

## Welcome to NIH SBIR/STTR Conference

May 30, 2012; 8:00 a.m.

On behalf of the University of Louisville, let me welcome you to Louisville. We are honored and delighted to be hosting the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual NIH SBIR/STTR Conference. This is a big deal to our community and our state.

Last year at the BIO Conference I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Rohrbaugh, Director of the Office of Technology Transfer for NIH, and Dr. Murthy, Director of the NIH Institute for Aging. At that time we talked about initiatives taking place at our university and our community, particularly the economic cluster we have developed around aging. In this conversation we mentioned our SBIR match program that Kentucky has. They indicated that indeed this was unique, important and

shows how our state supports research and encourages innovation.

Dr. Mahendra Jain of the Kentucky Science & Technology Council took over in leading the effort to bring this conference to our community and state and we thank him for his leadership in making this conference happen here.

First, a little about our city. Louisville grew up as a great river town. Over time Louisville became one of the leading industrial and manufacturing centers in our country. As I say on many occasions, I'm old enough to remember in the early 1950s when General Electric opened Appliance Park in Louisville, employing at its peak, 25,000 workers. We, as a community and state, have been home to many of the great industrial giants and we have historically been a great manufacturing state with

a much higher percentage of manufacturing jobs than the national average.

Unfortunately, we, as a state, began to lose many of those jobs over the last decade. Some job loss was tied to the economy downturn, some to increased productivity, but many of the 100,000 manufacturing jobs we've lost over the last decade have been tied to lower wages offshore.

As a result of this job loss in this important sector, our public policy focus within our community and in our state is based upon a recognition that the jobs of today are different than the jobs of yesterday, and that we don't ever know what the jobs of tomorrow will be.

But we do understand that we live in a "New Economy," a knowledge-based economy, where the most important input into the production process is human capital – brain power. We understand the value of education, and in

particular higher education, and how strong research universities are vital to our economic future.

We understand the paradigm change taking place in our economy. Today, jobs follow people and, as Richard Florida says, those communities that will grow and prosper are those that embrace the three T's – talent, technology, and tolerance.

We also understand the work of several years ago of Ross DeVoe, of the Milken Institute, that the great growth communities within our nation have a major research university as part of their community – universities that are hubs of innovation/commercialization based on translation research.

So the University of Louisville is committed to providing the human capital that allows us to grow our economy and helps us develop the economic clusters of the future,

including health care/life sciences; logistics and distribution, additive manufacturing; and renewable energy.

A great transformation taking place in our community, with most of that transformation being driven by the University of Louisville and its growth in NIH research; the growth in Nano/MEMS research, as well as research on supporting logistics and distribution companies such as UPS – today or biggest employer – and research renewable energy sources – after all, we are an energy state.

We still have more to do. But we are making progress – the 2011 Kaufman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity ranked Kentucky as 8<sup>th</sup> among the states. Important/critical to our efforts to transition our state to a knowledge-based economy is our SBIR match program

that encourages innovation and entrepreneurial activity tied to our research initiatives.

So we are honored that the NIH SBIR/STTR conference has selected Louisville as its host city. Hosting this important conference adds to an energy/enthusiasm/excitement that exists in our community and state as we compete in the new knowledge-based global economy.

Have a great conference. Have a great time. Spend a lot of money and boost our sales tax collections while you are here.