GOVERNOR GILMORE AWARDS $18 MILLION TO VIRGINIA’S RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES

RICHMOND – Governor Jim Gilmore today awarded $18 million in grants to Virginia’s research universities from the Commonwealth Technology Research Fund. The Governor also announced the Virginia Research and Technology Advisory Commission (VRTAC), a commission he proposed and created, is now a permanent, statutory body within Virginia’s government. The General Assembly ratified the proposal to make VRTAC a permanent body this past session.

“Today’s economy depends on the continuous creation and application of new knowledge, and this is accomplished through the research process. Top notch academic research is critical in attracting high-tech companies to Virginia,” Governor Gilmore said. “These grants will help Virginia continue as a leader in the new technology-based economy and provide colleges and universities with the resources necessary to continue to succeed.”

Governor Gilmore created the Commonwealth Technology Research Fund in 2000 to help Virginia’s colleges and universities vie competitively for federal and private research grants. The fund currently has $13 million in seed money designed to leverage additional funds for matching grants, and to increase technological and economic development in Virginia through investment in higher education research. VRTAC sets research and development (R&D) priorities for Virginia and plays an integral role in the allocation of state resources, including the Commonwealth Technology Research Fund.

Grants are presented to research projects in three categories: those aimed at increasing the capacity to conduct research in areas key to economic development; projects designed to attract high tech industries to Virginia; and matching funds for projects requiring state and local support in order to qualify for large federal grants. Grant proposals were evaluated by independent experts, and representatives of VRTAC, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, Virginia’s Center for Innovative Technology, and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership made funding recommendations based on these evaluations.

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Following are the grant awardees:

- **Commonwealth Information Security Center ($4.1 million over three years):** Researchers at *James Madison University, George Mason University, Hampton University* and *Virginia Tech* are working to create the Commonwealth Information Security Center, which will address escalating attacks on computing systems. The universities have partnered with Lockheed-Martin TDS, Keane Federal Systems, Litton/PRC, EDO Corporation, Veridian, Dyncorp and Ubizen for this project.

- **Center for High Performance Manufacturing ($4.3 million over three years):** Researchers at *Virginia Tech, James Madison University, Virginia State University* and *the College of William and Mary* have partnered with manufacturing firms to establish the Center for High Performance Manufacturing. This project will position *Virginia Tech* as a leading university in manufacturing research and education.

- **Collaborative Research in Bioinformatics ($2.5 million over three years):** The *Virginia Tech* Department of Computer Science and the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute have forged a partnership creating the infrastructure for world-class research, graduate education, and economic development in bioinformatics. This partnership will place Virginia in a position of prominence both nationally and internationally in the field.

- **Cancer Genomics and Development of Diagnostic Tools and Therapies ($3 million over three years):** *Virginia Commonwealth University, George Mason University*, and Inova Health Systems have joined together to explore the role genes play in cancer. The research will help develop more cost-effective means of diagnosing and treating cancer. Researchers will apply emerging technology to the health care field, and will work closely with technological companies in the Commonwealth.

- **Center for in-vivo hyperpolarized gas MR imaging ($1.8 million over three years):** Researchers at the *University of Virginia* have forged a partnership with Nycomed Amersham, a world leader in in-vivo diagnostic imaging. The proposed Center strengthens this partnership, enhances the research infrastructure, and creates a world-class program in this exciting new field of medical imaging that will provide Virginia with substantial health and economic benefits.

- **Virginia Bioinformatics Consortium ($1.5 million):** Researchers at *George Mason University*, the *University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University*, and *Virginia Tech* are engaging in groundbreaking study and development in the field of bioinformatics. The Virginia Bioinformatics Consortium will help Virginia universities work together on cutting edge research and allow individual members of the group to maximize research capabilities at their respective institutions.

**MATCHING FUND GRANTS:**

In addition to these awards, the Governor has announced an award under the matching funds program to help the University of Virginia secure $5.5 million in federal funding.

- **The development of an environmentally compliant, multi-functional coating for aerospace application using molecular and nano-engineering methods ($728,000):** The *University of Virginia*, joined by researchers at Ohio State University, the University of Cincinnati, the University of New Mexico, Arizona State University and the U.S. Naval Academy, has begun a project seeking to develop a multi-functional coating for military aircraft. The proposed functions include the ability to: (1) sense damage (mechanical and corrosion) and initiate mitigating responses, (2) change color on demand, (3) provide corrosion protection and adhesion using environmentally compliant materials, and (4) improve the fatigue resistance and mechanical integrity of the fuselage. The universities are partnering with various businesses, including 3M, Boeing, GE R&D, Rockwell, Praxair, Rowan, Air Force Research Laboratories, Army Research Laboratories, Naval Research Laboratories, Naval System Warfare Center, and Sandia National Laboratories for this project.

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