stated, “To the rising start-up, there is a tremendous financial burden and commitment that comes with the purchase of a piece of scientific equipment, especially when that piece of equipment may be important to an early phase of research and not required as the research advances. Access to the shared lab space has afforded my company the ability to use these tools without putting forth such an investment and thus granting my company the ability to make sound analytical decisions and accelerate our products to the market place.”

In addition to the donations from Altria, the Virginia Biotechnology Research Park is able to provide more affordable lab supplies through a partnership with Fisher Scientific as well as the Core Lab of VCU.

About the Park: The Research Park is a life sciences community adjacent to the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Medical Center—housing private sector companies, research institutes, non-profits, and state and federal laboratories on a 34-acre campus in downtown Richmond, Virginia. The Park is home to nearly 60 private and non-profit companies, state and federal laboratories, and research institutes/administrative functions of VCU and the VCU Health System, employing approximately 2,400 researchers, scientists, engineers and support personnel. Major member organizations in the park include the VCU Innovation Gateway, the Altria Center for Research and Technology, United Network for Organ Sharing, True Health Diagnostics and the Virginia Division of Consolidated Laboratory Services. The Park also has developed partnerships with neighboring Chesterfield, Hanover and Henrico Counties to expand its 34-acre downtown campus to extend the reach of the Research Park.

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